



MAS 390

Public Relations Practice

S2 Day 2014

Dept of Media, Music & Cultural Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

MAS389

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

The objective of this unit is to develop practical public relations (PR) skills, including: strategy writing, budgeting and professional presentation. Students work in groups as small PR agencies pitching for business of either commercial or non-profit organisations. The unit offers real-life case studies as well as a possibility of the best proposed ideas to be taken up by client organisations. It is expected that students use the knowledge acquired in MAS389 and that all the assessments in this unit answer to the professional industry standards. The unit develops critical, analytical and creative thinking and further develops students' effective communication capabilities.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Develop problem-solving skills through strategic and analytical research

Produce a communication strategy that shows competence in designing a communication plan and all its required components which demonstrates your knowledge of communication processes and your capacity to incorporate theory into practical and creative applications

Apply relationship management skills and the ability to reflect upon working as a member

of a team and with an external client

Use professional writing skills that provide evidence of your capacity to tailor material to the target audience, incorporating high level English writing skills

Demonstrate effective and creative presentation skills

Build your capacity to be socially inclusive and sustainable in your understanding of how to produce ethical communication strategies for disadvantaged communities and environmental groups in Australia and internationally.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Research report</u>	25%	Week 4
<u>PR strategy document</u>	40%	Week 11
<u>PR strategy pitch</u>	20%	Weeks 12 and 13
<u>Participation</u>	15%	Ongoing

Research report

Due: **Week 4**

Weighting: **25%**

Your individual research report is an analysis of research on the communication situation of the organisation for which you will develop a PR strategy. The objective is to collate and understand useful information about the organisation and the issue you will be dealing with. It also prepares you for the briefing with that organisation.

There will be a document on iLearn which provides more information on the research report.

??Maximum 1000 words.

Marking criteria:

Reading, research & relevance (60%):

- Evidence of thorough non-academic desk-top research of the organisation and its sector and the issue to be addressed
- The content of the assignment is relevant to the client
- The information presented is useful for appreciating the client's communication position.

Expression (30%):

- Ideas are expressed clearly and succinctly
- Correct grammar, vocabulary spelling and punctuation

- Written in an appropriate factual report style.

Presentation (10%):

- Correct referencing (footnotes only)
- The document is formatted as a report and looks polished and professional.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop problem-solving skills through strategic and analytical research
- Produce a communication strategy that shows competence in designing a communication plan and all its required components which demonstrates your knowledge of communication processes and your capacity to incorporate theory into practical and creative applications
- Use professional writing skills that provide evidence of your capacity to tailor material to the target audience, incorporating high level English writing skills
- Build your capacity to be socially inclusive and sustainable in your understanding of how to produce ethical communication strategies for disadvantaged communities and environmental groups in Australia and internationally.

PR strategy document

Due: **Week 11**

Weighting: **40%**

You will work in a group of four to develop a PR strategy for your client. You will have to divide responsibility for its various components, and those will be the basis of your mark for this assignment. The assessment will be based on the content, innovative ideas, design and layout and clarity of expression. The finished report is given to the client at the presentation. It is a group report and is marked as a group so no individual's work is identifiable. It is recommended one student is responsible for the final editing.

There is no word count for this report. It should meet the needs of your campaign.

Marking criteria:

- Strategic thinking: the campaign document aligns with client's needs and expectations by analysing the issues presented by the client and addressing the client's communication position through a series of targeted strategies (35%)
- Practicability and creativity: competence in designing a communication plan and its various components – messages, audiences, tactics, evaluation, appendices of media releases, timelines, budgets etc. (35%)
- Professionalism: logical flow, proofreading & editing, correct spelling, consistent

formatting, design and layout (30%)

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop problem-solving skills through strategic and analytical research
- Produce a communication strategy that shows competence in designing a communication plan and all its required components which demonstrates your knowledge of communication processes and your capacity to incorporate theory into practical and creative applications
- Use professional writing skills that provide evidence of your capacity to tailor material to the target audience, incorporating high level English writing skills
- Build your capacity to be socially inclusive and sustainable in your understanding of how to produce ethical communication strategies for disadvantaged communities and environmental groups in Australia and internationally.

PR strategy pitch

Due: **Weeks 12 and 13**

Weighting: **20%**

You will present your PR strategy to your client and pitch for the account. It is a group presentation and will be assessed by both the tutor and the client.

The presentation should be 15 to 20 minutes long. It will be followed by about 10 minutes for questions from the panel members.

You will receive a group mark for the presentation. This means that all the decisions you make on the format of the presentation must be driven by the group.

Marking criteria:

Content – what was the standard of the work and the creativity of the campaign?

Structure – did it address the key elements of the strategy?

– was it well thought out, flowed well (introduction, body, conclusion) and well prepared?

Presentation – was it interesting and engaging, were the presenters enthusiastic and motivated?

– could they answer questions?

Visual aids – were they appropriate, well designed and did they support or detract from the message?

– if using PowerPoint or Prezi were the slides effective, attractive, appropriate and easy to read?

