



**PRSA**  
COLLEGE OF FELLOWS

## **2026 Applicant Prep Guide**



# **PRSA**

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# Introduction

An application to the PRSA College of Fellows is presented as testimony to one's impact, service and leadership through demonstrable communications versatility, empathy and creativity in solving problems. The confidential submission is enriched by colleagues, chapter members, clients and professional references who are ready to speak knowledgeably on behalf of the applicant.

While PRSA's College of Fellows is recognized as a career pinnacle of excellence, induction is not an end destination. It is a springboard to join an influential community of master public relations innovators who are committed to contributing purposeful leadership for our profession and its practitioners.

Stepping forward is an applicant's declaration that a career journey bears evidence of more to come. The rigorous peer review that follows verifies the breadth and outcomes of an applicant's work while noting the impactful relationships established along the way, an applicant's core professional integrity in upholding PRSA's pillars and ethics, and attention to detail and responsiveness throughout.

Applicants describe this retrospective career narrative as fulfilling and rewarding. Because the process is rigorous, repeat applications – after receiving feedback from the College of Fellows – are not uncommon.

We thank you for sharing your unique professional story with the PRSA College of Fellows.

# What to know

To be considered for admission to the College of Fellows, PRSA members must meet a stringent list of qualifications and complete the application process by the applicable deadlines. Applications are reviewed by the Fellows Selection Committee, which recommends new Fellows to the PRSA National Board of Directors for approval.

## **Applicants must demonstrate:**

- Current PRSA membership.
- A minimum of 240 months of public relations and communications experience.
  - Professional work experience in journalism, internships, volunteer and student jobs do not count toward the 240 months of work experience in public relations and/or communications.
  - Applicants must complete the Experience Calculator to verify they meet or exceed the 240-month criterion.
- Current Accreditation in Public Relations (APR).
- Outstanding professional performance in the practice/teaching of public relations.
- Advancing the profession.
- Contributing to the profession and/or the community through service and leadership.
- Serving as a role model in the profession and the community.

In addition, first-time applicants must provide six letters of support with their application.

## **Please note:**

- A non-refundable application processing fee of \$100 is due when the application is filed.
- For 2026, applications are due by 5 p.m. EDT on Friday, May 1. **No exceptions.**

# The first steps

All potential applicants to the PRSA College of Fellows must take the following mandatory steps before beginning the formal application process.

- **Download and complete the Experience Calculator** to demonstrate that you meet the minimum 240 months of applicable work experience.
- **Submit a current resume and the completed Experience Calculator** to [GoodFellows@prsa.org](mailto:GoodFellows@prsa.org).
- The GoodFellows chairs will **review these materials and verify eligibility** within three business days. Once verified, applicants may proceed to the next steps in the applicant submission process.
- The College strongly recommends applicants **request a GoodFellow**. A GoodFellow is a College member who acts as an application mentor and is trained to assist applicants with the process. **Requests for a GoodFellow are only accepted January 1-February 1, 2026 at 5 p.m. EST. Send requests, along with your resume and Experience Calculator to [GoodFellows@prsa.org](mailto:GoodFellows@prsa.org).**
- Participate in the live (or view the archived) **“How to Apply” webinar**, conducted in early January.
- In addition to your GoodFellow, the GoodFellows Committee chairs are available as an additional resource throughout the process. You can reach them by emailing [GoodFellows@prsa.org](mailto:GoodFellows@prsa.org). The committee chairs for 2026 are:
  - Andy Corner, APR, Fellow PRSA
  - Dr. Kelly Bruhn, APR, Fellow PRSA
  - Pamela Thompson, APR, Fellow PRSA

# Application guidelines

- Extensions for letter writers or applications **will NOT** be granted.
- Be responsive to the scope of each question.
- Adhere to the format requested.
- Writing and technical quality matter. Use a descriptive title as a synopsis for each case study.
- Proofread all materials carefully to remove typos and grammatical errors.
- Use AP (Associated Press) Style with single spaces between sentences and standard punctuation (no Oxford commas in a series).
- Do not violate an ethical, confidential or proprietary trust with your submittal.
- Applications determined to be in any way incomplete or not consistent with requirements will be disqualified. Grounds for disqualification may include misidentified letter writers and incomplete data related to experience (for example, not including the years an individual worked in a position).
- Repeat applicants from the prior year should follow the reapplication instructions on page 22.

