

# Customer Charter

## Revision History

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## Introduction

The Educational Research Centre (ERC) carries out research at all levels of the education system, on behalf of the Department of Education, at the request of other agencies and on the initiative of the ERC itself and its staff. The ERC also provides an assessment support service to schools, supplying a range of standardised tests to primary and post-primary schools. The *ERC Drumcondra tests* are the leading standardised tests used in Irish schools. The ERC also publishes the [Irish Journal of Education](#).

Under Government Policy, each State Body or agency is required to have in place a Customer Charter (detailing the Body's Commitment to Customer Service) and a Customer Action Plan (describing how the commitment will be delivered and evaluated).

The ERC is committed to providing a professional, efficient, and courteous service to all its stakeholders, and the broader education community it serves, in a fair and transparent manner. It aims to evaluate and improve its service in accordance with the twelve Principles of Quality Customer Service for Customers and Clients of the Public Service.

The ERC Customer Charter has been compiled to highlight the ERC's mission in delivering an efficient, effective and accessible service, ensuring that requests and queries, where possible, are dealt without delay.

This charter is available in both English and Irish versions.

## Our Customers

The work of the ERC can impact a large number of individuals both personally and professionally.

Our customers are the general public, government departments (most notably the Department of Education) and other statutory bodies, schools, teachers, parents, students, third party service providers, non-governmental organisations,

international organisations (e.g. OECD, IEA), our staff and you, if you are affected by anything we do, or if you have reason to contact us.

## Our Commitment

The ERC is committed to carrying all its functions in a professional and efficient manner, with integrity and impartiality. It aims to provide a high quality, user friendly and easily accessible service to its customers.

All visitors, members of the public and stakeholder can expect that every reasonable effort will be made to provide access to full, timely and accurate information about our services.

A range of supports is used to facilitate this process, and this Customer Charter sets out the standards of service that customers can expect when engaging with us.

It applies only to services provided by the ERC.

## Visitors to ERC Offices

The **Educational Research Centre** is located in the grounds of DCU, St. Patrick's Campus, Drumcondra Road Upper, Dublin D09 AN2F.

The **Test Department** is located at 66 Richmond Road, Dublin D03 E702.

- We will be available to meet with our customers by appointment during normal office hours.
- You will be treated with courtesy and respect in all face-to-face communication.
- Staff who visit your place of work will at all times act in a professional and courteous manner.
- While we will make every effort to accommodate visitors with special requirements, we regret to inform you that our premises on Richmond Road and at the DCU, St. Patrick's Campus are not currently fully accessible for people with disabilities, including wheelchair access for some areas, due to limitations on historic infrastructures. We acknowledge this as a significant

accessibility concern and we continue to work on the building's restructuring.

The ERC remains committed to exploring options to accommodate any request within a reasonable timeframe.

## **Written Correspondence**

- Written correspondence can be submitted to the ERC via post or e-mail.
- The customer will receive acknowledgement of receipt of written correspondence sent by post to the Educational Research Centre or to the e-mail addresses listed in this Charter document within 5 days of receipt.
- We will reply to correspondence within 15 working days where possible.
- You will be treated with courtesy and respect in all written correspondence and we endeavour to use clear and simple language in our responses, only using technical terms where necessary.
- All responses will have a contact name, telephone number, and e-mail address to facilitate further communication as required.

### **Contacting the ERC via Post**

General Correspondence can be sent to:

The Educational Research Centre  
DCU, St. Patrick's Campus,  
Drumcondra Road Upper,  
Dublin D09 AN2F.

Correspondence pertaining to the purchasing of school assessment tests can be sent to:

The Educational Research Centre – Test Department  
66 Richmond Road,  
Dublin D03 E702

### **Contacting the ERC via Email**

- For general queries, you can contact us at [info@erc.ie](mailto:info@erc.ie).

