



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG



Faculty of Humanities

# Short Learning Programme in Digital Public Relations 2023

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**The Future  
Reimagined**

## SHORT LEARNING PROGRAMME IN DIGITAL PUBLIC RELATIONS 2023

**The programme** ■ The Department of Strategic Communication offers a Short Learning Programme (SLP) in Digital Public Relations. The course will be completed over six months. Classes start in February and July each year.

This course aims to introduce potential students to gain industry-relevant and usable public relations skills in the digital age. Learn more about best practices and pitfalls when engaging with influencers and journalists on social media. Discover techniques for crafting digital brand storytelling and creating engaging content. Students will be equipped to compile a social media strategy to enhance a brand's online reputation. The SLP provides a broad overview of the latest online trends and popular platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, to name a few. Discover how to use these trends and platforms for the strategic execution of Paid, Earned, Shared and Owned media tactics.

The SLP will equip students to identify and respond to the various brand risks associated with an online presence. The public relations and media landscape is becoming more technologically driven, with the power of social media becoming more prominent. Therefore, the skills to manage brand reputation online are necessary to avoid reputational damage in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

SLPs are offered at the University of Johannesburg in an academic atmosphere that respects academic freedom, emphasises fairness, consistency, and transparency, and treasures academic freedom.

### **Programme code and NQF level**

Qualification Token: **HUMSLP**

Programme Code: **S7023Q**

Programme Level: **Continuous Education Programmes**

NQF Level: **5**

The Short Learning Programme in Digital Public Relations is not offered as a qualification by the University; however, certificates will be issued to successful participants. It is envisaged that it will build skills related to the subjects offered.

**The purpose of the programme** ■ The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the theory and practice of using digital public relations tools, techniques and strategies. Students will learn about digital public relations fundamentals, digital channels, social media strategies, storytelling and digital branding. Students will be able to apply the relevant knowledge to design and implement their organisations' digital public relations strategies.

We define digital public relations as creating and publishing digital content and optimising relevant online channels to maintain relationships with connected audiences to support traditional PR techniques (Pritchard & Sitto, 2018).

**Programme content** ■ The programme covers the following topics:

1. **Digital public relations tools to gain the attention of journalists and influencers:** Writing and distributing media releases for the digital age. Online newsrooms. Relationship-building with influencers and journalists. Social media takeovers.
2. **Tips and techniques for creating engaging content:** Contemporary trends and channels in Digital PR to engage with fans, followers and online communities. The fundamentals of the rapidly evolving social media landscape. Roles and responsibilities of the Digital PR team.
3. **Storytelling tools for converged media:** Paid, Earned, Shared and Owned media. Narrative techniques for telling memorable brand stories. Strategic and creative content production. Telling compelling brand stories using video, sound, images and text such as apps, podcasts, digital advertisements, blogs, and e-mails.
4. **Crafting social media strategies to increase brand reach, engagement and visibility:** Digital PR campaigns. Content calendars. Long-form and short-form content. User-generated content. Hashtags. Chatbots. Employee advocacy. Facebook groups.
5. **Using online dashboards to track and measure brand performance:** Measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of Digital PR campaigns across Paid, Earned, Shared and Owned media. Metrics and analytics.
6. **How to respond to the risks of online engagement:** Ethical and legal concerns in Digital PR such as disinformation, trolling and online harassment. How to spot fake news. Responding to social media backlashes and crises. Social media policies and guidelines for employees, employers and brand pages.
7. **Creating your professional online brand persona:** Compiling creative and authentic biographies and social media profiles to maintain a favourable online reputation. Expressing the brand in a suitable tone and voice.

**Who should Attend?** ■ This course introduces students to the fundamentals of digital PR in a practical and accessible manner. The SLP appeals to young professionals who want to pursue a career in digital PR and social media marketing. Those already working in digital PR and would like to receive a certificate from a university may also consider applying for this course. The course is also suitable for someone who has never worked in public relations or studied for a certificate for a course completed in public relations or social media.

