

Foras Taighde ar Oideachas **Educational** **Research Centre**

Irish Language Scheme for the Educational Research Centre

2025-2028

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Introduction

Background

This is the Educational Research Centre's (ERC) first Irish Language Scheme and it will be in effect for the period 2025-2028. The Official Languages Act 2003 provides for the preparation by public bodies of a language scheme detailing the services they will provide:

- through the medium of Irish;
- through the medium of English, and;
- through the medium of Irish and English;

and the measures to be adopted to ensure that any service not currently provided by the ERC through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

We are committed to providing a professional, efficient and courteous service to the public with a view to evaluating and improving our service over time.

Preparation

In the preparation of this scheme, due regard has been given to the 2024 National Plan for Irish Language Public Services and guidance issued by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. The ERC is guided by the principle that the provision of Irish language services should be based on:

- the underlying level of demand for specific services in the Irish language;
- the importance of a proactive approach to the provision of such services, and;
- the resources, including human and financial resources, and the capacity of the ERC to develop or access the necessary language capability.

This scheme complements the principles of Quality Customer Service and our Customer Charter. This scheme has been formulated with the intention of ensuring that all relevant obligations under the Official Languages Act by the ERC will be fully addressed on an incremental basis, through this and future schemes.

Commencement date of the Scheme

This draft Scheme will be sent to the Minister Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. It commences with effect from 26/02/2025 and shall remain in force for a period of three years or until a new scheme has been confirmed, whichever is the later.

Overview of the ERC

The Educational Research Centre ('ERC') is a public research institution dedicated to advancing educational research and informing policy that enhances the quality and equity of education in Ireland.

The ERC was originally founded in 1966 in St Patrick's College (now part of Dublin City University), Drumcondra. In September 2015, the ERC was established as a designated statutory body of the Department of Education under Section 54 of the Education Act (1998). The ERC is funded through a grant from the Department of Education and through the sales of standardised tests to schools.

The establishing legislation of the ERC (SI 392/2015) sets out the purpose of the organisation, as follows:

- a) Provide an assessment support service to schools and centres for education that will enable them to fulfil their obligations under Section 9 of the Education Act 1988; and
- b) Conduct independent research on all aspects of education and at all levels of the education system including educational research that will inform policy making and the improvement of educational standards.

Our Mission, Vision and Values

Our mission

The Mission of the ERC is to enhance learning outcomes for all students by conducting high-quality research and by developing effective assessment tools that will support better learning and inform policy.

As a foundational statement, our mission seeks to reflect the ERC's commitment to conducting research, advancing knowledge, and contributing insights that facilitate the improvement of educational practices and policies.

Our vision

Our vision, working in partnership with the Department of Education and key national and international stakeholders, is to optimise educational outcomes for the next generation by supporting schools, teachers, parents and all involved in policy/curriculum development to better understand and guide the learning journey.

Our vision recognises the ERC as an authoritative voice on student achievement and educational research.

Our values

It is important that the Department of Education, as our parent Department, and stakeholders have confidence in our ability to conduct our work while maintaining the highest levels of integrity and objectivity. Our values enable stakeholders to have this confidence. These values collectively guide the ERC in fulfilling its mission for the benefit of students, educators, and the broader education sector. The following values guide how we conduct our work:

Quality - We are committed to excellence. We ensure that our research is thorough, accurate, and reliable.

Impact - We aim to make a real difference with our research. We want our work to support policy makers and inform public debate.

Independence - We conduct research and report findings with integrity, impartiality, and without undue influence, ensuring the credibility and trustworthiness of our work.

Respect - We value different perspectives, cultures and backgrounds, and treat everyone with dignity, kindness and consideration in an inclusive and respectful environment.

Teamwork - We collaborate with others, fostering a culture of open communication and mutual support in our work.

Key services to the public, customers, and clients

The ERC engages with the public through its various research activities (e.g. fieldwork, research publications, conference events). We also interact with a variety of groups and individual members of the public who have an interest in our activities and educational research. The ERC's main client and customer base comprises:

- The General Public, including parents and students
- Formal Education Sector (Schools and centres of education)
- The Department of Education and other public bodies
- Researchers
- Online audiences

We also recognise that we have internal customers which includes our staff, both permanent and temporary.

