

**A career in Public relations** is notoriously portrayed to be a one way route to a glamorous lifestyle, with popular TV icons such as Sex & the City's Samantha Jones interpreting the profession to be one non-stop party. With pre-conceived perceptions of the industry well set in people's mind it is unsurprising that many people stereotype a career in public relations to be somewhat superficial; assuming that the career centres on champagne receptions and networking with socialites. As sociable as a career in public relations is, this glamorised portrayal of the industry is something which is resulting in people choosing a career in PR without looking into the realities of the industry.

So what is PR? Public relations is not advertising which is a common misconception, it is however the practice of managing communications between a business and the public. The public relations industry focuses on creative exposure and imaginative promotions to expand a company's profile and heighten its popularity. When working in PR you are expected to be up-to-date with current affairs and in essence be a social butterfly. PR work consists of preparing company pitches, interacting with journalists and producing press releases, articles and newsletters; which is why having good writing skills is fundamental. For students interested in public relations the best advice is to get involved in anything you can, whether you have a passion for writing or a knack for events management the more experience you have the better. A great way to do this is by setting up a blog and writing about things which interest you. Being flexible with social media platforms is a large part of public relations so get yourself on twitter and start developing your network; 'It's not what you know, it's who you know'.

To work in public relations you need to be confident, sociable and charming as well as being able to stay calm at the most stressful of times. The nature of the job is to build relationships within the industry through networking and you will find once you start making contacts the more opportunities you will be faced with. Public relations is one of the most sought after career choices for graduates across the UK as the industry is so diverse and versatile. There are many different PR agencies ranging from financial and political to beauty and fashion so there are many areas for practitioners to specialise and excel in.

Having a degree in public relations is highly sought after as the multipurpose degree combines elements of journalism, marketing and business, meaning you graduate with the skills needed to thrive in the general media communications industry. Leeds Metropolitan is home to one of the most established PR degrees in the UK, and after twenty years of successful educating and gaining Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) recognition its reputation speaks for itself. The university supports your individual development while educating you on the varied areas of PR such as how to write press releases and produce social media campaigns. A large part of the course is to create an ongoing portfolio with evidence of PR based work you have completed over the duration of your degree. Upon graduation this will be crammed full of your best work, ready for you to take to potential employers giving you an edge over other candidates. Jess Eggington, public relations undergraduate at Leeds metropolitan describes the course to be '*so much more than I expected*'. She goes on to say '*The degree is helping me learn more about the PR industry while improving my confidence, the lecturers are really supportive and after completing placements I now have an idea of where I can see myself in the future*'. Public Relations is a competitive yet rewarding career choice, so if you're ready for the challenges that this stimulating and versatile vocation offers then perhaps PR is for you.

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