

Appointment of science expert(s) to the PISA National Advisory Committee (until the end of 2025) and the TIMSS National Advisory Committee (until the end of 2024)

The Educational Research Centre is looking to appoint science experts to the PISA National Advisory Committee (3 years, until the end of 2025) and the TIMSS National Advisory Committee (2 years, until the end of 2024). These are unpaid positions.

PISA

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a collaborative project of the member states of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Its purpose is to address the question of how well young people are equipped for future participation in society, in the labour force, as citizens, and as individuals through an assessment of some key skills. PISA assesses the reading, mathematics and science achievement of 15-year-olds in over 90 economies across the world. The study takes place every three years and in each cycle one domain becomes the main focus of the assessment while the other two are assessed as minor domains. In 2022, mathematics is the main focus of the study while science will be assessed as the main domain in PISA 2025.

Ireland has participated in PISA since its first cycle in 2000. As of 2015, PISA has been delivered as a computer-based assessment.

TIMSS

TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) is a study of the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) that measures the mathematics and science achievement of students in grade 4 (Fourth Class in Ireland) and grade 8 (Second Year). TIMSS began in 1995 and takes place every four years. To date, Ireland has taken part in four cycles of TIMSS: at both primary and post-primary level in 1995, 2015 and 2019; and at primary level only in 2011. Ireland will take part at both grade 4 and grade 8 in TIMSS 2023, when the administration of TIMSS will transition to a computer-based assessment.

In Ireland, PISA and TIMSS are jointly administered by the Department of Education and the Educational Research Centre. The Department of Education appoints a National Advisory Committee for each study to assist with planning for the assessments, and the interpretation of survey outcomes. The duties of members of the committees include:

- To attend meetings of the National Advisory Committee (usually two per year for each study; where possible, meetings for the PISA and TIMSS committees are scheduled for the same day).
- Advise and provide observations to the Department of Education and the ERC on general issues concerning the national administration of PISA or TIMSS, as relevant.
- Provide observations on the future directions of the PISA or TIMSS (as relevant), including providing comments on drafts of framework documents.
- Comment on drafts of test items and how they relate to national curricula.
- Comment on draft national and international questionnaires that may be administered to teachers, principals, parents and students.
- Review the outcomes of the relevant study, comment on draft national reports, and advise on recommendations. In particular, provide advice on policy implications of the outcomes of

the relevant assessment and how those outcomes could be effectively communicated to schools, teachers, parents, students and the education system generally.

The Terms of Reference for the PISA National Advisory Committee are available [here](#) and for the TIMSS National Advisory Committee are available [here](#).

Candidate requirements

The new appointees should have a background in a science domain, preferable in the area of life sciences (biology), and should have a strong interest in and experience of science education at post-primary level in Ireland and internationally.

The applicant should have a strong publications record in the areas of science and education (e.g., academic journal articles; book chapters; research reports/monographs). Experience in the assessment of science is desirable.

The Educational Research Centre pays all reasonable expenses in respect of the attendance of members at meetings of the National Advisory Committee. Moreover, membership of the committee provides opportunities for generating published work arising from this high profile international study. Although members do not receive payment in respect of time spent on committee-related activities, opportunities for some paid consultancy work may arise from time to time.

How to Apply

Interested candidates should send an up-to-date copy of their CV and a cover letter of no more than 2 pages (minimum size text 11) explaining why they are interesting in joining the TIMSS and/or PISA committee(s) and how their experience aligns with the requirements outlined above. Candidates should indicate which committee they are interested in joining (i.e., TIMSS, PISA or both).

All documents must be submitted in Word or PDF format and sent to vacancies@erc.ie quoting 'PISA/TIMSS NAC science expert application' in the subject heading. by **5.00pm (Irish time) on Wednesday 25th January**.

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

If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your application to vacancies@erc.ie within 24 hours of applying, please contact rachel.perkins@erc.ie.

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

Appointments to each committee will be carried out through a paper review of applications by a selection committee. Where two candidates of similar profiles, experience and skills score identically, interviews with both candidates may be carried out. The Terms of Reference for the recruitment of unpaid members of ERC advisory committees is available [here](#).