

Critical Thinking Standards- Public Relations Graduates

Definition: Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterised by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artefacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. In public relations critical thinking involves identifying the issue; detailing the business objective; collecting information and evidence; assessing, isolating and defining the issue (with a focus on attitude; strategic and organised thinking; general knowledge; work experience; and team work); exploring, weighing and considering options; making a decision; developing and refining the decision; implementing the decision; monitoring the decision; and evaluating whether the decision achieved the stated business objective.

PR graduates will be able to demonstrate critical thinking in a wide range of business contexts

#	Standards Criteria	Exceeds University and Industry Expectations	Meets University and Industry Expectations	Below University and Industry Expectations
1	Identify Issue IDENTIFY ISSUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quickly identifies workplace issue Understands impact issue has on business Applies rational, realistic & mature thought to solving problems and threats that may arise Applies critical thinking process to solve issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can identify most workplace issues Aware issues can adversely impact business Uses rational thought to solve problems Applies critical thinking process to solve issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finds it difficult to identify workplace issues; and/or Knows solutions to issues should align with business statements, but cannot list which statements
2	Detail Business Objective OBJECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knows solution must support business goals Details business objective in relation to issue Acknowledges deadline to solve issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aware solution must support business goals Details business objective in relation to issue Acknowledges deadline to solve issue Regularly liaises with peers to check thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Struggles to describe constraints associated with the business issue; and/or Requires assistance from peers to detail business objective in relation to issue
3	Collect Information and Evidence RESEARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knows where to go to collect information Ensures information relates to issue Quickly comprehends and interprets information in charts, diagrams and tables Competently researches, digests and understands unfamiliar topics Spends appropriate amount of time on research commensurate with budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knows where to go to collect information, but may need assistance on who to talk to Understands and can explain most information in charts, diagrams and tables Can research, digest and understand unfamiliar topics, and may ask for help Seldom goes over time on research and adheres as best possible to the budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires guidance on who to talk to and where to go to collect information; and/or Struggles to understand and explain information in charts, diagrams and tables; and/or Struggles to adhere to time and budget restrictions

4	Assess, Isolate and Define Issue DEFINITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Embraces appropriate attributes to assess, isolate and define issue, entailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An intellectual and reflective attitude ▪ A strategic and organised thinker ▪ Extensive general knowledge ▪ Relevant work experience ▪ Relevant experience in team work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Possesses appropriate attributes to assess, isolate and define issue, entailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An intellectual and reflective attitude ▪ A strategic and organised thinker ▪ Good general knowledge ▪ Some work experience ▪ Some experience in team work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does not display necessary attributes to assess, isolate and define issue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lacks a reflective attitude; and/or ▪ Is a predominantly tactical thinker; and/or ▪ Has limited general knowledge; and/or ▪ Has limited or no work experience; and/or ▪ Struggles working in a team
	ATTITUDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has a challenging, curious and enquiring mind ▪ Asks ‘why and how things are the way they are’; is analytical and astute ▪ Can stop, reflect and question why and how a task is to be done; is inquisitive ▪ Accepts that they do not know everything ▪ Does not automatically accept arguments ▪ Examines assumptions; assesses pros & cons ▪ Is observant and mindful ▪ Knows and feels when something is not right ▪ Looks for hidden particulars and facts; can see ‘holes’ in an argument ▪ Has high level of common sense ▪ Can think multi-dimensionally, looks at issue from a variety of angles and layers ▪ Does not claim to know everything; comfortable in saying “I don’t know” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has a challenging, curious and enquiring mind ▪ Asks ‘why and how things are the way they are’; is analytical and astute ▪ Can stop, reflect and question why and how a task is to be done; is inquisitive ▪ Accepts that they do not know everything ▪ Does not automatically accept arguments ▪ Examines assumptions; assesses pros & cons ▪ Is observant and mindful ▪ Knows and feels when something is not right ▪ Looks for hidden particulars and facts; can see ‘holes’ in an argument ▪ Has high level of common sense ▪ Can think multi-dimensionally, looks at issue from a variety of angles and layers ▪ Does not claim to know everything; comfortable in saying “I don’t know” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May potentially have some interest in work, but attitude is disinterested
	STRATEGIC AND ORGANISED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understands business is like a chess game; you have to know what moves to take place before you make your first move; is strategic ▪ Understands impacts of rash decisions ▪ Objectively assesses and evaluates ideas, suggestions and proposed strategies ▪ Always thinks ahead; questions what challenges could emerge ▪ Thinks through and assesses the risks and consequences associated with decisions ▪ Knows what competitors are doing ▪ Has strong organisational skills and can 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understands business is like a chess game; you have to know what moves to take place before you make your first move; is strategic ▪ Understands impacts of rash decisions ▪ Objectively assesses and evaluates ideas, suggestions and proposed strategies ▪ Always thinks ahead; questions what challenges could emerge ▪ Thinks through and assesses the risks and consequences associated with decisions ▪ Is aware what competitors are doing ▪ Has strong organisational skills and can 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tends to be disorganised and is more experienced in making short-term decisions