# The application

There is no question that the application is a rigorous exercise in detailing one's career and achievements. To succeed, case studies must be robust, measurable and exemplary in the practice or teaching of public relations and in community engagement.

This guide provides a series of tips and “thought starters,” beginning with Section 2.2 – “Experience” – and sample case studies, to help applicants demonstrate their career successes.

## Section 1 | INTRODUCTION

This section includes basic information like your name and contact information. Follow all the online instructions about filling out this section that includes social media presence, declaration of conflicts of interests, PRSA years and types of service (in descending order) and your top five recognition.

- Use of artificial intelligence (AI) to complete the application should be limited to spell and grammar check. If other AI tools are significantly used, you must disclose it in the "Conflicts" section. PRSA has extensively studied [ethical use of AI](#), which can better outline parameters of using that tool.

*This section is basic and self-explanatory, but email [GoodFellows@prsa.org](mailto:GoodFellows@prsa.org) or consult a GoodFellow for help with specific questions.*

# The application

## Section 2.2 | Experience – Job/Rank Descriptions

In descending chronological order, index your professional roles with public relations or communications responsibilities including the months and years of service. The Experience Calculator can assist here. It will provide the percentage of time spent in public relations or communications for each held position and compute the allowable tally of months for each position held.

- Yes, this section of the application duplicates the Experience Calculator. Applicants must report months of experience for each position held both in the body of the application and through the Experience Calculator.

### Job/Rank Descriptions:

Each position should include a brief description of the employer/industry if this is not self-evident, e.g., nonprofit, association, private equity, boutique agency, government, community college, retail, manufacturer, among others. All applicants with military background (active duty, reserves or veterans) should list their rank and progression as they are the equivalents of civilian job titles with advancements.

Military reservists should outline their military reserve career with the same detail as their civilian career. It is part-time work, but it is also a parallel career with a separate path of advancement and recognition. Make sure the selection Committee can see that.

Remember the Selection Committee only sees what is included in the application and the content of the letters of support.

*Reminder: Professional work experience in journalism, internships, volunteer and student jobs do not count toward the 240 months of work experience in public relations or communications.*



# The application

## Section 2.2 | Calculating Experience by Month

Cumulatively, the minimum number of months dedicated to public relations-centric work for eligibility to the College of Fellows must meet or exceed 240 months. Applicants are encouraged to exceed this amount by viewing this as a minimum threshold. Refer to the Experience Calculator to complete this section.

Full-time public relations and communications roles (including program leadership and related responsibilities) may be calculated as 100%.

A position requiring at least 50% of the time assigned to communications work is calculated as full time.

Applicants are not permitted to count two jobs that overlap in time. In other words, applicants may only count one job at a time – reporting two full-time jobs held during the same time frame is not acceptable. If an applicant holds two part-time jobs concurrently, only one can be counted toward the 240-month minimum. *Exception: Applicants may count an adjunct teaching role held concurrent to a full- or part-time position.*

**Note: The Experience Calculator is a blunt instrument. Reporting one role that ends and a subsequent role that begins in the same month will cause the month to be double counted. Resolve this by removing the overlap (change the start or end date for one of the roles to a different month).**

Pt-Time Conference Marketing	Vertex, global drug discovery corporation	8/2015 – 7/2019
Qualified and managed digital presentation vendors for large industry sales and educational conferences		
Wrote and produced pre-conference mailers to boost attendance; conferences shortened sales cycle to hospital, clinic trials by 30 percent		
Percentage PR/Comms: 100%		48 Months @ half-time = <u>24 Months</u> *The job is calibrated for part-time

# The application

## Section 2.2 | Calculating Experience by Month (cont.)

Adjunct Faculty, Communications	UMass Amherst, hub campus of state's largest land grant research university, 30K enrollment	9– 12/2020
Developed and executed DE&I undergrad communications course As mentor, provided pitch guidance to students resulting in four internship placements Grow administrative support with campus poster symposium attended by faculty, prospective employer hosts and future students		
Percentage PR/Comms: 100%		2 Months *Each one-semester/3-credit course = 2 Months

Self-Employed Principal	Spots for Zebras Communications, independent writing, and media relations agency	5/2000 – 2/2011
Write wide-ranging editorial, website and social content for hospitality, tourism and food clients Orient to brand positioning against competition and web search traffic for SEO Provide spokesperson preparation and reporter follow-up		
Percentage PR/Comms: 100% NOTE: A Solo practitioner is spending 100 percent of their time in PR: planning/execution, business development or networking.		130 Months

# The application

## Section 3 | Testimonial letters

Applicants must provide six letters of support in addition to the application.

