

**Educational Research Centre
MEETING OF THE BOARD
19 June 2019**

A meeting of the Board of the Educational Research Centre (ERC) was held on 19 June 2019 at the offices of the organisation.

Board Members Present:

Pauric Travers (PT), Chairperson; Denise Burns (DB), Deputy Chairperson; Michael Martin (MM) (Via Skype Link); Edward Murtagh (EM)

In Attendance:

Jude Cosgrove (JC), Anne Comey (AC) who took the minutes

Absent: N/A

Counsel Present: N/A

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3.00 pm.

The Agenda was adopted (Appendix I).

1. Minutes BMin (Bmin-0319)

The minutes of the last meeting were adopted and signed.

2. Matters arising from previous minutes

- ERC still waiting on guidelines for dealing with surplus or unspent funds.
- Issue with payroll and meeting with Department of Education and Skills (DES) / Dublin City University (DCU) still pending feedback from CPU (Central Policy Unit).
- ERC procuring the services of an external consultant to issue pension statements to staff following correspondence from the Pensions Authority.

3. Report on developments since previous meeting

(See Appendix II)

4. Governance matters

JC and AC to meet with CPU on June 28 to discuss arrangements with DCU including the test department, budget surplus and budget for staffing on new projects; online assessment developments; IPA staffing review; sign-off on the annual report and the Performance Delivery agreement.

Work has started to formalise ERC's Senior Management Team (SMT).

5. Finance (B-4-19-1/2/3)

The Board reviewed the revised Draft Financial Statement 2018 and Statement on Internal Controls and noted the recommendations of the ARC, further to correspondence from the C&AG, which was also reviewed.

The Board agreed to approve the revised draft pending no other substantial changes to this version.

6. Annual Report 2018 (B-4-19-4)

The Board considered the Annual report for 2018 and it was recommended that reporting on projects and outcomes should be done at a high level only . The CEO will consider the changes required.

7. Policies and Terms of reference (B-4-19-5/6)

The Board approved the Parental Leave policy draft including the inclusion of parental leave for children up to age 13, in line with the Civil Service.

The Board approved the Internal Audit Charter following recommendation for the ARC.

The Board discussed the formalisation of the SMT meetings and confirmed that the organisational decisions are a matter for the CEO and that the function of the SMT is to provide advice, support and guidance.

8. Risk Management (Recurring item) (B-4-19-7)

The Board reviewed the strategic risk register and the organisational chart and agreed with the recommendations of the ARC.

In relation to internal control, the Board agreed the following actions:

- The Board nominated Anne Comey as the liaison between the internal auditors and the ARC and the Board.
- The ERC will obtain quotations for 2019 audits and put in place a tender agreement for 2020 and 2021 (if possible through the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) framework)
- The Function is now included in the Organisation Chart and the Board reviewed the Chart of Internal Audit Process, the Internal Audit Process map, the Internal Audit Charter (as approved by the ARC).

Following review of work programme by the ARC, the Board approved the following audits for the next 3 years (subject to changes where required). The scope for 2020 and 2021 will be confirmed at a later stage:

2019:

- Human Resources - review of recruitment processes and gap analysis
- Financial Audit
- Project Audit – review of project administration information

2020:

- Payroll/Pension audit (pending resolution of payroll matters)
- Financial Audit
- Risk management
- Data Protection Audit

2021:

- IT Audit
- Implementation of Strategic Plan
- Financial Audit
- Procurement Audit
- Critical review (2020 or 2021 –pending discussion with CPU)

9. Staffing

A recruitment ad for a Research Fellow (Methodologies specialisation) has been agreed and will shortly be posted. Handover has commenced.

10. New Board and Audit and Risk Committee member

The Chairperson updated the Board on the recruitment of a new Board member and confirmed that selection has not been finalised.

The Chair of the Board confirmed that further updates were available in relation to this matter but that the nomination of a new member was with the minister and therefore it was expected that an update would be available after the summer.

11. AOB

There being no further business requiring their presence, JC and AC withdrew from the meeting which concluded shortly after.