Provision of Services in English only or Bilingually

Where the ERC interacts with the public such interaction is, in the main, conducted through postal and email correspondence, phone, website and visits by appointment. The variety of methods of communication ensures versatility and flexibility for our customers to ensure they receive the service they require in the most appropriate manner.

The ERC primarily provides its services to its key stakeholders and to the general public through the medium of the English Language.

We will endeavour to interact through the medium of Irish upon request. However, due to the technical nature of some of the terminology used in educational research, in some instances we may have to interact through the medium of English. This may be necessary in order to ensure clarity and consistency in our communications.

Current Provision of Services

Services	In English only	Bilingually, in English and Irish
Reception		Reception staff at main reception desk in the ERC are bilingual.
Phone Calls		Bilingual – our main reception desk will respond in Irish, upon request.
Letters		All non-generic written communication is responded to in the official language in which it was received.

Email		All non-generic written communication is responded to in the official language in which it was received. The contact details and disclaimer at the end of every email that issues from the ERC is presented in English and Irish.
Stationery		The name of the ERC is presented in both Irish and English in our logo and on all stationery.
Signage		Signage on the exterior of our office on the DCU St. Patrick's campus is bilingual, in accordance with SI 391/2008.
Publications		The ERC's Annual Reports and Strategy documents are published in Irish and English.
Website	Our current website is presented largely in English. A process is underway to upgrade our website.	
e-Newsletter		Our newsletter is issued in both English and Irish.
Personal Callers to our offices		Our offices are not open to the public. Members of the public are asked to make an appointment prior to their visit to ensure that a relevant member of staff with requisite expertise is present. This includes the provision of information in the Irish language.
Social Media		In the main, social media channels (Instagram, LinkedIn and X, formerly Twitter) are typically in English only. All non-generic social media communication with the ERC is responded to in the official language in which it was received.
Press	Press releases are typically issued in English only.	

Actions under this Scheme

Over the course of the period 2025 to 2028, the ERC will be undertaking a number of actions:

Means of communication with the public		Commitment	Timeline
Oral / Written Communication	Recorded Oral Announcement	<p>The following recorded oral announcements will be in Irish or bilingual:</p> <p>(a) Recorded oral announcements provided on the telephone when the offices of the public body are closed;</p> <p>(b) Recorded oral announcements created and transmitted by means of a computerised messaging system or a computerised telephone answering system.</p>	2025
	Letters and Email	All written communication will be responded to in the official language in which it was received.	Ongoing
	Stationery	Headings of stationery, including notepaper, compliment slips, fax cover sheets, file covers and other folders, labels and envelopes are provided in Irish or bilingually.	Ongoing
	Key Publications	The ERC will publish its Annual Reports accounts and Strategy documents in Irish and English.	Ongoing
	Gaeltacht Placenames	The official place names of Gaeltacht areas will be used by the ERC in accordance with the legislation.	Ongoing
	Reception	If a member of the public wishes to speak to someone in Irish, our reception staff will contact the appropriate person.	Ongoing
		Our reception staff use the name of the organisation in Irish and English. These staff are familiar with greetings in Irish and can put members of the public in touch without delay with a member of staff who speaks Irish.	Ongoing
	Telephone Communications	The out-of-hours recorded message on our main phone line is in Irish and English	Ongoing
	Live announcements	We do not use live announcements however if this becomes a service requirement in the future we will ensure that we are in compliance with the legislation	Ongoing

	Information leaflets and brochures	Brochures and information leaflets for the general public are made available in both languages.	Ongoing
	Application forms	All application forms are available bilingually.	Ongoing
	Face to Face Service	Our only face to face/counter service is provided at our main reception desk. This reception desk is staffed by staff who speak Irish. Our reception desk can also supply the contact names and extensions of staff available to deal with queries through Irish.	Ongoing
Gaeltacht	Meetings and Research Activities	Any meetings or research activities undertaken in the Gaeltacht or Irish-medium schools will be conducted through Irish or bilingually, all associating documentation will be provided in Irish or bilingually.	Ongoing
IT	Email	As required by the Official Languages Act, we reply in Irish to any emails received in Irish. Out of Office messages and automatic messages will be bilingual. An email address has been set up to deal with any queries in the Irish language: gaeilge@erc.ie	Ongoing
	Website	All automatic acknowledgements of correspondence via our website will be in both English and Irish	Ongoing
		Our website will be redeveloped to provide information in Irish and English.	2026
	Interactive Services	The ERC does not currently operate any interactive services. Any new interactive services will be introduced simultaneously in both languages where appropriate.	2026
Advertising, Press and Stakeholder Engagement	Spokesperson	An Irish speaking spokesperson/s will be available for interviews with the Irish language media (subject to personnel availability at time of request)	2026
	Press releases and news alerts	We are committed to translating 25% of the press releases we issue in Irish each year. Our goal will be to issue this material simultaneously.	2025