- One letter must be from the applicant's Chapter, Section or District. This letter must be signed by the current (or immediate past) chair or president and must be accompanied by the required support form.
- Five more letters of support are required. Four must be from individuals who are public relations or communications practitioners or public relations or communications educators. The fifth must come from an individual outside the profession – someone who does not practice or teach public relations or communications.

Applicants should carefully consider which public relations/communications practitioners or educators they ask to write letters. Authors must know the applicant and their public relations/communications work firsthand. Authors must be able to articulate an applicant's qualifications and expand on the story told in the application.

If possible, at least two letters from members of the College of Fellows, or from PRSA members who have earned their APR, should be included.

*Current College of Fellows members may write a letter of support for no more than two applicants each year.*

Chapter, district and section leaders can write letters for as many applicants, as necessary.

Non-public relations (fifth letter): One letter must come from an individual who is not a public relations or communications practitioner or public relations or communications educator. The letter from the non-PR practitioner or non-PR educator cannot be from someone who is a member of PRSA, IABC, AMA or any similar organization. Applicants should ensure the letter writer is familiar with their work as a public relations practitioner/educator and can address contributions and leadership within the field.

**NOTE: A letter writer cannot be used as a reference in any of the case studies examples.**

# The application

## Section 3 | Testimonial letters (cont.)

The following may **not** write a letter of support for an applicant:

- Members of the national PRSA Board of Directors
- Members of the College of Fellows Executive and Selection Committees
- PRSA staff members
- The GoodFellow working with an applicant.
  - That GoodFellow may write a letter of support for another applicant.

It is the applicant's responsibility to:

- Follow up with each letter writer to ensure that the letter written on their behalf is submitted on or before the application submission deadline.
- Ensure that letter writers understand the significance of becoming a Fellow.
- A strong letter of support will:
  - Add something to the application and not simply repeat information from the resume or application.
  - Add content and substance to the application, expand upon an example provided and give a more complete picture of the applicant's excellence in practice, leadership and service.
- Writers should:
  - Know the applicant and the applicant's work.
  - Briefly explain why/how they are qualified to write in support of the applicant.
  - Address College of Fellows criteria:
    - The applicant's record of excellence in professional capabilities and achievements
    - The applicant's work to advance the public relations or communications profession
    - The applicant's service and leadership in PRSA and in the community
    - The applicant's reputation, integrity, how they have been a role model and/or how they have demonstrated the highest ethical standards.

# The application

## Section 3 | Testimonial letters (cont.)

Applicants must ensure that letter writers are equipped with, and understand, the letter of support guidelines. Every letter received must meet all criteria listed here or the letter will not be accepted. Letters received must be written by the individuals cited in the application.

Letters must be:

- No longer than one page.
- A maximum of 500 words.
- Arial 11 pt. font.
- 1" margins all around.
- Submitted on business, organization or personal letterhead. Submitted by the letter writer. Applicants cannot submit letters of support on behalf of the author.
- Submitted with an original or electronic signature.
- Sent directly to the PRSA College of Fellows *via the link emailed to them or via email to [FellowsApplication@prsa.org](mailto:FellowsApplication@prsa.org)*.
- Received by the PRSA College of Fellows no later than the application deadline.

