

Educational Research Centre
MEETING OF THE BOARD
3.30pm, 25th JUNE 2024
Online

A meeting of the Board of the Educational Research Centre (ERC) was online 25th June 2024.

Board Members Present:

Mr. Edward Murtagh (EM), Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Prof. Michael Martin (MM), Dr. Eilish Broderick (EB) and Paula Fyans (PF).

In Attendance:

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

Absent: Dr. Sharon Feeney (SF)

Others Present: N/A

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3.30 pm. Board members were reminded of the need for confidentiality of board matters.

The agenda was adopted (Appendix 1).

1. Minutes of meeting of 7 May 2024

The minutes as circulated were approved. No redactions required.

2. Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest declared either before or during the course of the meeting.

3. Matters arising from previous minutes

There were no matters arising.

4. Report on developments since previous meeting

JR highlighted some items from the CEO report relating to test sales, recruitment and research reports. JR noted that recent recruitment efforts had eased pressures in a number of areas.

5. Governance and Internal Matters

• **Board Recruitment**

The Board noted that this was MM's final meeting. The Chairperson thanked him for his service to the ERC and his contributions over many years.

• **Workforce Plan**

A letter from the Chairperson to the DoE supporting the findings of the RA Consulting Report and a return letter from the DoE were circulated.

- **ARC membership**

A vacancy will arise due to Mick's retirement which will be addressed in Q3.

- **Test Dept update**

Test Sales – the sale of test for 2023/24 rose by 0.5%.

Test Sale price – the price increase of 24% from September was confirmed to DoE

- **DCU Lease/Building Plans**

There is still no update on the signing of the lease. DD had a phone call with DCU and there appears to be some title issues to be resolved but these are not expected to delay the signing. It was agreed that solicitors for both sides will progress the draft lease.

An architect is working with management to progress plans for the building. We now have detailed, scaled drawings which will help in discussions on how the building will be used into the future.

Plans for Richmond Road will be presented to the Board later this year when we expect to have a plan in place for the Test Department.

- **Sale of Artworks**

The bank accounts to receive the proceeds of the artwork sales has been opened. The Board will decide at its October meeting how this money will be spent.

- **Wellbeing update**

A staff wellbeing committee has now been established. A survey was carried out. The first workshop on diversity and inclusion took place on 20th June focussing on improving the lives of LGBTQ+. Future workshops will focus on more general diversity and inclusion, supporting neurodiversity in the workplace and resilience training.

- **CPU Governance Meeting**

The meeting took place on 24th June and the following items were discussed:

- Sanctions for posts arising from the Workforce Plan – ERC stressed the importance of moving quickly on the approved posts.
- Test Sale price – the price increase of 24% from September was confirmed to DoE

- **Strategy 2025**

JR gave a verbal update from June 17th strategy session with the DoE.

- **Irish Language Scheme**

A draft Irish Language Scheme was circulated for comment. The Board will be asked to approve this at a later date.

- **Climate Action Roadmap**

The CAP was circulated and approved by the Board.

- **Annual Report**

JR gave a verbal update on the status of the Annual Report. This will be finalized at the October meeting.

6. Finance

The Board discussed the following items:

- **Financial Statements 2023**

The final version of the Financial Statements was approved. DD gave a verbal update on the progress of the audit. The post audit discussion points with the auditors few in number and nothing overly concerning. The C&AG will forward on the management letter in due course and will attend the Board meeting later in the year.

- **Budget 2025**

The budget was circulated for information. It includes the agreed posts being recruited for in 2024 and the remaining 6 posts identified in the RA Consulting report for 2025.

- **Minister's report**

The Minister's Report was circulated and approved.

7. Risk Management and Internal Audits (Recurring item)

- **Report on Board and ARC Effectiveness Review**

The report was issued to management who are working on draft responses. This will be circulated at September meeting.

- **Report on the Irish Language Audit**

The report, with management responses, was circulated and approved by the ARC.

- **Project Risk status** – circulated for information.

- **Risk Management** – DD updated the ARC with plans to develop the Corporate Risk Register which he plans to work on over the summer. It is hoped to have a draft for the September meeting.

- **Cyber Training**

It was agreed that the ERC would offer cyber training to staff annually.

8. Policies

- **Guidelines for Publications**

The guidelines are close to completion and will be circulated to the Board for information at the next meeting.

- **HEO Governance**

Recruitment will begin after the summer for the post of HEO Governance. Responsibility for policy development and review will fall, in the first instance,

to this person. It is hoped to maintain a comprehensive Policy Tracker for all policies and identify new policies.

- **Remote Working Policy**

This policy is due for review and work is expected to take place over the summer.

9. Staffing & HR

- **Irish Language recruitment**

Management are working on a plan to recruit researcher with fluency in Irish. This is a challenge given the demands for Irish speakers across the public sector and this remains a high risk for the ERC.

- **Recruitment update**

All post sanctioned in Dec 2023/January 2024 have now been appointed except for the Head of Research and Research Associate with Irish.

- **Research Associates**

We will start a recruitment campaign in September and we have made contact with various organisation seeking help with finding relevant candidates.

- **HEO HR**

We are starting to recruit for the post of HEO HR recruitment. A booklet issued to Public jobs today. With the growth in the workforce, this is an important post to fill.

- **PO Head of Research**

We have started speaking to a consultant to help us with this recruitment process and expect the advertising to go out after the holiday season. Awaiting quotes.

10. Strategy Formation

The CEO outlined the process for the development of the strategy. Management to lead on consultations with the DoE and other bodies. A draft will issue to the Board in advance of a separate meeting late in September to discuss strategy. The strategy will be approved by the Board at its December meeting and submitted to the Department.

11. AOB

- Board meeting dates for 2025 to be agreed at the October meeting.
- DD to liaise with Mick on his plans to return to Ireland over the summer with a view to agreeing a date for a dinner to mark his retirement.


Edward Murtagh (Dec 29, 2024 22:47 GMT)

Appendix 1

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE

Board Meeting Agenda

3.30pm, 24 June 2024

ONLINE

1. Minutes of meeting of 7 May 2024 (BMin – 052024)

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-3-24-1 – for discussion)*

5. Governance and Internal Matters

Shared documents:

- ✓ Board letter to the DoE Re workforce plan and response from DoE (**B-3-24-2A / 2B – for information**)
- ✓ Irish Language Scheme DRAFT (**B-3-24-3 – for comments**)
- ✓ Climate action Roadmap (**B-3-24-4 – for comments**)

6. Finance

Shared documents:

- ✓ Final version of the FS (**B-3-24-5 - for approval**) – and update from the audit
- ✓ Budget 2025 (**B-3-24-6 - for approval**)
- ✓ Minister's report (**B-3-24-7 - for approval**)

7. Risk Management and Internal Audits (Recurring item)

8. Policies

9. Staffing & HR

10. Strategy Formation

11. AOB

BM 062024 - Updated - Final

Final Audit Report

2024-12-20

Created:	2024-12-20
By:	Anne Comey (anne.comey@erc.ie)
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Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAV8-Y-bAhQfPvkyyQwTAkhD72nIFI9Eut

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