Prospective students and graduates may be interested in seeking career opportunities as influencer marketing assistants, digital storytellers, public relations practitioners, media relations assistants, content creators, digital brand managers, community managers and social media managers.

**Application closing date** ■ You need to apply no later than 30 September of the previous year for the February intake and not later than 31 May for the July intake. Applications are only processed once applications have closed. You may only be notified after the closing date if your application has been successful.

Only online applications via the UJ website will be accepted. Click [here](#) to apply. No e-mail applications are accepted.

**Admission Requirements and selection process** ■ Applicants will own an NSC or Senior Certificate or any equivalent qualification at an NQF4, with an interest in pursuing a career in public relations in the public sector or the private sector. The selection of students is based on the ability of students to demonstrate that they have basic communication skills and reliable internet access. Each application needs to be accompanied by a curriculum vitae (CV).

Students who received their School Leaving Certificates outside South Africa must get these evaluated by the South African Matriculation Board. This could take a couple of months, so please do this timeously.

Achieving the minimum admission criteria does not guarantee a place in the programme. If you are accepted to the programme, you must register as soon as possible once the UJ registration period begins.

The university follows a “first come, first serve” registration policy, which means that if the places in the programme are filled up before the end of the registration period, the registration for the programme is closed.

Once your application has been approved and you have been finally accepted, you are urged to register at your earliest convenience, pay the registration fee, and send us proof of registration to secure your place. E-mail proof of registration to Ms Faith Nephawe, [faithn@uj.ac.za](mailto:faithn@uj.ac.za)

Once capacity has been reached and we are full, registration will be closed for the SLP in Digital Public Relations. Should you still want to study with us, we advise you to apply again for the next intake.

**Flexible mode of delivery** ■ Learning is made convenient for students who live far away from campus and those who have work and family responsibilities. They can attend online. The option to attend in person is also available for students who live close to campus and prefer to attend face-to-face lectures.

Facilitated in a flexible, hybrid mode, students can choose to attend classes online, in-person, or a mix of the two. Live-streamed lectures will be recorded, further enhancing flexibility and accommodating different learning preferences.

Virtual communities of practice will be established for students who complete this course online to connect with other students. This is to allow online students to equally engage with their peers online, similar to students who attend in-person classes.

Course coordinators and lecturers will engage students through face-to-face classes alongside the UJ Learning Management System, Blackboard. In addition, online learning platforms such as MS Teams or Zoom may be used.

Teaching and learning also occur through independent, structured and guided self-study using learning communities and sources. These include prescribed readings (textbook chapters or journal articles, study guides), text, audio or video case studies, discussion forums, podcasts, and project-based learning.

The live streaming of face-to-face lectures will take place from a Future Fit venue on the Kingsway Campus. Lectures take place on Wednesday evenings, from 6pm to 8pm. Should anything change due to unforeseen circumstances, we will notify you.

**Assessments** = Assessments are not limited to written assignments. Included is the creation of practical industry-relevant projects such as creating social media campaigns, executing social media content, making digital advertisements, creating podcasts, designing infographics, participating in online discussion forums, video presentations and completing quizzes, among others. All summative assessments will be conducted and submitted online to accommodate students living far away from campus. Reliable internet access, with access to a computer to complete assessments, is required to complete the assessments successfully.

A continuous assessment approach will be followed. All assessments contribute to the final period mark being 100%. You need a minimum of 50% in the final mark to pass the course.

**Duration** = 6 Months

**Cost** = R11 000. The cost includes prescribed learning materials, such as textbooks. Click [here](#) to find out about payment options and how to contact Student Finance.

**Are any bursaries available?** = Click [here](#) to consult the Fees and Bursaries page on the UJ website.

**Programme leaders** = Prof Corne Meintjes, [cmeintjes@uj.ac.za](mailto:cmeintjes@uj.ac.za) | Prof Maritha Pritchard [mpritchard@uj.ac.za](mailto:mpritchard@uj.ac.za)

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