

CIPR Specialist Diploma Sustainability Communication



POST-GRADUATE

MAXIMUM TIME TO COMPLETE: ONE YEAR

ONLINE, FLEXIBLE

Develop knowledge and expertise in how sustainability can be integrated into strategic public relations planning and management. Gain a sound theoretical and practical understanding of ethical sustainability communications leadership.

What you will learn

The CIPR Specialist Diploma: Sustainability Communication, explores the link between sustainability and reputation, issues and crisis management. Analyse and evaluate stakeholders' importance to sustainability. Establish a sustainability agenda including setting organisational sustainability goals.

The course discusses Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) and how best practice in diversity supports sustainability goals. It considers how the context (global, international, national and/or local) impacts on attitudes to sustainability.

This course is right for you if:

- You are a senior practitioner working in public relations, corporate communication, marketing communication, internal communication, public affairs or media relations, either in consultancy or in-house.
- You want the knowledge and tools to lead the organisation's strategic management of sustainability communications in complex situations.

What will I get out of the course?

You'll learn how to:

- ✓ Lead the organisation's strategic management of sustainability communication
- ✓ Research, interpret and analyse sustainability data
- ✓ Evaluate sustainability PR

Enrol today

The course is really flexible; **enrol at a time that's right for you.**

Book a **Course Advice Call** if you need help to decide if it's the right course for you.

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FIND OUT MORE ONLINE



Why study with PR Academy?

We're PR and communication specialists.

We have more than 15 years' experience of delivering professional qualifications for PR and communication students.

Learn the theory and how to apply it.

Through our online learning system, the Study Hub, we'll teach you the theory and how you can apply it in the real world. You'll have access to video lessons, case studies and optional live online workshops.

Learn from leading experts.

All our tutors are experts in their field and are practicing communicators. Many are also highly qualified academics.

We're really supportive.

From tutor one-to-ones, online workshops, to your course leader, and our admin team, we're here to help you succeed.

The best results!

We train hundreds of students every year with excellent results. We're certified by the CIPR, PRCA and AMEC!

How will I learn?

The course is designed to be really flexible. You have one year to complete and can set your own study pace.

The PR Academy Study Hub – benefits

With **PR Academy's Study Hub** – our online learning system – you'll have access to everything you need to succeed with your professional qualification.

- **Expert video lessons and learning materials** from your specialist tutor – watch at any time.
- **Plenty of tutor support.**
- **Access to our extensive online library** of PR and communication books.
- **Regular live workshops** to support your online learning.
- **Bonus sessions** – specialist live sessions tackling contemporary PR and communication topics.
- **Networking** – join our LinkedIn groups to network with other PR Academy students.

95%

of respondents agreed that qualifications are **useful for developing capabilities** whilst working in public relations.*

77%

of respondents said that a professional qualification either has **led to a career progression/promotion** or that they are confident it will.*

*PR Academy Education Report 2023

Flexibility

With **PR Academy's 'start any time' CIPR qualifications** you get the best of both worlds with complete flexibility and guided support:



Tailor your study schedule



Join the optional live lectures



Feel supported



The cherry on top? The senior management door I'd been knocking on for years quickly opened and I am now a Senior Communications Manager.

Holly McLennan





Our tutors and support

All our tutors are experts in their field and are practicing communicators. Many are also highly qualified academics.



There is always a new channel, concept or communication approach to discuss. I like to ensure my sessions are full of real life case study examples which collectively we can either praise or pull apart.

Chris Tucker
PR Academy tutor

- You'll be assigned a course leader who will oversee your course.
- In addition to the lessons in your online course, there will be optional live online workshops.
- You can book a one-to-one tutorial with your tutor for personal guidance and support.
- You can submit your proposal for your assignment to your tutor, who will provide feedback.

Our study support package

Knowledgeable tutors

Who combine top academic credentials and senior practitioner experience.

The PR Academy Study Hub

With easy-to-follow lessons, video and guided reading from our library.

A curated online library

With a range of books on communication topics.

Plenty of tutor support

There is always someone available to help you.

Easy ways to keep in touch

Our messaging system makes contacting your course leader or admin team easy.

Network with other practitioners

Join our LinkedIn group for the course.

Enrol today


Book a **Course Advice Call** if you need help to decide if it's the right course for you.

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APPENDIX: FULL SYLLABUS

The aim of the CIPR Specialist Diploma (Sustainability Communications) is to enable candidates to develop knowledge and expertise in how sustainability can be integrated into strategic public relations planning and management. It has been developed in line with the UN Principles for Responsible Management Education, with specific reference to: Principle 1: Purpose, Principle 2: Values, and Principle 6: Dialogue.

The CIPR Specialist Diploma (Sustainability Communications) will be of interest to senior PR practitioners working in public relations, corporate communication, marketing communication, internal communication, public affairs and media relations, in consultancy or in-house, or in a related discipline within the strategic management framework. This qualification will equip the candidate with the knowledge and tools to effectively lead the organisation's (commercial, public sector or non-profit-making) strategic management of sustainability communications in complex situations.