*Notifications and status checks about what letters have been received are available through the OpenWater online platform that PRSA utilizes.*

*The letter with original or electronic signature must be received **on or before 5 p.m. (EDT) on Friday, May 1, 2026. NO EXCEPTIONS.** Do NOT wait to input data until April 30 or later. Any technical difficulties or letter delays are the applicant's sole responsibility. For assistance, please write to [FellowsApplication@prsa.org](mailto:FellowsApplication@prsa.org).*

# The application

## Section 3 | Testimonial letters - Chapter/District/Section Form and Letter Instructions

Applications must include support from the Chapter, Section or District to which the applicant belongs. This support is delivered via two documents: a Comment Form and a letter. These documents must be submitted directly by the current or immediate-past president/chair of the Chapter, Section or District.

- This **letter** is a personal message prepared in support of the applicant. It is one of the required letters of support (six for a first-time applicant, four letters for a re-applicant). The letter must be consistent with all the formatting requirements described on page 14.
- The form requests that the executive committee, board or leadership of the Chapter, Section or District discuss the applicant's role within that group privately and confidentially and give the Fellows Selection Committee comments. The form is located on the [PRSA website](#).

*These documents are far more enlightening and persuasive if the person providing them is very familiar with the applicant and their work.*

A Chapter, Section or District current president, incoming president or immediate-past president/chair can submit comment forms and letters for multiple applicants within their chapter/section/district who meet the criteria and that the group considers to be qualified for membership in the PRSA College of Fellows. There are no restrictions on the number of forms and letters a current president, incoming president or immediate-past president/chair can submit. However, the Chapter/District/Section letter is only signed by one individual.

Letters must be consistent with all the formatting requirements described on page 14.

The comment form and letter with original or electronic signature must both be sent directly to the PRSA College of Fellows via the link emailed to them or emailed to [FellowsApplication@prsa.org](mailto:FellowsApplication@prsa.org).

Both must be received no later than 5 p.m. (EDT) on Friday, May 1, 2026.

Assistance is available by email from [FellowsApplication@prsa.org](mailto:FellowsApplication@prsa.org).

# Application guidelines

- Applicants provide a total of 20 case studies to demonstrate their exemplary career highlights as examples of sustained excellence for the Selection Committee to review.
- Examples are most compelling when they are specific. Include organizational names/industry, measurable results using RPIE, RACI, etc. Strong case studies utilize numbers and data to tell the story.
- **Case studies must demonstrate measured outcomes** that align to the originating challenge. Outputs or ordinary work examples are not compelling.
- While case studies might be used in different categories, applicants have the agency to choose the category that best suits the example being shared.
- Case study references and letter writers **cannot** be repeated. A reference may only be applied to one case example or one testimonial letter (exclusive). Therefore, first-time applicants must offer 26 different individuals to validate their application.
- The "Relation to Applicant" information is essential and required. The Selection Committee must understand how the reference knows the applicant (client, co-worker, supervisor, etc.).
- "Case Study Titles" can be leveraged to add to the story. These headlines do not fall within the case's 250-word limit. In that sense, headlines are "extra words" that can add context, capture attention or extend an explanation. They should be used strategically!
- Applicants should obtain consent from their references. The reference should agree to be contacted and ideally be briefed on the content of the case study. Failure to contact references ahead of time may disqualify the application.
- Contact information for references must be accurate and complete. Recommendation: Send the draft case summary to the reference so they will know what was submitted.
- References should be prepared to promptly respond to outreach from a member of the Selection Committee (usually in May/June). References therefore should be selected carefully. Lack of access due to potential absences (military deployments, sabbatical or parental leave) can be detrimental to an application.



# The application

## Section 4.1 | Outstanding Performance

"Provide five (5) case studies (250 words max.) from your career as a practitioner, an educator, in the military or in any industry setting as evidence that your work has been consequential to or achieved wide influence in an industry, your community or for a specific cause. Make sure to cite Outcomes using RPIE and to show the impact of your contributions."

Examples as thought starters:

- Use of innovative strategies and tactics to accomplish exceptional results for an organization, employer or client.
- Strategies used to defuse opposition that achieved notable, measured benefits for all involved groups beyond your own sphere of influence. Use numbers to demonstrate the impact.
- Effective programs that were adapted for broader use. For instance, a problem that has plagued many organizations was resolved and the solution was shared with others who face the same issue, extending the impact of your work within a community, industry or public policy.
- Anecdotes about the success of current or past students beyond the classroom or efforts that succeeded in elevating the reputation of an academic department or school.
- Groundbreaking research that led to change in an organization and was successfully applied later in other situations.
- Development of new crisis protocols that helped an organization, client or another stakeholder, potentially enabling others to avoid the problem altogether.
- Military commendation medals as applied to public relations work are equivalent to civilian public relations awards. This is the place to amplify awards with a quote from the actual citation. Example: The Navy Commendation Medal by the Commander Naval Reserve Force for Meritorious Achievement stated in its citation: "The resulting exposure greatly enhanced the image of the Navy and boosted recruiting efforts for the Naval Reserve."



