

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE (ERC)
VACANCY FOR HEAD OF GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS
(PRINCIPAL OFFICER, PERMANENT)

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. It published its first [Strategic Plan](#) in 2019. It has a dual remit of providing tests and supports for these tests to schools, and conducting educational research and evaluation studies. Since summer 2020, the ERC comes under the remit of the 2003 Official Languages Act. Its programme of work can be divided into seven strands (with more information available at www.erc.ie):

1. Oversight, delivery and national reporting of large-scale international assessments
2. Management, oversight and reporting of large-scale national assessments
3. Contributing to policy on, and evaluation relating to, educational disadvantage
4. Test development, standardisation and support (in both paper and online formats)
5. Programme evaluation
6. Data analytic support
7. Independently-initiated research.

The main ERC building is located on the grounds of DCU's St Patrick's College Campus in Drumcondra and its Test Department is nearby on Richmond Road, Drumcondra. The ERC employs about 40 staff who work together in small collaborative teams. The work is supported by an administrative team and the ERC's Senior Management Team, which is comprised of the CEO, senior researchers, senior administrator and IT manager. The ERC engages with various sections of the Department of Education and other agencies in its research projects, and participates in a range of advisory and steering committees, both national and international.

Job Specification

The ERC now wishes to recruit a Head of Governance and Corporate Affairs (on a salary scale equivalent to that of Principal Officer, PO, in the civil service). This is a **new** senior management role whose function is the management and oversight of corporate governance functions generally. The PO will report to, and work closely with, the CEO on a range of governance and corporate affairs matters. The postholder will support the CEO to deliver change and achieve strategic objectives, and to help ensure full compliance with relevant legislation. This senior leadership position is an exciting and challenging role for an experienced manager who can demonstrate an excellent working knowledge of relevant areas of financial management, governance, risk management and public administration, along with a proven track record in the management and delivery of corporate services, governance and related compliance functions.

The postholder will supervise the work of corporate affairs (administrative) and technical staff (see ERC's Organisation Chart on the **last page** of this Candidate Information Booklet). S/he will

oversee corporate projects and provide leadership and strategic direction on elements of the ERC's IT and business functions. The postholder will play an important role as a member of the Senior Management Team and will also be required to support the organisation's reporting to its Governing Board and Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) and the Department of Education.

In the first 6-12 months in the role, some priorities for the postholder will include:

- enhancing and developing the ERC's strategic risk management policies and processes;
- enhancing and developing the ERC's data protection and data governance policies and processes;
- supporting the establishment of a long-term services/lease agreement with DCU;
- providing leadership support in the development of ERC's first IT Strategy; and
- supporting the development of a Strategic Workforce Plan (2022-2024).

It is also expected that the postholder will develop and oversee ERC's Corporate Strategy and contribute to the development of ERC's second Strategic Plan (2022-2024).

Duties and Responsibilities

- Leadership and management of corporate affairs and technical and professional support staff
- Oversight and monitoring of compliance functions (as related to, for example, the Education Act 1998, the Official Languages Act 2003, the 2016 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, and the GDPR)
- Development and oversight of ERC's Corporate Strategy
- Supporting the CEO in reporting to the Governing Board and ARC as required
- Acting as the ERC's Chief Risk Officer
- Acting as the ERC's Data Protection Officer
- Member of the ERC's Senior Management Team
- Assisting the CEO in developing and managing a services/lease agreement with DCU
- Management of procurement relating to corporate projects
- Management of the implementation of corporate projects
- Central oversight of ERC's legal matters
- Oversight, review and strategic support for ERC's financial management and accounting systems
- Strategic input into HR, project management and information/data governance functions
- Strategic oversight of corporate communications
- Strategic oversight and management of Test Department
- Any other task as may be identified and assigned in line with the overall role.

Note

This job specification is intended as a basic guide to the scope and responsibilities of the position. It is subject to ongoing review and will evolve in line with the constantly evolving practices and functions of the ERC. A high level of flexibility is expected.

Competencies

In carrying out the above duties, the candidate is expected to perform to a high standard across all five areas of the [Civil Service Competency Model at Principal Officer level](#), i.e.

- Leadership and Strategic Direction
- Judgement and Decision-Making
- Management and Delivery of Results
- Building Relationships and Communication
- Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self-Development.