- If you have a query regarding paper-based tests, please contact [tests@erc.ie](mailto:tests@erc.ie).
- If you have a query about computer-based tests, please contact [dots@erc.ie](mailto:dots@erc.ie).
- For Data Protection-related queries, please contact [data.protection@erc.ie](mailto:data.protection@erc.ie).
- For Freedom of Information queries, please contact [foi@erc.ie](mailto:foi@erc.ie).

**Purchase of Tests:**

You can purchase paper and online tests via the ERC website through

<https://www.tests.erc.ie>

If you have any queries in relation to the purchase of standardised tests you can contact the Test Department directly on **(01) 837 7614**.

## Telephone

At all times, we aim to provide a prompt and helpful response to all enquiries.

**We will be available to answer calls during normal working hours, Monday-Thursday between 9.30 am to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 5pm (4.00 pm on Fridays).**

We provide an effective messaging service for customers and stakeholders who contact the ERC out of office hours and at weekends.

Most staff have direct numbers (the details of which are available on their email signatures or through reception) and where the staff member sought is not available, you will be connected to a voicemail system which will allow you to leave a message.

Alternatively, you can contact the main office number (01 837 37 89) and leave a message with the receptionist who will ensure the message is forwarded to the relevant person.

We will:

- Answer calls promptly when available.
- We will divert the call to voicemail when the relevant person is unavailable
- Be courteous and identify ourselves over the phone
- Provide an email address where this is helpful to the caller

- Respond to voicemail messages (by phone or in writing) within 1 working day where possible.

## Social Media

The ERC publishes a wide range of information on its website targeted at the general public and education communities. Our website is maintained as a key information source detailing the work and research carried out by the ERC.

We will ensure that our website is kept up to date with relevant and accurate information and that the information is easy to navigate and understand.

We will provide information on our website in a format that is accessible to people with disabilities.

To access the corporate information, visit – <https://www.erc.ie>

ERC information is also periodically posted on our social media channels:

*Bluesky at: [@ercirl.bsky.social](#)*

*Instagram at: [@erc\\_irl](#)*

*LinkedIn at: [@ERC-Ireland](#)*

If you wish to provide any feedback on the content of our website, please email us at: [info@erc.ie](mailto:info@erc.ie).

## Accessibility & Choices

The ERC is committed to making its services accessible to all customers.

Should you require Irish Sign Language Interpretation Services, please email [info@erc.ie](mailto:info@erc.ie) and we will organise for this service to be made available to you.

Please note that, as the service is external to the ERC, we would ask that you give us 14 days' notice of requiring such service, where possible. The provision of this service is free of charge.

Where other translation services are required, the ERC will aim to assist where possible. Again, as the service is external to the ERC, we would ask that you give us 14 days' notice of requiring such service.

We are committed to providing choice, where feasible, in the delivery of service to our customers. The ERC also provides a clean, safe, and comfortable environment with facilities for confidential discussions, should you require in-person meetings. Access to facilities is available to meet all our customers' and stakeholders' needs, including persons with disabilities, and our building and main meetings room are fully equipped with interactive screens, laptops, flipcharts, and video conferencing devices to guarantee maximum access and information delivery.

## Service in Irish and the Official Languages Act

Although the ERC primarily provides its services through the medium of the English Language, it will, in line with the [Official Languages \(Amendment\) Act 2021](#)<sup>1</sup>, make every effort to accommodate people who wish to conduct their business through the medium of Irish.

We will ensure that correspondence received in Irish is answered in Irish (unless the response is an automatic “out of office” message).

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.

Our offices are not open to the public and 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.

The ERC’s Irish Language Scheme (2025-2028) is available on the ERC website <https://www.erc.ie/about/about-the-erc/corporate-governance/>

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<sup>1</sup> The aim of the Official Languages Act 2003 and the Official Languages (Amendment) Act, 2021 is to increase and improve in an organised manner, over a period of time, the quantity and quality of services provided for the public through Irish by public bodies. The legislation intends to create a space for the language in public affairs in Ireland.