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate effective and creative presentation skills
- Build your capacity to be socially inclusive and sustainable in your understanding of how to produce ethical communication strategies for disadvantaged communities and environmental groups in Australia and internationally.

Participation

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **15%**

Your mark will be based on your attendance and participation in lectures, tutorials, client and team discussions and overall participation in the course and your project.

You will be marked on how you meet deadlines, how work is presented and how you worked as part of a team.

There are three important components which will contribute to your participation marks:

1. Task progress, support and guidance: Week 6

Develop a timeline for your group project (this is not for your group's progress but for your strategy).

(Refer to p187 of Allert & Zawawi reading)

This follows the client briefing, and you must compile the list of tasks and responsibilities and convert them into a timeline. Your timeline will change, but it will help to structure your group work. This is the foundation of successful project management.

2. Work in progress (WIP) summary: (every week commencing Week 6)

Ongoing contribution to teamwork

3. Peer review and self-reflection

Due Date: Week 13

Each student will undertake a self-reflection at the beginning of the semester which they will complete at the end.

Your team members will also assess your performance and submit it to the tutor, together with the self-reflection.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop problem-solving skills through strategic and analytical research
- Apply relationship management skills and the ability to reflect upon working as a member of a team and with an external client
- Demonstrate effective and creative presentation skills

Delivery and Resources

Classes

Lectures: 10am, Thursdays W5A T1.

You are required to attend a one-hour lecture throughout the semester, and tutorials and consultation times as instructed by your tutor. In week 5 you are expected to attend a briefing session with your client and presentations to clients will be held in Weeks 12 and 13.

For tutorial times and classrooms please consult the MQ Timetable website:

<http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au>. This website will display up-to-date information on your class times and classroom locations.

Tutorials in Weeks 1 - 4 will focus on developing the skills you need to develop your PR strategy. The format will change in Weeks 6 - 11 when you will work on your project in a workshop environment.

Lectures and tutorials are compulsory and attendance and participation will form part of your final mark for this unit. All the components for the report will be covered in the lectures and tutorials. The readings too are compulsory and you will also be expected to conduct your own independent research in line with your client's requirements. Information presented in lectures will not be repeated in tutorials and the exercises done in the tutorials will be based on the lectures.

MAS390 is a 3 credit point unit. This means that you should spend 10 hours of study per week in addition to your weekly classes (this includes non-teaching weeks) - this includes working with your team. NOTE: Tutorials begin in week 2.

Required and Recommended Texts and/or Materials

All the required readings are in the MAS390 Public Relations Practice Unit Reader, available from the Co-op bookshop. Two copies will be placed in the Reserve section of the Library.

There are three textbooks which are useful but which aren't available at the Macquarie Coop Bookshop:

Smith, Ronald D., 2009, *Strategic Planning for Public Relations*, Routledge/Taylor & Francis, NY

Johnston, J. and Sheehan, M. (eds), 2014, *Public Relations: theory and practice*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney

Mahoney, J. 2013, *Strategic Communication: Principles and Practice*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne

Student wellbeing

Student support services are available and are highly recommended. For more information, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Students who have difficulties presenting to groups need to notify their tutor at the beginning of the semester.

The University has a comprehensive *Disruption to Studies Policy* which students should avail themselves of when and if they feel it is relevant.

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

Technology Used and Required

iLearn

This unit will make extensive use of iLearn. Templates and comprehensive information packs on assessment tasks will be posted to iLearn, as will a bibliography, important announcements, information about internships and job opportunities. Make sure you check iLearn regularly particularly in the lead-up to client briefings and presentations.

This unit has an online presence. Login is via: <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/> Students are required to have regular access to a computer and the internet. Mobile devices alone are not sufficient. Basic computer skills (e.g., internet browsing) and skills in word processing are also a requirement.

- For technical support go to: http://mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/informatics/help - For student quick guides on the use of iLearn go to: http://mq.edu.au/iLearn/student_info/guides.htm

Unit Schedule

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 Aug 7	Introduction and projects Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Introduce MAS390, our potential clients and projects· Revisit some useful principles of strategic communication· Introduce the principles of working in groups· Introduce the principles of public relations writing
Week 2 Aug 14	Planning and research Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Establish project research strategies· Clarify the structure of PR proposals· Define the parameters of the planning process· Finalise teams and clients
Week 3 Aug 21	Pitching and presentation (guest lecture by PR practitioner) Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Introduce the importance of business etiquette· Introduce the principles of writing for a business audience· Establish the principles of public relations writing

<p>Week 4 Aug 28</p>	<p>Groupwork – theory and practice</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Determine how groups function · Understand you and your group dynamics <p>The tutorials follow on from the lecture so lecture attendance is crucial</p>
<p>Week 5 Sept 4</p>	<p>Compulsory client briefings</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Establish a good working relationship with your client · Understand your client's business, expectations and communication needs · Define your project plan and assign project tasks to team members
<p>Week 6 Sept 11</p>	<p>Goals, objectives and publics</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Determine the difference between goals and objectives · Determine the parameters of measurable objectives and evaluation · Differentiate between various types of objectives · Introduce the principles of segmenting publics
<p>Week 7 Sept 18</p>	<p>Strategy and tactics</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Understand the difference between strategy and tactics · List types of PR tactics that would be useful for MAS390 projects · Understand how to budget
	<p>Mid-semester break – this is not a holiday. Use this time to work together on your project.</p>
<p>Week 8 Oct 9</p>	<p>Social media (guest lecturer)</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Examine role of social media in campaigns
<p>Week 9 Oct 16</p>	<p>Media and stakeholder relations</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Review the principles of media relations · Understand the principles of stakeholder relations

