

## Update on chartership: August 2016

### Chartership: we need to meet

At the first of our meetings in Whitehall, on 17 May, I met Tracey Heyworth, senior policy adviser, creative economy, and two of her colleagues from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). As Sabine Citron, the chair of the SfEP, was not available, Christina Thomas, one of our senior tutors, kindly agreed to accompany me; her contributions were invaluable.

From this exploratory meeting it was evident ('X used to do that; I don't know who does it now') that all ministries were in some turmoil from reorganisation and down-sizing. Skills were an obvious topic to discuss, but responsibility is shared by the DCMS, the Department of Business, and Creative Skillset. None of our interlocutors knew who dealt with standards, but they promised to find out; I also left them with questions for their legal team and the Analysis and Evidence Unit.

They believed hardly any government departments use editors or proofreaders. One had a horror story of a report for Parliament that ignored the style guide and typographical specification and had to be pulped; she really lit up when we explained that this is the sort of thing our members watch for.

Finally I asked if the DCMS would be our sponsoring department, and the answer was 'yes'. This is a requirement for chartership, and an important step on the way. We will meet at regular intervals, and Tracey Heyworth will be at the SfEP conference on the Monday.

A meeting with Creative Skillset on 28 June was cancelled that morning; we are rearranging. So far, it has proved impossible to find someone to talk to in the Department of Business, which has been reorganised yet again. The quest goes on.

Sabine Citron and I will have our first, informal meeting with two clerks in the Privy Council Office in early October, when we hope to clarify some of the requirements for chartership. I shall resist the impulse to suggest that the information on its website needs a copy-editor.

We also need to talk to other organisations in the same broad area of published words – bodies that represent journalists, indexers, translators, writers, editors and publishers – to explain our plans, compare notes and keep them in the picture.

Before Sabine and I get that show on the road, the strategy group will be discussing what we should say and what outcome we expect from these meetings. Some hard thinking is needed.

*Gerard M-F Hill*