# The application

## Section 4.2 | Advancement of the Profession

"Provide five (5) case studies (250 words max.) of your significant contributions to, or advocacy for, the public relations profession through your leadership that has been emulated, altered perceptions of the field, or otherwise achieved influence for public relations among decision makers or other audiences. Make sure to cite Outcomes using RPIE and to show the impact of your contributions."

Examples as thought starters:

- Articles, books, chapters, published monographs or blogs, hosted chats, or podcasts the applicant led, or lectures given, that contributed to the profession's body of knowledge or increased understanding of the profession by corporate executives, community nonprofit boards, the public, news media or career hopefuls. Be specific about the title, publication and/or date of any presentation, as well as the impact (using numbers wherever possible). **It is essential that such examples include demonstrable results. Simply referencing an article appearing in *Strategies & Tactics*, for example, in which the applicant was interviewed does not demonstrate results. Neither does describing a media interview, or a speech or presentation about PR. These do not show outcomes. The article or podcast's impact must be clear – specific detail about how it influenced others to advance the profession is needed, supported by numbers wherever possible. These activities are important and add to a career with sustained excellence – but only if the case explicitly shows how they influenced others and advanced the profession.**
- Comprehensive campaigns resulting in desired behavioral change, supported by numbers, that are used as lessons learned to educate other public relations professionals.
- Exceptional management of the business or teaching of public relations that generated a new standard of collaboration, enhanced results from new technology and/or new training excellence.
- Significant instances of demonstrated leadership within PRSA at the Chapter, Section, District, National Committee or task force level and/or the National Board of Directors or national officer level. These cases are compelling when they are specific and clearly show impact.

# The application

## Section 4.2 | Advancement of the Profession (cont.)

Case studies may also include:

- Significant contributions to other professional communication organizations (e.g., IABC, American Marketing Association, Association for Women in Communications, or Arthur W. Page Society, among others). These cases are compelling when they are specific and clearly show impact.
- Research activities the applicant created and/or conducted, such as studies published or otherwise made public that advanced the profession in a significant way. The case must clearly explain how each research activity advanced the profession. Unpublished articles or proprietary research cannot be considered without a clear explanation of their benefits to the profession.
- Programs or events that the applicant initiated or developed and passed on to others to continue.
- Activities the applicant led or created that increased appreciation and understanding of public relations among those who are neither practitioners nor educators.
- A critical ethical issue or dilemma the applicant faced as informed by PRSA's Code of Ethics and the outcome as an ethical resolution. Do not compromise confidentiality.

# The application

## Section 4.3 | Service & Leadership

"Provide five (5) examples (250 words max.) of your present or past volunteer or elected service through which your leadership has made a significant contribution to beneficiary groups. While case studies may include PRSA service, this is also about you leveraging your skills and knowledge for a larger legacy footprint, well beyond our profession. Be clear about delineating the outcomes of your contributions and use RPIE."

Examples as thought starters:

- Leveraging PR to achieve significant contributions to professional organizations in an industry outside public relations (e.g., architecture, engineering, healthcare, travel/tourism, among others).
- Leadership that produces significant impact through community-based volunteer service for an organization, nonprofit or cause (e.g., school board, elected position, alumni association).
- Clear, strong and ethical leadership in a variety of places/organizations.
- Contribution of PR leadership to an organizational board in crisis response, customer communications or advocacy that helped grow awareness and involvement, or helped the organization reach its strategic goals. Demonstrate such impact with numbers wherever possible.
- Merging a personal passion or community need with PR skills to achieve an appreciable benefit for others.
- Illustrating how an effectively planned and executed public relations strategy can achieve a turnaround, policy change or donor/member growth, all leading to new durability of the organization.
- Outstanding public and community service that was not part of the applicant's job and did not provide direct financial gain. The case example will be most compelling when it describes the benefit of the activities, the applicant's role, why they became involved, and the program's scope (local, regional, state, national or international).

