

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET **RESEARCH ASSOCIATE**

(PERMANENT, FIXED TERM AND SPECIFIED PURPOSE CONTRACTS PANEL)

Background

The [Educational Research Centre](#) (ERC) was established as a Statutory Body in accordance with the Education Act (1998) in September 2015, but has been in existence since January 1966. The ERC has a dual remit - providing standardised tests and supports to schools, and conducting educational research and evaluation studies. The current Strategic Plan for the ERC can be found [here](#).

The programme of work of the ERC includes:

- Management, delivery and reporting of large-scale national and international assessments (e.g. [PISA](#), [PIRLS](#), [TIMSS](#), [NAMER](#))
- The development and standardisation of tests to primary and post-primary schools
- The evaluation of educational programmes (e.g. DEIS)
- Independently-initiated research.

Further information on the work programme of the ERC can be found [here](#).

The ERC is creating a panel of **Research Associates** for future vacancies related to large scale assessment, evaluation studies and/or test development. Panels will cover permanent, fixed term and specified purpose posts. All posts are subject to the completion of a probation period.

As well as a rewarding and challenging career, some of the benefits the ERC offers include:

- Competitive salary, (Pay increases will be awarded annually subject to satisfactory performance)
- Public Sector pension
- 25 days of annual leave per year (excluding closure days)
- Hybrid and Flexible working arrangements, with a commitment to work-life balance and a family-friendly workplace
- Personal development opportunities through employer sponsored academic education and in house training
- Access to Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
- Access to travel tax saver scheme and cycle to work scheme

Job Specification:

The position of Research Associate is an exciting and challenging role for an individual who has a strong academic background and interest in the study and analysis of Irish education system.

Research Associates work closely with Research Fellows (senior researchers) on a range of research and operational matters related to large-scale national assessments, evaluation, and test development studies. Successful candidates will be assigned to one or more projects in the ERC's work programme.

Working collaboratively with the project team, the research associate will typically be involved in the following tasks:

Key elements of the role include:

- Overseeing various phases of research or test development study implementation (development, piloting, sampling, fieldwork, data processing, scoring and scaling, analysis and reporting).
- Liaising with schools, parents, subject specialists and other stakeholders during various phases of the study.
- Engaging in analysis and writing of a range of materials including, for example, administrative/instructional fieldwork manuals and reports/papers on study results.
- Preparing or adapting instruments (e.g., tests, questionnaires) to be used in projects.
- Attending and contributing to internal and external project meetings.
- Co-ordinating and monitoring general administrative work in relation to assigned project(s).
- Overseeing, mentoring and supporting the work of research assistants and temporary/casual staff.
- Monitoring and reviewing project budget and project risks effectively.
- Liaising effectively with the administrative team and senior management as required.
- Assisting in the management of databases.
- Conducting literature searches and reviews.
- Conducting data processing and data coding activities.
- Conducting statistical analysis (e.g., using SPSS).
- Providing support to other Centre projects as needed
- Undertaking any other duties as may be assigned from time to time.

This role requires high attention to detail, drive and commitment, capacity to respond to competing priorities, collaborative working style, and an open-minded and flexible approach to problem solving. The post may require occasional national (regional) and/or international travel.

The successful candidate will be encouraged to participate in training and upskilling to maintain and enhance levels of knowledge and expertise.

Note:

Applicants should note that the above is a general guide to the role of Research Associate and is not an exhaustive description of the duties which are associated with the role or tasks which may be assigned to the role in the ERC. Applicants should also note that additional duties may be assigned.

Competencies:

In carrying out the above duties, the candidate is expected to perform to a high standard across the following areas of competencies:

- *Building future readiness*
- *Evidence Informed Delivery*
- *Leading with Specialist Insight*
- *Communicating and Collaborating*

Person Requirements:

At the time of submitting their application the successful candidate must be able to demonstrate evidence of:

Essential Requirements for Research Associates
A post-graduate degree to Masters or PhD level in education, psychology or a related discipline (e.g., statistics, data analytics, social science).
Experience in the administration or project management of large-scale projects, preferably in education.
Knowledge of the Irish education system and educational research in Ireland and internationally.
Strong IT skills (particularly: a good working knowledge of MS Office and experience working with spreadsheet/database and statistical software) and ability to learn to use novel/customised software quickly.
Excellent planning, organisational and oral and written communication skills, including an ability to communicate effectively and diplomatically with a range of stakeholders.
Demonstrated ability/experience in statistical analysis and written reporting of large-scale assessment or survey datasets.
Evidence of excellent writing ability, both formal and informal
Ability to work both on own initiative and work as part of a team.
A focused, flexible and collaborative approach to meeting project deadlines and capacity to respond to competing priorities.
Evidence of strong personal effectiveness, flexibility and problem-solving
High attention to detail.

Desirable Requirements for Research Associates
Experience in using and managing database applications (such as Microsoft Access)
Experience in bivariate and preferably multivariate analysis of large-scale national assessments or surveys
Demonstrated ability/experience in managing research study teams.
Good understanding of key concepts and principles of survey sampling and weighting.
Experience in statistical analysis skills (i.e. using SPSS or similar software) and/or knowledge of psychometrics (e.g. classical test theory, item response theory).
Knowledge of the development and/or use of standardised tests (e.g., for Irish, English, or mathematics).
Fluency or proficiency in the Irish language.
Current full clean driver's licence
Access to a car for occasional work-related travel.

