

## ***Understanding British Portraits* network: brief for external evaluation 2015/2017**

Date of issue: Tuesday 4 August 2015

### **Summary description of *Understanding British Portraits* network**

*Understanding British Portraits* [UBP] is a network of professionals actively engaged with portraiture. Members are curators, academics, conservators, museum-based learning professionals, and independent scholars.

The *UBP* network was established in 2007 with seed funding from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), and has secured grants from Arts Council England [ACE] and The Foyle Foundation in the succeeding years. It is an ACE-designated Subject Specialist Network (<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-funding/funding-programmes/renaissance/subject-specialist-networks/>). The network is coordinated by a Steering Group comprising representatives from the National Portrait Gallery, National Trust, the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, and Bristol Museum & Art Gallery. A part-time Researcher/Co-ordinator supported by the National Portrait Gallery manages the day-to-day delivery of the network's programmes.

The network aims to enhance the knowledge and understanding of portraits of all media and periods in British collections. By providing seminars, private collection visits, bursaries, and a resource-rich website ([www.britishportraits.org.uk](http://www.britishportraits.org.uk)) aimed at portrait professionals, the network hopes to foster new portrait research, expertise development, and enhanced interpretation and learning programmes. Further details of the remit and extent of the network, and all past and current activities, can be found on the website at the above link.

In spring 2015 the *UBP* network successfully applied for a significant step-up in the scale of funding from ACE for the period 2015-18. It has, among many other activities, enabled the network Steering Group to commission this in-depth external evaluation. New strands of activities starting in 2015, which build on previous network schemes, include a programme of Professional Fellowships, podcasting network seminars, commissioning short-film content for the website, and developing the number and format of network events.

## **Purpose of evaluation**

The *UBP* network will be ten years old in 2017. The Steering Group is seeking to evaluate the effectiveness of the network's modus operandum, the impact and quality of experience of the members, and to identify areas of weakness and potential for development in the future. The principal areas of examination which will form the framework for evaluation are:

- How the network serves and responds to members' professional needs
- The network's seminars, private collection visits and workshops
- The network's website – content and functionality
- Monthly e-newsletter and social media presence
- Professional Fellowships scheme
- Composition and operation of the network Steering Group
- Composition of the network's 1,200+ membership
- Our definition of membership, and whether this should be altered
- Marketing and advocacy means and priorities

## **Evaluation resources and methods**

The evaluation will draw from existing sources of information, as well as new research.

Existing information includes:

- The *UBP* website and site statistics
- Feedback from delegates at all network events
- Feedback from all past Bursary recipients
- Steering Group minutes

New quantitative research will be gathered through interviews with:

- Network members and participants
- Steering Group members

## **Expected outputs**

- A final report will be produced by the consultant and submitted in draft form before being finalised.

## **Evaluator fee and timescale**

The overall fee is £7,600, inclusive of all travel and expenses. It is allocated as follows:

Financial year 2015/16: Evaluator is expected to attend at least one network event, and sit in on one Steering Group meeting. £300 is set aside to cover time and travel expenses, and will be paid by invoice in this financial year.

Financial year 2016/17: as above.

Financial year 2017/18: A detailed methodology of the in-depth evaluation is expected to be submitted to the Steering Group in spring 2017 for final comments and sign-off. The

substantial element of the evaluation will be conducted between spring and winter 2017. A finished draft of the final report to be submitted to the Steering Group by November 2017. Delivery of the final evaluation report prior to Christmas 2017. A fee of £7,000, inclusive of all travel and expenses, will be paid in this financial year.

### **Expressions of interest**

Prospective evaluators are required to provide an outline response to this brief. This should include a proposed methodology demonstrating how the scope of the brief will be met. Respondents should detail the number and use of days which will be committed to the project over the three year period, the members of the team who will be involved, and the proposed contribution of each member. We will be seeking applicants to include in their proposal details of how they will maintain effective engagement between autumn 2015 and the close of 2017. Expressions of interest must be submitted to the network contact (below) by email before 5pm on Wednesday 30 September 2015.

### **Selection process**

The Steering Group will assess responses to this project brief in order to appoint an evaluator. We do not expect to hold interviews.

### **Network contact**

Caroline Pegum, Researcher/Co-ordinator, *Understanding British Portraits*, National Portrait Gallery.

Email: [cpegum@npg.org.uk](mailto:cpegum@npg.org.uk)

Ph: 020 7321 6427

Please get in touch if you have any headline questions at this stage to assist with your response to this brief.