

Certified Public Relations Counselor(CPRC) Fact Sheet

The Certified Public Relations Counselor (CPRC) certification program is designed to recognize professional growth and achievement of senior members. The CPRC credential is an opportunity, and member benefit, exclusively available to Florida Public Relations Association (FPRA) members who have earned their APR and have a minimum of 10 years experience in the field of public relations. CPRC certification enables candidates to challenge their advanced principles, skills and knowledge and demonstrate proven expertise to current and future employers, clients and peers as one of about 100 CPRCs in the state of Florida. PR counselors are recognized as seasoned practitioners who research and evaluate situations and then advise organizational leaders on communications strategies that foster wise and ethical business decisions.

CPRC is our second tier credential. However, it is not APR 2.0. While the APR exam is an objective exam with specific written examination resources to study, the CPRC exam is a subjective exam that requires candidates to draw from their 10 or more years of solid public relations planning and experience in applying the Research-Planning-Implementation-Evaluation (RPIE) method to solve problems and present solutions. Though no two candidates' answers will be alike, all answers must apply a strategic RPIE approach to a solution and address the key elements presented in each scenario. Candidates must demonstrate persuasive counseling skills in the scenarios commonly faced by government agencies, corporations, nonprofit organizations and public relations firms. The CPRC exam consists of two elements: a written exam and an oral presentation. Candidates must pass both to earn the CPRC credential.

Written Exam

The written exam consists of 14 case studies with an estimated length of time for answering each question. The time estimates range from 15 to 60 minutes. The length of each time estimate also represents the number of points possible for that question. For example, a 15-minute question is worth 15 points. The total points possible on the written exam is 300. To pass, a candidate must score 210 points (70%). Six hours (including a one hour lunch) is allotted for the exam, which will be graded by two FPRA professionals who have earned the CPRC credential. If there is not agreement on pass or fail, a third CPRC will serve as a tie breaker. Candidates are identified on the written exam by a number, not by name, to protect their privacy.

Candidates will want to be as thorough as possible in answering each question within close proximity of the time suggested. However, candidates should not make assumptions that certain actions or steps in the RPIE formula are "a given." For example, the question might not ask about research, but an astute candidate might start his/her answer with "I would begin first by conducting research." To manage time wisely, outline or bullet form, is acceptable. Because the test is timed and candidates are asked for very thoughtful replies, points are not deducted for AP style or spelling errors. Candidates should emphasize professionalism, clarity, continuity and completeness in their answers.

The exam covers a variety of types of scenarios that cross all sectors of the PR profession. If a candidate's experience has been mostly concentrated in a specific area (corporate, nonprofit, agency or government for example), he/she may want to tap into the knowledge of his/her fellow FPRA members for a refresher on situations and tasks they aren't familiar with. Some candidates may want to create study groups and sessions with other candidates sitting for the exam to facilitate the exchange of information. It is also recommended that candidates review, individually or in a group, classic case studies in public relations, the FPRA Code of Ethics and past Golden Image winning entries posted on www.FPRA.org. Lastly, the local Accreditation and Certification Chair or the State VP of Accreditation and Certification can provide sample exam questions to help prepare.

When a candidate is ready to take the written exam, the local Accreditation and Certification Chair, with the support of the State VP of Accreditation and Certification and the State Office, will arrange a location, date and time that is convenient for both the candidate and the CPRC serving as the proctor for the written exam. The proctor will prepare the work space, have the exam materials ready, review instructions and return the candidate's completed exam to the State Office.

Oral Presentation

The oral presentation is designed to evaluate the persuasive skills and counseling abilities that cannot be evaluated in a written exam, those required to successfully present a public relations plan and gain acceptance and support from decision makers such as senior management, boards of directors, clients and other stakeholders. The oral presentation is intended to test a candidate's skills in this crucial persuasion process and verbal application of the RPIE strategic public relations process. Candidates will choose one of three offered scenarios to present. After receiving the scenarios, the candidate will have seven days to prepare for his/her presentation.

A panel of three FPRA professionals who have earned the CPRC credential evaluate and grade the presentation. Items evaluated include the specific steps of RPIE, whether the candidate was persuasive and effective and overall impression. Each item is scored between one and five for a total of 50 points. To pass, a candidate must score 35 points (70%) or greater. Candidates will be given a copy of the presentation evaluation form from their local Accreditation and Certification Chair or the State Office. The form can be used as a guideline for preparing for the presentation.

The local Accreditation and Certification Chair, with the support of the VP of Accreditation & Certification and the Staff Office, will arrange a location, date and time that is convenient for both the candidate and panelists. The local Accreditation and Certification Chair, if certified, or one of the panelists, will facilitate the panelists' agreement on pass/fail and return the score sheets to the State Office.

Application and Fees

Applications are available on www.FPRA.org or by contacting the FPRA State Office by phone or mail at 941-365-2135 or 40 Sarasota Center Blvd., Ste. 107, Sarasota, FL 34240. The cost for the exam is \$150.