Following recruitment, panels of successful candidates may be created. Applicants may be placed on one or more panels, depending on which panel(s) they apply or qualify for. Decision of which panel will be used at time of appointment will depend on the requirement of the relevant project to which the post is assigned. Appointments may be made on a permanent, fixed term or specified purpose basis depending on the vacancy. The panels will remain in place for 12 months from the date of their creation or until their expiry (whichever occurs first), and may be renewed once for a further 6 months. The ERC reserves the right not to use the panels where it feels a specific role requires a separate recruitment campaign

Citizenship Requirements:

Candidates must fall under one (or more) of the six criteria below at the date of submitting their application:

- A citizen of the European Economic Area. The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; or
- A citizen of the UK under the protection of the Common Travel Area
- A citizen of Ukraine who has received a letter confirming they have been granted Temporary Protection under the EU Directive.
- A citizen of Switzerland pursuant to the agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the free movement of persons; or
- A non-EEA citizen who is a spouse or child of an EEA or Swiss citizen and has a stamp 4; or
- A person awarded international protection under the International Protection Act 2015 or any family member entitled to remain in the State as a result of family reunification and has a stamp 4; or
- A non-EEA citizen who is a parent of a dependent child who is a citizen of, and resident in, an EEA member state or Switzerland and has a stamp 4.

Salary Scale:

The appointment will be made on the Research Associate Scale of the ERC (57,460 - €83,952) Personal Pension Contribution (PPC) Scale), at 1st October 2023 at a point in line with current Government Pay Policy, **with new entrants commencing at the first point of the scale**. Different terms and conditions may apply if, immediately before appointment, the successful candidate is a currently serving civil/public servant.

Pension:

Superannuation terms and conditions as prevailing in the ERC at the time of being offered an appointment. In general, and except for candidates who have worked in a pensionable (non-single scheme terms) public service job in the 26 weeks prior to appointment, this means membership of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (“Single Scheme”). However, in the latter scenario, some exceptions may apply.

Annual Leave:

The annual leave allowance for the position of Research Associate is 25 days. This allowance is subject to the usual conditions regarding the granting of annual leave in the civil service, is based on a five day week and is exclusive of the usual public holidays.

Place of Attendance:

The appointee for this role will be based in the ERC’s offices in Drumcondra, Dublin. The ERC operates a hybrid working model with staff dividing their working time between the ERC’s offices and a specified remote location. The option to work remotely will depend on the requirements of the relevant project. Further information is available upon appointment.

When absent from home and place of employment on official duty, the appointee will be paid appropriate travelling expenses and subsistence allowances, subject to normal civil service/public sector regulations.

Tenure and Probation:

In the event of appointment to a permanent, fixed term or specified purpose position with the ERC the appointee must serve a probationary period, which normally will last for 6 months. If at any time during this period it appears that the appointee would not be suitable for final appointment the employment will be terminated.

Hours of attendance:

Hours of attendance will amount to not less than 35 hours net per week. The appointee will be required to work such additional hours from time to time as may be reasonable and

necessary for the proper performance of their duties subject to the limits set down in the working time regulations.

How to Apply:

Only applications submitted electronically will be accepted. Applications will not be accepted after the closing date and time.

THE CLOSING TIME AND DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS: 12.00 p.m. (Irish time), Monday 8th September 2025.

Applications must include:

Applications (**Consolidated in one file**) must include:

- 1: A short cover letter (500 words max) explaining why you are applying for this position and how your qualifications and experience align with the requirements of this position.
- 2: An up-to-date CV of no more than **four pages** in length which includes the names and contact details (phone number and email) of two referees.

All documents must be submitted in Word or PDF format (One File). Files sent by email as links to documents in shared cloud-based servers will not be accepted for security reasons.

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Completed applications should be submitted the careers portal on <https://www.erc.ie/about/careers/>.

Communications:

Campaign updates will be issued to the email address supplied with your application. The onus is on each applicant to ensure that they are in receipt of all communication from the ERC. Candidates are advised to check emails on a regular basis throughout the duration of the competition. In addition, candidates should check junk/spam folders should any emails be mistakenly filtered. The ERC accepts no responsibility for communication not accessed or received by a candidate.

Selection Process:

The selection may include shortlisting of candidates on the basis of the information contained in their application. An expert Interview Board will examine the applications against pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position. The selection process may include one or more of the following:

- Shortlisting on the basis of cover letter and CV
- Interview(s)
- Presentation or any other tests or exercises that may be deemed appropriate
- Language/communication test (oral and/or written).

Where Irish language fluency is a requirement for a position or applicants confirm a level of fluency in the Irish Language, shortlisted candidates may be invited to complete a separate assessment (written and/or oral) in Irish, in addition to interview.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview(s) to be scheduled between two and four weeks after the closing date for applications, or as close as possible to this timeline. Shortlisted candidates will be provided with further information and guidelines on the selection process at least one week in advance of interview to facilitate preparation.