Candidates will research and develop ethical sustainability communications strategies and plans that enable organisations to enhance and protect their reputation and stakeholders to achieve their strategic objectives and make a positive impact on communities.

Candidates would be awarded the CIPR Specialist Diploma (Sustainability Communications) on successful completion of the assessment.

Syllabus

The CIPR Specialist Diploma (Sustainability Communications) provides a sound theoretical and practical understanding of ethical sustainability communications leadership.

An analytical perspective is applied to enable candidates to take a reflective approach in critically examining their own experience alongside case studies of organisations and communities.

Qualification objectives

Successful candidates will be able to:

1. Apply relevant macro, meso and micro contexts of strategic communications leadership including:

- the role of PR in advocating the relationship between organisations and sustainability.
- the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
- UN Principles for Responsible Management Education.

- sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility.
- Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG).
- how best practice in diversity supports sustainability goals.
- how the context (global, international, national and/or local) impacts on attitudes to sustainability.
- the impact of the organisation's context and culture on its sustainability agenda.
- researching, interpreting and analysing sustainability data (including relevant case studies).
- identifying and responding to objections to sustainability.
- recognising and responding to disinformation and misinformation about sustainability.
- referencing the growing practice of brand/CEO/corporate activism.

2. Define sustainability engagement to internal and external audiences by:

- exploring the link between sustainability and reputation, issues and crisis management.
- analysing and evaluating stakeholders' importance to sustainability.
- establishing a sustainability agenda including setting organisational sustainability goals.
- engaging practically with comprehensive stakeholder analysis, resource-based review and resulting recommendations.
- identifying and addressing ethical, legal and other impacts on stakeholder groups within the context of sustainability.

3. Critically evaluate the role of PR in advancing a corporate sustainability communications strategy by:

- applying sustainability communications tools, concepts and ethical principles to the organisational context.
- evaluating the success of sustainability PR strategies and tactics.
- evaluating the impact of the organisation's sustainability goals.
- critically analysing potential areas of conflict, for example:
 - the potential disproportionate impact on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.
 - how structural inequalities might be exacerbated.

- transparency.
- “green-washing”.
- passionate advocacy vs private adherence (“secretly sustainable”).
- “climate anxiety”.
- adverse mental health impacts.
- applying relevant models of reflection.

Assessment: Executive report and summary situation analysis.

Aim: To enable candidates to demonstrate competence in undertaking an analysis of a case study situation/issue.

Topic of inquiry: Candidates will be required to evidence professional judgement in identifying a suitable case study as their chosen topic of inquiry. This could be based on the candidate’s own organisation, a client, or another organisation of the candidate’s choice that can be associated with a sustainability strategy.

Submission: The assignment will comprise:

1. 3,000-word (+/- 10%) executive report or management proposal comprising:

- A clear and concise statement describing the case study situation/issue, justifying its relevance as a problem or opportunity facing a specific organisation and/or sector, and verifying that it can be addressed by a sustainability communications strategy;
- Articulation of goals and identification of stakeholders, i.e. the approach, tools and techniques used to collect and analyse evidence from secondary research regarding the situation, and provide insight into its current or potential impact on the organisation and/or sector and its stakeholders;
- Using the key findings from above, advice on the development of a sustainability communications strategy to include, where relevant, objectives, messages, and key influencers/opinion formers. Where possible, this should include the current and potential impact on the organisation and/or sector and stakeholders;
- Evaluation and recommendations for implementation.

2. Supporting 2,000-word (+/- 10%) statement of reflection including critical examination and evaluation of:

- The research methods (including relevant tools and techniques) used to analyse and gain insight into the case study situation (reflecting on part (a) above);
- Concepts, models and frameworks relevant to sustainability communications used to inform

recommendations (reflecting on parts (b) and (c) above);

C. Ethical concerns and responsibilities that emerge for PR practitioners using sustainability communications concepts and tools to address the case study situation (reflecting on part (d) above).

3. A reference list of sources using an appropriate, consistent method of referencing.

Completion of the assignment involves the following activities:

- Evidence-based decision-making – candidates are required to undertake data collection using a range of secondary research methods (literature, archives, published surveys, reports, etc.) to examine the chosen topic of inquiry.
- Insight – candidates are required to use a range of appropriate models, tools and methods to analyse the external and internal environment, the organisation or societal issue and relevant stakeholder groups.
- Communication – candidates are required to review and structure their analysis of a situation in the form of an executive report or management proposal.
- Reflection – candidates are required to use problem identification concepts and approaches to identify a relevant topic of inquiry. This will be a current issue of concern (or opportunity) for a specific organisation and/or sector, and may relate to the candidate’s own experience.

Example topics

- The role of PR in advancing a sustainability agenda within a public sector organisation: The case of X.
- Integrating UNSDGs within a university’s corporate brand strategy: Communication issues and challenges.