	Newsletter	Our newsletter, <i>eolas ón ERC</i> , is published in Irish and English.	2025
	Speeches	We will include Irish content in English speeches. Such content shall include opening and closing greetings in Irish, and reference to the subject matter of any such speeches and/or to the occasion in hand, as a minimum.	2025
	Social media	All the material which is uploaded on social media will be bilingual.	2026
	Advertising	(a) at least 20 per cent of any advertising placed by the ERC in any year shall be in the Irish language; and b) at least 5 per cent of any money expended by the ERC on advertising in any year shall be used to place advertising in the Irish language through Irish language media.	2025

Enhancing the provision of Irish Language Services in Gaeltacht Areas

The ERC does not have offices situated in Gaeltacht areas. As noted above, where our research activities involve engagement with schools or centres of education in Gaeltacht Areas we use fluent Irish researchers insofar as possible.

Improving Language Capability

Recruitment and Development of staff

The recruitment of staff with the appropriate level of competence in the Irish language will be the primary means of optimising the availability of services through Irish. Our recruitment strategy will have regard to the need to improve Irish language capability on an incremental basis. All new staff will be briefed on our Irish Language Scheme in their induction training to ensure that they are aware of our commitments under the legislation.

Having regard to Government policy for enhanced provision of services in Irish, the ERC will identify all posts for which Irish language competency is an essential requirement. Every effort will be made to fulfil these requirements within the timeframe of this scheme having regard to recruitment, promotion and training policies, as appropriate. This will enable the ERC to plan and prioritise the incremental improvement of services in Irish in a more strategic manner.

The ERC is committed to making opportunities available for staff to attend appropriately accredited Irish language training courses, as resources permit. All staff will be advised of facilities/opportunities to improve their competency in Irish.

Recruitment and Development of Staff		Commitment	Timeline
Improving Irish Language Capability	Recruitment	We will encourage the employment of new staff in relevant sections who have proficiency in Irish. All newly appointed staff will be briefed on our Irish Language Scheme in their induction training to ensure that they are aware of our commitments under the legislation.	2025
		Recruitment campaigns will include Irish as a desirable attribute in all future recruitment campaigns. We will also identify any positions for which Irish language skills should be considered essential. External recruitment advertisements and internal competition notices will issue in Irish and English. They will also indicate, in Irish, that applications will be accepted in the Irish language.	2025
		We will advertise Irish language job vacancies on websites and social media channels aimed at the Irish language community.	2025
	Training/ Provision of resources	We place great emphasis on the continuous professional development of our staff including funding courses for current staff who wish to upskill and develop their oral and written Irish language skills. Opportunities for staff to develop their Irish language competence will be provided and any staff wishing to improve their Irish language proficiency will be supported by the ERC HR team. The aim being to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support staff in maintaining and developing their proficiency in the Irish language (both oral and written); and enhance the capacity of staff to meet Irish language obligations in the conduct of their duties. 	2025

	Participation in language promotion activities	Staff will be encouraged to participate in cultural and language activities. Information on activities will be made available to staff.	2025
		The ERC will promote our research activities and standardised tests at relevant conferences and events dedicated to the Irish language and education.	2026
Other Initiatives	Social Engagement	“Cupán Caife” - ERC staff have an informal coffee morning in Irish on a quarterly basis	2025

Monitoring and Review

The implementation of the scheme will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by the ERC Governance and Corporate Services team and Board of the ERC. Please email any Language Scheme queries to gaeilge@erc.ie. Feedback, questions and queries on the scheme are welcome and will be used to formulate future Language Schemes we will create.

Requests for services through Irish will be monitored and recorded in our Annual Report.

Publication

This scheme will be publicised both internally and externally. The scheme will be made available on our website, and circulated to all staff, in both languages. Other means to publicise the scheme may also be used from time to time.

A copy of the agreed scheme will be forwarded to the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.