Notification of interview date and time will be issued to the candidates at the email address provided in their applications. Candidates should make themselves available on the date(s) specified by the ERC and should make sure that the contact details specified on their application are correct.

Candidates who do not attend for interview or any other element of the selection process when and where required by the ERC, or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as the ERC requires in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.

The ERC reserves the right to conduct interviews either remotely online or face-to-face as circumstances require, and also to require candidates to attend a second interview and/or complete further assessments or tests as it deems appropriate and necessary following the first interview.

The preferred candidate will be offered the position subject to satisfactory reference checks. Referees will **not** be contacted without the candidate's prior agreement.

Successful applicants would be expected to take up the position within a reasonable time following the interviews (typically 4 to 6 weeks). Where panels are created successful candidates would be expected to commence within 4-6 weeks following an employment offer. Where a candidate is not available within those time frames, the ERC reserves the right to move to the next person on the panel. In such cases the initial candidate will remain on the panel and be contacted, in turn, should another position arise .

Panel:

Arising out of this competition, the ERC may create a panel or panels from which future similar vacancies may be filled. Where a panel is created, the ERC reserves the right to decide that only a certain number will be placed on that panel. Qualification and placement on a panel is not a guarantee of appointment to a position.

Candidates not appointed at the expiry of a panel (12 months following its creation in this instance with the possibility of extension for a further six months) will have no claim to a position thereafter because of having been on the panel.

Once an offer of a specified purpose or fixed term appointment has been declined, the candidate may remain on the panel until the expiry of the panel for permanent positions

only (that is, the candidate will not be offered any other specified purpose or fixed term position).

Once an offer of a specified purpose or fixed term appointment has been accepted, the candidate may remain on the panel until the expiry of the panel for any other specified purpose, fixed term or permanent appointment which becomes available.

Once an offer of appointment to a permanent position has been accepted or declined by a candidate, the candidate will no longer remain on the panel in question and the ERC may select another person for appointment on the results of the selection process. More detailed information will be provided to successful candidates.

Other Important Information:

The ERC will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates. The admission of a person to a competition, or invitation to attend interview, or a successful result notification, is not to be taken as implying that the ERC is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements or is not disqualified by law from holding the position and does not carry a guarantee that your application will receive further consideration.

It is important, therefore, for applicants to note that the onus is on them to ensure that they meet the eligibility requirements for the competition before attending for interview. If essential entry requirements are not met but applicants nevertheless attend for interview they could be put to unnecessary expense.

Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to this position, the ERC will make all such enquiries that are deemed necessary to determine the suitability of that candidate. Until all stages of the recruitment process have been fully completed, a final determination cannot be made, nor can it be deemed or inferred that such a determination has been made. Should the person recommended for appointment decline, or having accepted it, relinquish it or if an additional vacancy arises, the Interview Board may, at its discretion, select and recommend another person for appointment on the results of this selection process.

Research positions may require visits to schools and successful candidates will be required to undergo Garda Vetting for the delivery of such roles. Any offer to a successful candidate is subject to that candidate achieving full and clean Garda Vetting and the ERC reserves the right to withdraw any offer of employment or terminate any contract of employment should a successful candidate fail to achieve full and clean Garda Vetting. Successful candidates should be aware that, and as will be provided in the contract of employment, the ERC may terminate the contract of employment for such role should that person fail to provide full and clean Garda Vetting at any time during appointment.

The above represents the principal conditions of service and is not intended to be the comprehensive list of all terms and conditions of employment, which will be set out in the employment contract to be agreed with the successful candidate.

Data Protection Acts, 1988 and 2003; GDPR 2018:

When a candidate's application form is received, the ERC will create a record in the candidate's name, which contains much of the personal information supplied. This personal record is used solely in processing the candidature and should the candidate be successful certain information provided will be retained going forward. Such information held is subject to the rights and obligations set out in the Data Protection Acts, 1988 & 2003 and in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), 2018.

To make a request under the Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003/GDPR 2018, please submit your request in writing to the Data Protection Officer at Data.Protection@erc.ie. Ensure that you describe the records you seek in the greatest possible detail to enable us to identify the relevant record.

The ERC provides a flexible, dynamic and challenging working environment and is an equal opportunities employer.

The ERC is committed to attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining the highest calibre of staff to build a diversified, supportive, innovative and inclusive workforce. The ERC provides a flexible, dynamic and challenging working environment, supports equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion and encourages people from underrepresented groups to make applications.

Candidates requiring reasonable accommodation with the application or interview process can contact the ERC in any of the following ways (being mindful of the deadline for application):

- ✓ Email hr@erc.ie (please reference the post you are applying for).
- ✓ Call 01 837 37 89 and request to speak to Niamh Goucher.
- ✓ Write to: HR Dept., ERC, DCU St Patrick's College Campus, Drumcondra, Dublin 9, D09 AN2F.

Candidates who wish to avail of reasonable accommodations may be asked to submit a report from a medical professional to help determine suitable accommodations.