



Dear learner

If you are considering applying for the National Learner Panel (NLP) this year, you will want to know how panel members are selected. As the outgoing NLP chair, I would like to explain the recruitment criteria to you.

The NLP is a reference group. This means that the panel works with the government and policymaking organisations to provide a learner perspective on how to improve emerging policies – and to highlight areas of concern where existing policy is not working well, or could be better. The panel needs members who reflect the full range of learners in further education: full and part-time, adult learners, work-based learners, A Level/NVQ/BTEC students, apprentices, and those on Access courses or Skills for Life courses.

As an individual applicant, you should be:

- **in some form of further education (FE) in England (or in an FE-related sabbatical position) and able to discuss your experience of this**
- **passionate about the contribution learners can make to improve FE**
- **willing to voice your opinion, be tolerant of other opinions and collaborate with other panel members**
- **willing to take part in full panel events, attend occasional subgroups and, as your availability allows, take part in profile-raising or other activities.**

There will be many applicants who will meet these criteria, so to reflect a reasonable range of learning, the following criteria will also be taken into account:

- **types, levels and environments of learning**
- **geographical locations (within England)**
- **age**

The panel members will also be selected ensuring a reasonable diversity with regard to gender and ethnicity. Those with learning difficulties or disabilities will be provided with any necessary support to enable them to carry out their role as a panel member.

Naturally, there will be many excellent applications from learners, and everyone has the potential to make a valuable contribution as an individual – however, there are a maximum of 20 places on the panel and many applicants will therefore not be successful. In the event that you are not offered a place on this year's panel, you will be:

- informed of the outcome of your application
- informed of who the new panel members are and where they are studying
- offered the opportunity to be kept informed of the panel's work during the year
- provided with advice about other ways you can be involved in influencing learning.

Whether you are studying at a college, an adult education centre or learning in the workplace I hope that, regardless of whether you are successful in gaining a place on this particular occasion, you will take up all the opportunities for ways to get involved and let your voice be heard.

Best wishes



Oliver Wood, NLP chair 2008-09