# The application

## Section 4.4 | Empowerment & Opportunity

"Provide five (5) case studies (250 words max.) of how you have worked to empower others. Empowerment comes in many forms: as a mentor beyond the requirements of an existing supervisory relationship, by enlightening organizational leadership as to the gains of being inclusive, or by being an accessible career confidante or role model. Giving back and paying it forward is at the heart of the College of Fellows ethos. Make sure to demonstrate outcomes using RPIE."

Examples as thought starters:

- Recommending, executing and advancing actions to improve workforce culture and connectedness and empower marginalized publics with demonstrable impact (i.e., numbers) under extreme or highly unusual circumstances. Many professional accomplished such results when the COVID pandemic forced organizations into detached, remote work positions. For such examples to be truly compelling, they must show significant measured results or be highly unique. Every organization was forced to respond to COVID – showing how a response was different, unique or highly impactful will make it truly resonate.
- Explaining support for a DEI mindset that included significant, measurable contributions to intentional recruitment, inclusive policies and programming.
- Explaining education, policy or brand positioning was used to measurably deepen connections to, and understanding by, individuals who self-identify as LGBTQ.
- Enhancing the professional skills of young people or practitioners who were not your own students or employees through mentoring, ethics training or other educational activities. Simply providing the name of a mentee, or the date of a training session, is not sufficient. Instead, describe the impact of the work and the expertise that was applied to benefit others.
- Beyond the list furnished in the "Experience" section, amplify the meaning behind a standout recognition or award. Winning such recognition is not in and of itself exemplary; the reasons why the award was won are. Amplify them.

# The application

## Section 5 | Why the College of Fellows?

This series of short answer questions further introduces the applicant to the College of Fellows Selection Committee. The objective is to learn more about the applicant, why they are applying to the College, what they have learned throughout their career, and what was learned from a project or program that did not conclude as envisioned.

"In 250 words or less per question, please tell us:

"Q 5.1: Why are you applying to the College of Fellows?

"Q 5.2: Share an example of wisdom you gained from expected or unexpected results in your public relations practice.

"Q 5.3: Explain how you will be an asset to the College of Fellows."

## Section 6 | Biography

This section is what would be read at the Induction Ceremony. Adhering to the word count limitations is important.

**SUBMISSION:** Applicants may continue to make changes to their application up until the point they pay the \$100 processing fee and submit the form. At that point, no further changes can be made.

# Reapplication process

If an applicant is not successful the first time applying, they may follow a reapplication process during the next consecutive year.

This reapplication process is somewhat streamlined compared to the standard application process.

Reapplication is only permitted in the year immediately following the unsuccessful attempt. If an unsuccessful applicant waits a year or longer to apply again, their application will be considered new and must follow the standard process.

Reapplicants must obtain a **new** Chapter/Section/District Comment Form and Letter.

In addition, reapplicants need **three new letters of support**: two letters from communications professionals and a third letter from outside the profession.

In addition to the new materials, the Selection Committee receives and will review materials from the prior year including the original application, prior letters of support, comments from the previous year's Selection Committee and the letter from the College of Fellows to the applicant. The totality of these documents will inform the Selection Committee's decision.

*All other instructions for submitting a standard application apply to a reapplication.*

# Evaluation

## Selection Process

The Selection Committee is comprised of 15 volunteer members, at a minimum. Selection Committee members typically serve a two-year term and cannot write a letter on anyone's behalf while serving.

All Selection Committee members are required to review each application. They are instructed to carefully read and evaluate the application looking for responses, solution efficacy, validation through references, originality, persuasiveness, attention to detail and measurable objectives including use of RPIE to achieve outcomes, not outputs. They are looking for outstanding and exemplary career highlights that made a difference and, when taken together, show sustained excellence across all four categories. Typos and errors are taken into consideration and can be damaging to the overall effectiveness of the application.