Citizenship Requirements

Candidates must fall under one (or more) of the five criteria below at the date of submitting their application:

- A citizen of the European Economic Area. The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; or
- A citizen of Switzerland pursuant to the agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the free movement of persons; or
- A non-EEA citizen who is a spouse or child of an EEA or Swiss citizen and has a stamp 4; or
- A person awarded international protection under the International Protection Act 2015 or any family member entitled to remain in the State as a result of family reunification and has a stamp 4; or
- A non-EEA citizen who is a parent of a dependent child who is a citizen of, and resident in, an EEA member state or Switzerland and has a stamp 4.

Essential Person Requirements

The ERC welcomes applications from both the public and private sectors.

The successful candidate must meet **all** of the following requirements at the date of submitting their application:

- Completed a qualification at Level 8 (honours Bachelor degree or higher diploma) on the [National Framework of Qualifications](#) (NFQ)
- Demonstrated, sustained and proven leadership experience at a senior level (Assistant Principal, or preferably Principal Officer, or other similar senior management role/grade in the public or private sector)
- Communication, interpersonal and relationship management skills evidenced by significant experience working with a range of internal and external stakeholders
- Proven experience in adapting to quickly changing circumstances and finding innovative solutions in complex environments
- Experience working in a management position in a data-rich environment
- Previous, hands-on experience working across a range of functions, as appropriate to a small or medium sized public sector agency
- Significant experience leading/managing Finance/Budget
- Experience in leading/managing Risk

- Experience in leading/managing at least **two** of:
 - Data/information governance
 - Complex IT systems/projects
 - Procurement
 - Human Resources.

Essential personal skills for this role include excellent written and oral communication skills, high attention to detail, drive and commitment, capacity to manage challenging demands and competing priorities, collaborative working style, and an open-minded and flexible approach to problem solving.

Desirable Experience, Skills and Characteristics

It would be a significant advantage to have one or more of the following:

- Proven experience in managing complex change and transition processes
- Good working knowledge of the Irish language
- Good working knowledge of public/civil service pension administration
- Experience working in a management role in a public sector organisation
- Experience working in a management role in the education sector
- Completed a qualification at Level 9 (Master's degree or post-graduate diploma) or higher on the [National Framework of Qualifications](#) (NFQ).

The successful candidate will be encouraged to participate in training and upskilling to maintain and enhance levels of knowledge and expertise.

The appointment is made on a permanent basis, subject to successful completion of a 12-month probation period.

A panel may be formed from which future similar vacancies may be filled. The panel will remain in place for 12 months.

Salary Scale

The appointment will be made on the Principal Officer scale in the civil service (€89,072-€109,547 (Personal Pension Contribution (PPC) Scale), as at October 2020) at a point in line with current Government Pay Policy, with new entrants commencing at the first point of the scale. Different terms and conditions may apply if, immediately before appointment, the successful candidate is a currently serving civil/public servant.

Pension

The successful candidate will be offered the appropriate superannuation terms and conditions as prevailing in the ERC at the time of being offered an appointment. In general, and except for candidates who have worked in a pensionable (non-single scheme terms) public service job in the 26 weeks prior to appointment, this means membership of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme ("Single Scheme"). However, in the latter scenario, some exceptions may apply.

Place of Attendance

The appointee for this role will be based in the ERC's current Head Office, in Drumcondra, Dublin. When absent from home and place of employment on official duty, the appointee will be paid appropriate travelling expenses and subsistence allowances, subject to normal civil service/public sector regulations. At present and in line with public health guidance and the ERC's COVID 19 response plan, ERC is operating a remote working policy with limited, essential on-site work.

Tenure

In the event of appointment to a permanent position with the ERC the appointee must serve a probationary period, which normally will last for 12 months. If at any time during this period it appears that the appointee would not be suitable for final appointment the employment will be terminated.

Hours of attendance

Hours of attendance will amount to not less than 37 hours net per week. The appointee will be required to work such additional hours from time to time as may be reasonable and necessary for the proper performance of his/her duties subject to the limits set down in the working time regulations.

How to Apply

Only applications submitted electronically will be accepted. Applications will not be accepted after the closing date and time.

THE CLOSING TIME AND DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS: 5.00pm (Irish time), WEDNESDAY 19 MAY 2021.

Applications must include:

- 1: A short cover letter (250 words max) explaining why you are applying for this position.
- 2: A completed copy of the Principal Officer Application Form (please pay attention to the word count limits).
- 3: An up-to-date CV of no more than **four pages** in length which includes
 - an organisational chart, schematic representation or description of your current or most recent employment organisation and your role within it
 - the names and contact details (phone number and email) of two referees.

