

Educational Research Centre
MEETING OF THE BOARD
3.30pm, 10th SEPTEMBER 2024
Online

A meeting of the Board of the Educational Research Centre (ERC) was online 10th June 2024.

Board Members Present:

Mr. Edward Murtagh (EM), Chairperson, Dr. Sharon Feeney (SF), Deputy Chairperson, Dr. Eilish Broderick (EB), 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.

Absent: n/a

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).

The Chair welcomed Orla Barry onto the Board.

1. Minutes of meeting of 25 June 2024

The minutes of the meeting as circulated were approved subject to one amendment noting the need for annual cyber training.

2. Conflict of Interest

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

3. Matters arising from previous minutes

Clarification was provided on the recent Wellbeing workshop. There were no other matters arising.

4. Report on developments since previous meeting

- The CEO's report was circulated for discussion.
- The CEO gave a verbal update on Strategy 2025 and will circulate information on the content of the special Board session on strategy scheduled for 23rd September. It was agreed to extend the length of the meeting, now due to begin at 1pm to 5pm with time for the Board to discuss without management.

5. Governance and Internal Matters

- **Recruitment of new Chair**

The Chair contributed to the booklet being prepared by the Department of Education to go to the Public Appointments Service. There were no further updates.

- **Branding**

The ERC will discuss branding with the DoE in the coming weeks.

- **Test Department and Richmond Road planned move**

The software contractor for DOTS agreed to provide 5,000 free tests to schools who have never used ERC tests before in an effort to increase online sales.

A report from the consultant has just been received and will need to be reviewing by management. If we are to move the Test Department is to move, it would need to be before the end of the year.

- **DCU Lease/Building Plans Update**

There has been no update from DCU on the lease. DD will continue to work with DCU to move this forward.

Following a number of meetings with the architect, a draft set of plans has been drawn up for the future use of the building to accommodate the growing staff numbers. Those plans will go to the SMT, the Building Redevelopment Committee and finally to all staff over the coming weeks. The agreed plan will allow the architect to move forward with costing up the proposals.

Management will report on this at the December meeting.

The Board wish to keep this item on the agenda of the CPU and questioned whether the ERC should continue in its current premises. This will be discussed in more detail at the December meeting.

- **CPU Governance meeting**

The scheduled meeting for 16th September has been cancelled by CPU. There is no reschedule date yet. The minutes for the June meeting are still in draft form and with CPU. The final version will be shared at December meeting.

- **Annual Report 2023**

The draft report was circulated for approval. The Chairperson and CEO introductions will follow. Members to forward any comments to DD. Otherwise the report was approved.

- **Board self-assessments**

The self-assessment template to be circulated at December meeting to allow for review prior to chair departure.

- **Audit and Risk Committee**

As required under the Code of Practice, the Board will need to assess the performance of the ARC. The format has yet to be confirmed but ARC Self-assessments to be circulated at December meeting to allow for review prior to Board chair departure.

It was agreed that the vacant position on the ARC should be for someone with a cyber/IT/Data background and that the ToR should change to allow for a third non-board member to serve on the Committee.

The ARC minutes were circulated for information.

- **Chief Executive Appraisal**

The Chair will carry out the CEO's appraisal in October.

6. Finance

The Board discussed the following items:

- **C&AG Management Letter**

This will be circulated to the members when we receive it from the C&AG and management have had time to give its comments.

- **Income & Expenditure Account Q2**

This will be circulated in the next week. The report format is being revised.

7. Risk Management and Internal Audits (Recurring item)

- **Corporate Risk Register**

DD working on a draft corporate risk register for the December meeting. The register will then be updated quarterly and circulated to the Committee along with a CRO memo.

- **Board & ARC Effectiveness Review**

The review was circulated for comment. The ARC approved the review at its meeting. The Board approved the review subject to some changes to the management responses including the softening of the word 'rejected'.

- **Test Department Building Update**

The draft report is due by end September/early October. This will be circulated to the Board by email due to time constraint for the Test Department move.

- **Financial Internal Control audit**

Work commencing this week.

- **Internal Audit Plan 2025**

Areas due for audit include Financial Internal Control (Credit Card and Prompt Payments), IT/cybersecurity, Climate compliance, Equality and Human Rights Act and FOI. DD to discuss and agree with the ARC Chairperson.

8. Staffing & HR

- HEO Procurement and HEO Human Resources have been appointed
- Recruitment processes for the Research Fellow and Research Associate with Irish will close next week. The Research Assistant is closing this week.
- Two members of the research staff (PPADe and DEIS) have confirmed they will be leaving the ERC. This will cause difficulties for the PPADe team as it is about to go to schools for pilot.
- Next recruitment campaigns will be for the HEO Governance, the HEO Logistics and the AP Operations.
- The closing date for the PO Head of Research was extended by a week and is now due to close next Monday.

9. AOB

- From 2025, the ARC and Board meetings will be held on separate days.
- DD to circulate recommended meeting dates for next year.


Edward Murtagh (Feb 18, 2025 23:45 GMT)

Appendix 1

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE
Board Meeting Agenda
3.30pm, 10 September 2024
ONLINE

1. Minutes of meeting of 24 June 2024 (BMin – 062024)

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-4-24-1 – for discussion)*

5. Governance and Internal Matters

Shared documents:

- ✓ Correspondence received by DoE RE: [Guidelines for Appointments of CEO's of Non-Commercial State Bodies](#)
- ✓ *Annual Report*

6. Finance

Shared documents:

- ✓ Management Letter (If received)

7. Risk Management and Internal Audits (Recurring item)

8. Policies

9. Staffing & HR

10. Strategy Formation

11. AOB

BM 092024 - Final

Final Audit Report

2025-02-18

Created:	2025-02-18
By:	Anne Comey (anne.comey@erc.ie)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAArEwlagpyEhdsr_ODc1HgbRD6gWI8Hnp

"BM 092024 - Final" History

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2025-02-18 - 11:41:07 PM GMT- IP address: 109.255.50.87
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