## Equality and Diversity

The ERC is committed to providing a service that is accessible to all customers and stakeholders, and we will make every effort to reach all interest groups. We will treat all persons in a fair and equitable manner, ensuring that your rights to equal treatment comply with equality legislation, referring to current legislation under the Human Rights and Equality Act, The Disability Act and the Official Language Acts 2003 and 2021 (amendments).

The ERC emphasises its commitment to treat all our customers equally, and strives to ensure that customers be treated with dignity and respect.

We continue to work to identify and remove barriers preventing access to our services.

## Communication Standards

We will be in a better position to help you if you;

- ✓ Are respectful and courteous in your dealings with our staff and with other customers;
- ✓ Provide information that is relevant to your enquiry;
- ✓ Provide any documents and reference numbers that will assist with the enquiry;
- ✓ Help us provide you with the best service possible by including your correct contact details in your correspondence, either by post or email. If you are calling or leaving a recorded message, please provide your correct contact details so one of the designated officers can reach out.

## Data Protection & Retention

The ERC complies with all relevant data protection legislation in relation to your personal data in line with its Data Protection Policy, Data Privacy Policy, and Record

Management Policy. All customer data will be treated in the strictest confidence and used only for purposes agreed by the parties, and under the legislation.

[Click here](#) to access our Data Protection Policy and Procedures.

## Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 confers on the general public the right to seek access to records held by public bodies (subject to certain exemptions), to seek reasons for decisions, and to have personal information corrected.

The ERC is subject to the provisions of this Act, and requests made under the Act should be addressed in writing to the Freedom of Information Officer at [foi@erc.ie](mailto:foi@erc.ie) or by post

[Click here](#) to access our FOI Information and Procedures.

## Complaints

While we strive to provide the highest quality service to our customers, we are aware that we may not always meet your expectations. However, you have the right to complain if you consider that the standard of service you have experienced is below the standard set out in this Charter.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of our service or interaction with us, we encourage you to direct the complaint directly to the individual you have been dealing with, outlining the nature of the issue and providing any feedback you feel is relevant. This feedback allows us to resolve any issues between those directly involved with the interaction.

All complaints are taken seriously and will be dealt with fairly and impartially. We will endeavour to respond promptly, rectifying the issue where possible.

If you do not receive a satisfactory response, you may address your request to the CEO.

- by e-mail to [info@erc.ie](mailto:info@erc.ie),. For the attention of the CEO, with a brief description of the issue in the subject heading, or

- by post to the following address:

The Educational Research Centre - Complaints  
DCU, St. Patrick's Campus,  
Drumcondra Road Upper,  
Dublin D09 AN2F.

Where the desired action cannot be taken to resolve an issue, an explanation will be provided to advise why this is the case, and we will advise you of your further right to appeal or refer the matter to the Office of the Ombudsman.

## Appeals

The ERC will work to provide a satisfactory outcome to any complaint. In the event that you do not receive a satisfactory response, you can refer the issue to the Office of the Ombudsman at any point. The Ombudsman can be contacted at;

**Office of the Ombudsman,**  
18 Lower Leeson Street,  
Dublin 2, D02 HE97.  
Phone: +353 1 639 5600,  
Lo-call: 1890 22 30 30 (charges may vary)  
Email: [info@ombudsman.ie](mailto:info@ombudsman.ie)

## Feedback and Service Improvement

We aim to offer high-quality service in a helpful way as possible, and we will continuously monitor, evaluate, and review our service processes.

In a scenario where the feedback provided cannot improve the current transaction, we commit to considering all feedback received to improve future services and interactions.

We welcome constructive feedback and suggestions from the public, our customers, and those in the research and education community as this is essential to helping us

improve how we serve you. Please let us know about your experience in using or accessing our services and information.

## **Approval / Revision History**

This Customer Charter has been adopted to guide our customers, stakeholders, and the public in accordance with the twelve Principles of Quality Customer Service for Customers and Clients of the Public Service, regarding information in education research, as well as the service provided to the public.

This will be reviewed and updated at least every three years or sooner as required, taking into consideration customer and stakeholder needs, changes in internal processes, and public service regulations.