Week 10	Social responsibility
Oct 23	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Starting finalising projects· Review the principles of PR for non-profit organisations· Determine the differences between corporate and not-for profit projects HAND IN FINAL REPORT FOR MARKING PRIOR TO PRESENTATION
Week 11	Managing presentations and finalising campaigns
Oct 30	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Understand the difference between 'pitching' and 'presenting'· Determine the best structure and communication mix for your presentation and rehearse· Finalise projects - make sure you tie up all loose ends and go through the checklists and make sure all the boxes have been ticked· Make sure everyone has handed in their written material for a final edit as a completed document.
Weeks 12 & 13	Presentations to clients – days and times to be advised
Nov 6 & 13	

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Additional information

MMCCS website https://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/departments/media_music_communication_and_cultural_studies/

MMCCS Session Re-mark Application <http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914>

Information is correct at the time of publication

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to

demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Build your capacity to be socially inclusive and sustainable in your understanding of how to produce ethical communication strategies for disadvantaged communities and environmental groups in Australia and internationally.

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Develop problem-solving skills through strategic and analytical research

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Develop problem-solving skills through strategic and analytical research
- Produce a communication strategy that shows competence in designing a communication plan and all its required components? which demonstrates your knowledge of communication processes and your capacity to incorporate theory into practical and creative applications
- Use professional writing skills that provide evidence of your capacity to tailor material to the target audience, incorporating high level English writing skills

Assessment tasks

- Research report
- PR strategy document

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Develop problem-solving skills through strategic and analytical research
- Produce a communication strategy that shows competence in designing a communication plan and all its required components? which demonstrates your knowledge of communication processes and your capacity to incorporate theory into practical and creative applications

Assessment tasks

- Research report
- PR strategy document
- PR strategy pitch
- Participation

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Develop problem-solving skills through strategic and analytical research
- Produce a communication strategy that shows competence in designing a communication plan and all its required components? which demonstrates your knowledge of communication processes and your capacity to incorporate theory into practical and creative applications

Assessment tasks

- Research report
- PR strategy document
- Participation

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Produce a communication strategy that shows competence in designing a communication plan and all its required components? which demonstrates your knowledge of communication processes and your capacity to incorporate theory into practical and creative applications
- Apply relationship management skills and the ability to reflect upon working as a member of a team and with an external client
- Use professional writing skills that provide evidence of your capacity to tailor material to the target audience, incorporating high level English writing skills
- Demonstrate effective and creative presentation skills

Assessment tasks

- PR strategy document
- PR strategy pitch
- Participation

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Produce a communication strategy that shows competence in designing a communication plan and all its required components? which demonstrates your

knowledge of communication processes and your capacity to incorporate theory into practical and creative applications

- Apply relationship management skills and the ability to reflect upon working as a member of a team and with an external client
- Use professional writing skills that provide evidence of your capacity to tailor material to the target audience, incorporating high level English writing skills
- Demonstrate effective and creative presentation skills
- Build your capacity to be socially inclusive and sustainable in your understanding of how to produce ethical communication strategies for disadvantaged communities and environmental groups in Australia and internationally.

Assessment tasks

- PR strategy document
- PR strategy pitch
- Participation

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Apply relationship management skills and the ability to reflect upon working as a member of a team and with an external client
- Build your capacity to be socially inclusive and sustainable in your understanding of how to produce ethical communication strategies for disadvantaged communities and environmental groups in Australia and internationally.

Assessment task

- PR strategy document

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active

participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Apply relationship management skills and the ability to reflect upon working as a member of a team and with an external client
- Build your capacity to be socially inclusive and sustainable in your understanding of how to produce ethical communication strategies for disadvantaged communities and environmental groups in Australia and internationally.

Assessment tasks

- PR strategy document
- PR strategy pitch

Course Outline

MAS390 Public Relations Practice is a PACE subject which builds on MAS389 Public Relations Theories. It aims to equip you with practical public relations skills by giving you the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills you have gained to solving a current communications challenge.

In this unit, you will work as part of a team to design a communications strategy for an organisation to which you will pitch your solution at the end of the semester. The course has been designed to mirror working in a PR consultancy (inasmuch as possible).

Your team of 4-5 students will function as a boutique PR agency. Lectures, tutorials and workshops emphasise practical PR skills and contemporary practices and you will be expected to place these skills within the theoretical knowledge acquired last semester.

Many of the clients are in the not-for-profit or social enterprises and we also work with PACE International clients. There is thus an emphasis on