

Educational Research Centre
MEETING OF THE BOARD
3pm, 28th APRIL 2025
ONLINE

A meeting of the Board of the Educational Research Centre (ERC) was held online on 28th April 2025.

Board Members Present:

Dr. Eilish Broderick (EB), chaired this meeting (exceptionally on this occasion), Paula Fyans (PF), and Orla Barry (OB).

In Attendance:

John Regan (JR), Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Damian Downes (DD), Principal Officer (PO) and Secretary, who took the minutes.

Also in attendance, as observer, was Dr Eugene Wall (EW), ERC Chair Designate.

Absent:

With apologies, Dr. Sharon Feeney (SF), Deputy Chairperson, attempted to join the meeting but was unable to do so due to a technical issue.

Others Present: n/a

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3 pm. Board members were reminded of the need for confidentiality of board matters.

The agenda was adopted (Appendix 1).

The Chair welcomed the Chair Designate and invited him to introduce himself. EW gave a brief background to his career including his early career experience in test development at Mary Immaculate College. While this experience will be beneficial to his chairmanship of the ERC, he acknowledged an apparent conflict of interest which he had already drawn to the attention to Department of Education and the interview panel in advance of his appointment. He addressed the conflict of interest with the Board and said he was happy to answer any questions from the members or staff on the matter. EW stated that, as Chair, he would always put the interests of the ERC first as he had done on previous boards he served on.

1. Minutes of meeting of 26 February 2025

The minutes of the 26 February meeting were approved without changes and there are no redactions.

2. Conflict of Interest and Register

There were no conflicts of interest noted.

3. Matters arising from previous minutes

There were no matters arising.

4. Report on development since previous meeting

The CEO presented his report in a new format, designed to bring together the key points regarding strategic and annual workplan progress and to highlight the major risks facing the Centre.

Progress on the procurement for the ICT managed services was reported. An update will be provided at the June meeting. Work is underway on the procurement of the DOTS 3.0 software. This is a complex procurement process and will require considerable time for the new contractor to develop the latest software to our needs.

The ERC has been accredited with an Investors in Diversity Bronze award.

The annual audit is progressing with the field work completed. It is expected that the audit certificate will be awarded before the end of June.

The CEO addressed the matter of the PDA and Oversight Agreement, which are progressing with the Department. The format of the PDA is a matter for the Department and the ERC completes the template each year. There are ongoing discussions with the CPU regarding work plans, which form the basis of the PDA.

The draft Risk Register was circulated to show progress is being made. The register will continue to be developed and will be reviewed by the ARC. The focus of the Board will be on the top risks as identified in the CEO's report.

5. Finance

Shared documents:

Budget 2026 document (B-2-25-2), was circulated for approval and was discussed by the Board. DD explained that, at the request of the CPU, the budget is being submitted two months earlier than usual. The budget allocation is usually made in December or January. Management will then re-work the budget to reflect the actual grant figure and re-present the revised budget to the Board at its February 2026 meeting. The budget was approved without change.

6. Risk Management

Shared documents:

The draft Risk Register (B-2-25-3) was circulated for information. This is a work-in-progress and will continue to be developed over the next number of months. Management will explore Risk Register software before the end of the year. The new Board meeting software, Board X, has a risk module and this, and other, solutions will be looked at.

7. Test Department briefing

Shared documents:

A memo on the proposed move of the Test Department was circulated for approval (B-2-25-4). The memo makes the case for a move to a more suitable premises and sets out the criteria which management will consider in sourcing those premises. JR assured the members that the ERC will continue to require a premises for test sales in ten years despite the move towards greater digitisation.

8. AOB

The next meeting of the Board is an in-person meeting at the ERC offices on 26th June at 3pm. At this meeting, the ERC ICT Manager will be on hand to distribute iPads to members and assist with any technical questions.

Eugene Wall
Eugene Wall (Jul 9, 2025 15:57 GMT+1)

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE
Board Meeting Agenda
28 April 2025
Online, 3.00 pm

1. Minutes of meeting of 26 February 2025 (BMin – 022025)
2. Conflict of Interest
3. Matters arising from previous minutes
4. Report on developments since previous meeting
Shared documents:
Update document circulated by CEO (B 2-25-1 A & B – for information)
5. Finance
Shared documents:
Budget 2026 request (B-2-25-2 - for approval)
6. Risk Management
Shared documents:
Draft Risk Register (B-2-25-3 - for information)
7. Test Department briefing
Shared documents:
Test Department Relocation Proposal (B-2-25-4A & B - for decision)
8. Test Development Briefing