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manage multiple tasks ▪ Has project management skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manage multiple tasks ▪ Has some project management skills 	
	GENERAL KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is interested and aware of life and events ▪ Remains actively up-to-date with general knowledge ▪ Interested in domestic and international news ▪ Knows politicians and business leaders' names ▪ Familiar with current trends and new issues ▪ Responds to events with new media ideas ▪ Knows business, not just communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is interested and aware of life and events ▪ Is fairly up-to-date with general knowledge ▪ Interested in local and global news ▪ Knows politicians and business leaders' names ▪ Familiar with current trends and new issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is uninterested in domestic and global events, although knows it is important
	WORK EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has been previously employed, such as in hospitality or sales ▪ Experienced in office environment work; even if unpaid or charitable work ▪ Has relevant PR experience, can manage databases, photo libraries, desktop research, and some event management ▪ Understands political and interpersonal landscapes in a workplaces ▪ Experienced administrator; can answer and make calls; organise meetings, take minutes ▪ Understands budgets, cost benefit analyses and the importance of money management ▪ Applies a 'professional approach' to people ▪ Understands where job fits into organisation ▪ Is commercially astute; knows business must operate at a profit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has been previously employed, such as in hospitality or sales ▪ Has some experience in office work; even if unpaid and some PR experience ▪ Experience in administration skills, such a making and answering calls; organising meetings and taking minutes ▪ Can read budgets and financial spreadsheets ▪ Has some idea of political and interpersonal landscapes in a workplaces ▪ Can apply a 'professional approach' to people in workplaces ▪ Knows business must operate at a profit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has little to no work experience in any industry, particularly office environments
	TEAM WORK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can work in different environments; adaptive ▪ Works comfortably with other people ▪ Has good people-handling skills ▪ Sense of spirit de corps; camaraderie, connection, pride and comfort in a team ▪ Able to follow a project plan and empower colleagues to complete tasks by due dates ▪ Follows checklists and plans ▪ Responds constructively to conflict; knows what to do in confrontational settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is okay to work in different environments ▪ Likes to work with other people ▪ Has fairly good people-handling skills ▪ Able to follow a project plan and provides regular updates to team coordinators ▪ Confidently follows checklists and plans ▪ Tries to respond constructively to conflict; and knows who to talk to when needing to cope with confrontational & difficult conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has little to no experience in working in team environments

5	Explore, Weigh and Consider Options EXPLORE OPTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lists range of potential solutions to issue ▪ Explores ideas with reference to constraints ▪ Competently rates issues for effectiveness ▪ Submits potential solutions to management with recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can list potential solutions to issue and capable of exploring and weighing options, particularly in regard to constraints ▪ May at times seek input from peers ▪ Submits potential solutions to management with recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Struggles to list potential solutions to issue and incapable of exploring and weighing options impartially; and/or ▪ Requires guidance
6	Make a Decision DECISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applies sound sense of judgement ▪ Makes decision based on impartial research and reflective thinking, followed by management feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applies fairly good judgement in making a decision, having based it on collected impartial research and reflective thinking ▪ If tackled individually, may have spoken with peers during the exploration process ▪ Seeks feedback from management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does not feel capable at applying good judgement to make decision; requires assistance and guidance from peers
7	Develop and Refine Decision REFINE DECISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Competently works on developing and refining the issue to minimise problems from arising; adheres to business constraints ▪ Ensures decision supports business objectives and organisational vision, mission and values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Works on developing and refining the issue to minimise problems from arising; and may seek input from peers ▪ Ensures decision supports business objectives and organisational vision, mission and values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is unsure how to further develop and refine the issue to ensure it adheres to constraints and retains its inventiveness ▪ Requires guidance from peers and supervisor
8	Implement Decision IMPLEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skilfully implements decision across appropriate mediums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can implement decision across appropriate mediums, and will have liaised with peers before implementing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires guidance from peers before implementing a decision
9	Monitor Decision MONITOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regularly monitors and reviews decision to determine effectiveness in solving issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitors and reviews decision to determine effectiveness in solving issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires guidance from peers to monitor decision and to determine its effectiveness in solving the issue
10	Evaluate Whether Decision Achieved Business Objective EVALUATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seeks feedback to determine whether implemented decision solved issue ▪ Reviews other potentially related issues ▪ Able to accept and learn from feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seeks feedback to determine whether implemented decision solved issue ▪ Prepared to accept and learn from feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fails to seek feedback on effectiveness of business decision; and/or ▪ Fails to learn from formal and informal feedback