

**EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE (ERC)
VACANCY FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANT (SPECIFIED PURPOSE)**

Background

The Educational Research Centre (ERC) was established as a Statutory Body in accordance with the Education Act (1998) in September 2015, but has been in existence since January 1966, and is located on Dublin City University's (DCU) St Patrick's College Campus in Drumcondra. Research is carried out at the request of the Department of Education and Skills or other agencies (e.g., NCCA or NCSE) and on the initiative of ERC staff. The ERC also provides an assessment service to the education system by, for example, developing and distributing standardised tests for use by schools. Further information, including the ERC's strategic plan (2019-2021), is available on the ERC's website at www.erc.ie.

Job specification

Applications are invited for a research assistant. The position involves working as part of the team overseeing the National Assessment of Mathematics and English Reading (NAMER). Fieldwork for the assessment will take place in Spring 2020. Prior to this, administration and instrument preparation and packing will take place. Fieldwork is followed by checkback of materials, data processing, analysis and reporting. Approximately 270 schools and 14,000 2nd and 6th class pupils (as well as their parents, teachers and school principals) will be selected to take part, with all participants completing context questionnaires, and pupils completing cognitive assessments of mathematics and English reading.

Core duties include:

- Providing administrative support during the preparation, fieldwork, coding and data processing phases under supervision
- Playing a key support role in the analysis and scaling of data, including the application of Item Response Theory scaling models.

The appointment is made on a specified purpose basis (arising from a career break) subject to successful completion of a 6-month probation period. Please note a vacancy arising as a result of a change in staffing will not give rise to a permanent contract.

A panel may be formed from which future similar vacancies may be filled. The panel will remain in place for 12 months from the closing date for applications and may be extended for a further 6 months.

This is a research post for which technical/methodological, administrative, planning and communication skills are required. The successful candidate should have all of the following:

- a postgraduate degree in a relevant discipline (e.g., psychology, statistics, education, assessment, social science)
- understanding of large-scale educational assessment design (for example sampling, weighting, fieldwork administration, data checking and processing)
- experience in scoring and scaling of assessments using both classical test theory (CTT) and item response theory (IRT)
- proven capacity to work both on own initiative and collaboratively

- capacity to communicate effectively and diplomatically with school staff, parents, test administrators
- willingness to travel (possibly occasionally outside Ireland) to attend project meetings and/or support fieldwork activities.

It would be an advantage for candidates to possess one or more of the following:

- experience in administrative aspects of large-scale assessments or surveys
- experience in training or supporting others in procedural or technical aspects of large-scale assessment
- analysis of large-scale/complex datasets
- experience in working with code or macros in one or more statistical software programmes, including IBM SPSS Statistics
- experience in documenting technical aspects of research (e.g. sampling, weighting, test development and scaling, procedural manuals).

Essential personal qualities for this role include commitment, the ability to manage challenging demands and competing priorities, collaborative working style, and an open-minded and flexible approach to problem solving.

Research staff in the Centre are encouraged to identify and work on independent analyses that help to develop its strategic research priorities.

Salary Scale:

The appointment will be made on the Research Assistant scale (**€33,710 – €46,638**) to the Public Sector at a point in line with current Government Pay Policy, with new entrants commencing at the first point of the scale.

Applications must include:

- cover letter that describes how the applicant's skills and experience meet the requirements for the post
- curriculum vitae
- names and contact details of two referees.

CLOSING DATE: 5.00 PM, WEDNESDAY 18 SEPT, 2019.

It is anticipated that interviews will be held within two weeks after the closing date. Shortlisting will apply.

to: vacancies@erc.ie , quoting 'Research Assistant NAMER Post' in the subject heading.

(Emailed applications should generate an automated response – if you do not receive a response shortly after you submit your application contact Patricia Gaffney at 01 8065 219.)

The ERC provides a flexible, dynamic and challenging working environment and is an equal opportunities employer.