

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE (ERC)
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE WITH FLUENT (SPOKEN AND WRITTEN) IRISH (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 current strategic plan in April 2022. It has a dual remit of providing tests and supports for these tests to schools, and conducting educational research and evaluation studies. 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, Head of Governance and Corporate Services, senior researchers (Research Fellows), senior administrators 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 Centre now wishes to recruit a Research Associate to work on Test Development. The successful candidate will report to a Research Fellow. Further information on the Centre's programme of work is available at www.erc.ie.

Arising out of this competition, the ERC may create a panel or panels from which future similar vacancies related to large scale assessment, evaluation studies and/or test development. Panels will cover permanent, fixed term and specified purpose posts. All posts are subject to the completion of a probation period.

Key elements of the role include:

- Overseeing various phases of test development study implementation (development, piloting, sampling, fieldwork, data processing, scoring and scaling, analysis and reporting).

- Liaising with schools, parents, subject specialists and other stakeholders during various phases of the study.
- Engaging in analysis and writing of a range of materials including, for example, administrative/instructional fieldwork manuals and reports/papers on study results.
- Preparing or adapting instruments (e.g., tests, questionnaires) to be used in projects.
- Attending and contributing to internal and external project meetings.
- Co-ordinating and monitoring general administrative work in relation to assigned project(s).
- Overseeing, mentoring and supporting the work of research assistants and temporary/casual staff.
- Monitoring and reviewing project budget and project risk effectively.
- Liaising effectively with the administrative team and senior management as required.
- Assisting with general administrative work related to projects.
- Assisting in the management of databases.
- Conducting literature searches and reviews.
- Conducting data processing and data coding activities.
- Conducting statistical analysis (e.g., using SPSS).
- Providing support to other Centre projects as needed (e.g., by translating materials into Irish or reviewing translations).
- Undertaking any other duties as may be assigned from time to time.

In carrying the above duties, the candidates will be able to demonstrate that they can:

- Consider the effectiveness of outcomes in terms wider than their own immediate area, and in line with the organisation's priorities and strategy.
- Understand complex issues quickly, accurately absorbing and evaluating data.
- Integrate diverse strands of information, identifying inter-relationships and interdependencies.
- Make effective use of project management skills and techniques to deliver outcomes, including identifying risks and mitigating actions.
- Use judgement to make clear, timely and well-grounded decisions on important issues.
- Plan ahead, reassess workload and prioritise work in terms of importance, timescales and other resource constraints, re-prioritising in light of changing circumstances.
- Ensure that quality and accuracy is central to the work.
- Look critically at issues to see how things can be done better.
- Present information in a clear, logical and convincing manner, verbally and in writing.
- Encourage open and constructive discussions around work issues, and share experiences to develop more effective working methods.
- Manage staff effectively, through clear and open communication, effective performance management and the provision of coaching and support.
- Manage the security and confidentiality of data and organisational information.

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

Note

This job specification is intended as a basic guide to the scope and responsibilities of the position. It may vary depending on which project(s) the post holder is assigned to. 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.

Requirements

Citizenship Requirements

Candidates must fall under one (or more) of the 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 the UK under the protection of the Common Travel Area
- A citizen of Ukraine who has received a letter confirming they have been granted Temporary Protection under the EU Directive.
- 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

Applicants should meet all of the below at the time of submitting their application (responses to these requirements will be assessed at shortlisting and/or interview phase):

- A degree in Irish, education, psychology or a related discipline (e.g., translation, statistics, data analytics, social science).
- Strong proficiency (CEFR/TEG Level C2) in spoken and written Irish.
- Knowledge of the Irish education system and educational research in Ireland and internationally.
- Knowledge of the development and/or use of standardised tests (e.g., for Irish, English, or mathematics).
- Strong IT skills (particularly: a good working knowledge of MS Office and experience working with spreadsheet/database and statistical software) and ability to learn to use novel/customised software quickly.
- Experience in the administration or project management of large-scale projects, preferably in education.
- Excellent planning, organisational and oral and written communication skills, including an ability to communicate effectively and diplomatically with a range of stakeholders in both Irish and English.
- Ability to work both on own initiative and work as part of a team.

- A focused, flexible and collaborative approach to meeting project deadlines and capacity to respond to competing priorities.
- Evidence of excellent writing ability, both formal and informal
- Evidence of strong personal effectiveness, flexibility and problem-solving
- Proven strong planning and organisational skills.
- High attention to detail.

Essential personal skills for this role include high attention to detail, drive and commitment, capacity to respond to competing priorities, collaborative working style, and an open-minded and flexible approach to problem solving.