Pam Stretton
25 Sept 2019

Appendix 1

**EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE
Board Meeting
19 June 2019
Agenda**

1. Minutes of meeting of 1 May 2019 (Bmin-4-0519)
2. Matters arising from the minutes
3. Report on developments since previous meeting
4. Governance matters
5. Finance (B-4-19-1/2/3)
6. Annual Report 2018 (B-4-19-4)
7. Policies and Terms of reference (B-4-19-5/6)
8. Risk Management (Recurring item) (B-4-19-7)
9. Staffing
10. New Board and ARC member
11. AOB

Appendix 2 Report on developments since previous meeting

- Developments since the previous meeting (item 3)
 - a. **Standardised testing:** overall, testing has gone well although we experienced high volumes of work and space constraints in the test dept. which resulted in some delays in dispatching tests. Testing was interrupted on two occasions – one system wide crash and one disruption to the reporting function (late May and early June). Awaiting a written report from the supplier on nature and cause of interruptions.
 - b. **Online testing development work:** We expect the independent review on DOTS by June 21. The reviewer has confirmed that although the system is integrated and has a good user interface, there is rigidity and redundancy in the database architecture and interoperability issues. We will be providing the Department of Education and Skills (DES) with costings for the new model (using a less administratively heavy funding model) at the end of August this year. Three ERC staff attended a FLIP+ (France, Luxembourg, Italy and Portugal) meeting in Rome which and it is envisaged that ERC will become a member of this association when the association is formally established. (FLIP+ has a mission to share learning, knowledge and tools for online assessment within an open source open standards collaborative framework.)
 - c. **National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) test standardisation:** test, administration and scoring materials are ready for a meeting with NEPS psychologists in Kilkenny on June 27 and a follow up training in early September is planned for testing in Oct-Nov. Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is completed and Data Protection Agreement (DPA) is in process.
 - d. **Continuing Professional Development (CPD) wellbeing:** a second meeting of the steering committee took place on May 22. Key terms and definitions have been agreed. Literature received from the committee is being compiled and a literature review protocol will be completed by the end of June.
 - e. **Digital Learning Framework (DLF) evaluation:** a meeting with the advisory group took place on May 21. The terms of reference (TOR) were agreed and work has begun on designing the longitudinal surveys. Two focus groups were held with the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) (May and June) and the baseline survey report will be published in October following review by the advisory groups.
 - f. **Gaeltacht school recognition scheme evaluation:** Instrument and survey development is underway and terms of reference agreed. Testing to take place beginning this autumn with a focus on early immersion at primary level. To be supplemented with survey questionnaires. Some sampling overlap with National Assessment of Mathematics and English Reading (NAMER) - Delivering Equality of opportunity In Schools (DEIS) rural schools expected and this will be handled using overlap control and case by case accommodation of schools selected for both studies.
 - g. **Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2019:** Coding is just completed and data submission is expected in July.
 - h. **NAMER 2020:** School materials returned and coding began this week.
 - i. **Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA):** 2018 data expected July 3rd. Report outline drafted and agreed with committee. For PISA 2021, the decision has been taken not to participate in creative thinking assessment (Cf. USA). General

Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) concerns remain, although standard contractual clauses with consortium solve some of the issues. DES and ERC have established a line of communication with the EU to clarify whether submission under derogation is feasible for PISA 2021. The Process Data Conference in May went well (this was a collaboration between ERC and Education testing Service (ETS) and presentations are now available on the ERC website. A proposal has been submitted to Large-Scale Assessments in Education to publish a special issue based on the conference presentations.

- j. **Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC):** the advisory group met on May 10 and following this the director of the Central Statistics Office (CSO) has written to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) expressing some concerns about GDPR and the delivery timeline for the case management system. ERC and CSO are to attend a three hour seminar on PIAAC and GDPR on June 25.
- k. **Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS):** A business case for participation in digital PIRLS has been submitted to DES and a response has been requested by the end of June to enable work to continue as planned.
- l. **Evaluation of DEIS:** the programme of work is under development, and this includes a small-scale evaluation of Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-Tech). ERC clarified data sharing agreements and programme of work priorities with SIU at a meeting on June 18. A meeting of the DEIS advisory group took place on May 27 and from the discussions it appears that the ERC's programme of work is in line with priorities and expectations.
- m. **Resource allocation modelling:** ERC participated in the review process for the current Special Education Teaching Allocation (SET) allocations and attended a meeting on June 12 to discuss a confirmatory model for frontloading Special Needs Assistant (SNA) allocation. The model will require some further work due to the level of 'churn'.
- n. **Strategic work/independent work:** Jude and Lorraine met with Anne O'Donnell, Hub Na NÓg, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), to explore strategic ways to incorporate children's and young people's perspectives into relevant aspects of our work (Hub Na NÓg has extensive experience in this area, and provides training at no cost). To be followed up with a more formalised requests from ERC, with training envisaged in late 2019/early 2020.