All documents must be submitted in Word or PDF format.

Files sent by email as links to documents in shared cloud-based servers will not be accepted for security reasons.

Completed applications should be submitted to: POVacancy@erc.ie, quoting 'Principal Officer Post' in the subject heading.

If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your application to POVacancy@erc.ie within 24 hours of applying, please contact our HR Officer, Marie Jones, at marie.jones@erc.ie.

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 1997 as amended, applications will be treated in strict confidence.

Communications

Campaign updates will be issued to the email address supplied with your application. The onus is on each applicant to ensure that they are in receipt of all communication from the ERC. Candidates are advised to check emails on a regular basis throughout the duration of the competition. In addition, candidates should check junk/spam folders should any emails be mistakenly filtered. The ERC accepts no responsibility for communication not accessed or received by a candidate.

Selection Process

The selection may include shortlisting of candidates on the basis of the information contained in their application. An expert Interview Board will examine the applications against pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position. The selection process may include one or more of the following:

- Shortlisting on the basis of cover letter, application form and CV
- Interview(s)
- Presentation or any other tests or exercises that may be deemed appropriate
- Language/communication test (oral and/or written).

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview(s) to be scheduled between two and four weeks after the closing date for applications, or as close as possible to this timeline. Shortlisted candidates will be provided with further information and guidelines on the selection process at least one week in advance of interview to facilitate preparation.

Notification of interview date and time will issue to the candidates at the email address provided in their applications. Candidates should make themselves available on the date(s) specified by the ERC and should make sure that the contact details specified on their application are correct.

Candidates who do not attend for interview or any other element of the selection process when and where required by the ERC, or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as the ERC requires in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.

The ERC reserves the right to conduct interviews either remotely online or face-to-face as circumstances require, and also to require candidates to attend a second interview and/or complete further assessments or tests as it deems appropriate and necessary following the first interview.

The preferred candidate will be offered the position subject to satisfactory reference checks. Referees will **not** be contacted without the candidate's prior agreement.

Panel

Arising out of this competition, the ERC may create a panel from which future similar vacancies may be filled. Where a panel is created, the ERC reserves the right to decide that only a certain number will be placed on that panel. Qualification and placement on a panel is not a guarantee of appointment to a position.

Candidates not appointed at the expiry of the panel (12 months following its creation in this instance) will have no claim to a position thereafter because of having been on the panel.

Once an offer of appointment has been accepted or declined by a candidate, the candidate will no longer remain on the panel and the ERC may select another person for appointment on the results of the selection process. More detailed information will be provided to successful candidates.

Other Important Information

The ERC will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates. The admission of a person to a competition, or invitation to attend interview, or a successful result notification, is not to be taken as implying that the ERC is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements or is not disqualified by law from holding the position and does not carry a guarantee that your application will receive further consideration.

It is important, therefore, for applicants to note that the onus is on them to ensure that they meet the eligibility requirements for the competition before attending for interview. If essential entry requirements are not met but applicants nevertheless attend for interview they could be put to unnecessary expense.

Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to this position, the ERC will make all such enquiries that are deemed necessary to determine the suitability of that candidate. Until all stages of the recruitment process have been fully completed, a final determination cannot be made, nor can it be deemed or inferred that such a determination has been made. Should the person recommended for appointment decline, or having accepted it, relinquish it or if an additional vacancy arises, the Interview Board may, at its discretion, select and recommend another person for appointment on the results of this selection process.

The above represents the principal conditions of service and is not intended to be the comprehensive list of all terms and conditions of employment, which will be set out in the employment contract to be agreed with the successful candidate.

Data Protection Acts, 1988 and 2003; GDPR 2018

When a candidate's application form is received, the ERC will create a record in the candidate's name, which contains much of the personal information supplied. This personal record is used solely in processing the candidature and should the candidate be successful certain information provided will be retained going forward. Such information held is subject to the rights and obligations set out in the Data Protection Acts, 1988 & 2003 and in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), 2018.

To make a request under the Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003/GDPR 2018, please submit your request in writing to the Data Protection Officer at Data.Protection@erc.ie. Ensure that you describe the records you seek in the greatest possible detail to enable us to identify the relevant record.

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

ERC Organisational Chart
April 2021