Desirable Experience, Skills and Characteristics (*responses will be assessed at shortlisting and/or interview phase*):

It would be a significant advantage for candidates to have one or more of the following (at the time of submitting their application):

- A post-graduate degree to Masters or PhD level in Irish, education, psychology or a related discipline (e.g., translation, statistics, data analytics, social science).
- Experience of designing child-friendly materials (for example, information leaflets, activity sheets).
- Experience in test/questionnaire development and design.
- Demonstrated ability or experience in analysis and written reporting of data.
- Demonstrated ability/experience in managing research study teams.
- Experience in using and managing database applications (such as Microsoft Access).
- Good understanding of key concepts and principles of survey sampling and weighting.
- Experience in statistical analysis skills (i.e. using SPSS or similar software) and/or knowledge of psychometrics (e.g. classical test theory, item response theory).
- Willingness to undertake occasional national (regional) and/or international travel to attend project meetings.
- Current full clean driver's licence.
- Access to a car for occasional work-related travel.

Following recruitment, a panel of successful candidates will be created. Appointments for posts with similar requirements will be made on a permanent, fixed term or specified purpose basis depending on vacancies arising. The panel will remain in place for 12 months from the date of its creation and may be renewed once for a further 6 months.

Terms of employment

Salary Scale

The appointment will be made on the Research Associate Scale of the ERC (€52,166 - €76,219 (Personal Pension Contribution (PPC) Scale), as at October 2022 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 main building, in Drumcondra, Dublin. The ERC is in the process of implementing a Blended Work Policy which allows some remote working options for staff members. The options to work remotely will rely on the submission of an application by the candidates and will depend on the requirement of the relevant project. 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.

Tenure

In the event of appointment to a permanent, fixed term or specified purpose position with the ERC the appointee must serve a probationary period, which normally will last for 6 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 35 hours net per week. The appointee may be required to work such additional hours from time to time as may be reasonable and necessary for the proper performance of their 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: 1.00pm (Irish time), Monday January 23rd 2023.

Applications must be submitted in the Irish Language but candidates are also encouraged to send a copy in the English Language.

Applications must include:

- 1: A cover letter of **no more than 2 pages** (minimum size text 11) explaining why you are applying for this position and how your experience aligns with the **Essential Person Requirements** and, as applicable, the **Desirable Experience, Skills and Characteristics** for this position.
- 2: An up-to-date CV of **no more than four pages** in length which includes the names and contact details (phone number and email) of **two referees**. (Referees will **not** be contacted without the candidate's prior agreement.)

Research positions may require visits to schools and successful candidates will be required to undergo Garda Vetting for the delivery of such roles. Any offer to a successful candidate is subject to that candidate achieving full and clean Garda Vetting and the ERC reserves the right to withdraw any offer of employment or terminate any contract of employment should a successful candidate fail to achieve full and clean Garda Vetting. Successful candidates should be aware that, and as will be provided in the contract of employment, the ERC may terminate the contract of employment for such role should that person fail to provide full and clean Garda Vetting at any time during appointment.

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: vacancies@erc.ie, quoting 'Research Associate Test Development' Post' in the subject heading.

If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your application to vacancies@erc.ie within 24 hours of applying, please contact our HR Officer, Hertz O'Flynn, at hertz.oflynn@erc.ie. Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 1997 as amended, applications will be treated in strict confidence.

Other information

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, and CV
- Interview(s)
- Presentation or any other tests or exercises that may be deemed appropriate
- Language/communication test (oral and/or written).

Where Irish is a requirement for a position, shortlisted candidates may be invited to complete a separate assessment (written and/or oral) in Irish, in addition to interview.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview(s) which will be scheduled after the closing date for applications. 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 be issued 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 or panels 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 a panel (12 months following its creation in this instance with the possibility of extension for a further six months) will have no claim to a position thereafter because of having been on the panel.

Once an offer of a specified purpose or fixed term appointment has been declined, the candidate may remain on the panel until the expiry of the panel for permanent positions only (that is, the candidate will not be offered any specified purpose or fixed term position).

Once an offer of a specified purpose or fixed term appointment has been accepted, the candidate may remain on the panel until the expiry of the panel for any other specified purpose or fixed term appointment which becomes available.

Once an offer of appointment to a permanent position has been accepted or declined by a candidate, the candidate will no longer remain on the panel in question 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 is committed to attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining the highest calibre of staff to build a diversified, supportive, innovative and inclusive workforce.

The ERC provides a flexible, dynamic and challenging working environment, supports equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion and encourages underrepresented groups to make applications.

Candidates requiring reasonable accommodation with the application or interview process can contact the ERC as follows (being mindful of the deadline for application):

- ✓ Email hr@erc.ie (please reference the post you are applying for)
- ✓ Call 01 837 37 89 and request to speak to Hertz O'Flynn

- ✓ Write to: HR Dept., ERC, DCU St Patrick's College Campus, Drumcondra, Dublin 9, D09 AN2F

Candidates who wish to avail of reasonable accommodations may be asked to submit a report from a medical professional to help determine suitable accommodations.