One reviewer is assigned to vet each application. That lead committee member reviews social channels and letters. Then, that person calls and interviews at least three case study references (at a minimum). In addition, that person calls and interviews one individual from the applicant's network who is not listed in the application (at a minimum).

During the selection session, the assigned reviewer provides a five-minute overview of interviews and the application. The report is followed by a timed committee discussion. The committee may vote to extend the allotted time.

An anonymous vote is taken. Each Selection Committee member votes either to accept or decline the application. Majority rules. If the vote is split, a second discussion period may be granted, and a re-vote taken.

Following the review of all applications, the Selection Committee forwards recommendations for new Fellows to the PRSA National Board of Directors for approval.

# Recommended timeline

## **November–December 2025**

Candidates should thoughtfully evaluate their body of work, ensuring they have accumulated a minimum of 240 months (prior to January 1, 2026) in public relations or communications roles. They should reflect on their accomplishments, awards, and accolades, as well as their service and leadership contributions to PRSA—whether at the Chapter, Section, District, or national level—and to their broader community. It is also important to consider the time commitment required to prepare a comprehensive application.

## **December 2025 – Early January 2026**

Candidates should begin drafting an outline that addresses all application criteria and start identifying case studies to support each category. They may find that some case studies are applicable to multiple criteria; in such cases, they should determine the best fit for each. Case studies should span the candidate's career, and they are encouraged to reconnect with colleagues who can verify the work and its impact.

The application requires five supporting case studies aligned with the following criteria:

- Outstanding Performance
- Advancement of the Profession
- Service and Leadership
- Empowerment and Opportunity

## **January 2026**

Candidates should complete the Experience Calculator and submit it along with their resume to [GoodFellows@prsa.org](mailto:GoodFellows@prsa.org), clearly noting dates, number of months, and the percentage of time spent in public relations or communications roles.



# Recommended timeline

## January 2026 (continued)

Applicants should attend the **January 7, 2026 "How to Apply" webinar**, or register to watch it later.

They may access **education modules** from January through April, along with **monthly Q&A sessions**.

Applicants are encouraged to **identify potential letter writers early**. Fellows and APRs are preferred, and Fellows may only write **two letters per year**.

They should also determine who will serve as **references for each of the 20 case studies**. Each reference should be used only once and must be **distinct from letter writers**. References may include colleagues who collaborated on the program. Applicants are advised to begin contacting them personally, as this process can take time and offers a chance to revisit career highlights.

By **February 1**, applicants should request a **GoodFellow**, who will provide valuable support throughout the application process.

## February 2026

By the end of February, applicants should share a **first draft** of their application with their GoodFellow, incorporate feedback, and schedule a time to review the **second draft**.

They must **secure all letter writers** and enter their names and contact information in the online application (note: there are two places to enter this information).

Applicants should provide each letter writer with the **letter-writing requirements** and clarify which aspect of their experience each writer will focus on.

They should continue contacting references for each case study. While more than one reference may be available per case study, applicants should select the most appropriate one. If former co-workers are unavailable, they may need to get creative in identifying suitable alternatives.

# Recommended timeline

## March 16, 2026

Applicants should provide a **second draft** of their application to their GoodFellow. It is recommended that they draft in Word before entering content into the online version, but they should not wait to become familiar with and begin using the **OpenWater platform**.

They should continue contacting **references** for each of their case studies.

## March 30, 2026

Applicants should submit a **third draft** of their application to their GoodFellow.

They should also **remind letter writers** and ensure they are prepared to meet the deadline. Reviewing draft letters with them may be helpful.

## April 15, 2026

Applicants should share the **final draft** of their application with their GoodFellow. They may also consider asking additional sources or proofreaders to review and edit.

Final edits should be made, and the application allowed to “sit” for a few days before a final read-through.

A **last-minute reminder** should be sent to letter writers.

Applicants must ensure that **all references are secured**.

## Week of April 20, 2026

Applicants should **cut and paste** the sections of their application into the correct fields online, if they have not already been using the platform. The tool remains available until submission and payment.

They should conduct a **final review** and consider submitting early. The application must be submitted with the fee by **5 PM EDT, Friday, May 1, 2026. No exceptions.**

Questions? Email [GoodFellows@prsa.org](mailto:GoodFellows@prsa.org).



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