

Foras Taighde ar
Oideachas
Educational
Research Centre

HEO Data Protection

(Fixed Term Contract)

Application Deadline: 11th March 2026 – 17.00



CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET

www.erc.ie

Background

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 employs 70 researchers, analysts and support staff, has an annual budget in 2025 of €7 million, and is funded through a grant from the Department of Education and through the supply of standardised tests to schools.

The ERC has a dual remit - providing standardised tests and supports to schools, and conducting educational research and evaluation studies. The current Strategic Plan and work programme for the ERC can be found [here](#).

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. 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 values

Our values collectively guide the ERC in fulfilling its mission for the benefit of students, educators, and the broader education sector:

- **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.

About this Role

The position of HEO is an exciting and challenging role for an individual seeking career progression in a collaborative and dynamic work environment. Working collaboratively with the administration and research teams, the successful candidate will typically be involved in the following tasks.

Why join the ERC?

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 scheme
- 29 days of annual leave per year
- 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

Key Responsibilities

- Execute a data protection/data sharing strategy that supports the ERC's objectives, ensuring timely, compliant and cost-effective delivery of outputs.
- Providing support to the Principal Officer and Assistant Principal of Corporate Affairs.
- Providing data protection and data sharing support to ERC staff.
- Facilitating the drafting of data protection and data sharing documentation (e.g. RoPAs, DPIAs, Data Sharing Agreements, policy documents, etc.)
- Act as the main point of contact for the Data Governance Unit (OGCIO), for external consultants and for all data protection related queries.
- Ensure that appropriate governance, risk management, change management and audit controls are implemented for data protection activities.
- Implement best practices and process improvements throughout the data protection and data sharing activities to ensure efficiency.
- Respond promptly to time sensitive queries e.g. Subject Access Requests, DPC Notifications.
- Oversee the management, implementation and ongoing review of the ERC's data protection/governance-related policies and procedures.
- Prepare reports and analysis on data protection and data sharing activities as required to senior management and Audit and Risk Committee and the Board as necessary.
- Establish and maintain strong relationships with the DPC, the Data Officers network and other relevant bodies.
- Oversee the continuous updating of the data protection/data sharing sections of the website.
- Support the implementation of Open Data obligations.
- Provide support for other Centre work as needed and undertaking any other reasonable duties as may be assigned from time to time.

The HEO Data Protection will also be the designated Data Officer and coordinate and represent the ERC as part of the Data Officer Network.

This role requires discretion and confidentiality at all times, high attention to detail, flexibility, capacity to respond to competing priorities, a collaborative working style, and an open-minded, positive and solution-driven attitude. The post may require occasional national (regional) 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 HEO Data Protection and is not an exhaustive description of the duties which are associated with the role or tasks which may be assigned to the role. Applicants should also note that additional duties may be assigned and that duties may evolve over time.

Competencies

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

- Building Future Readiness
- Evidence informed delivery
- Leading and Empowering
- Communicating and collaborating

About You

Experience, Skills, Knowledge & Qualifications

Essential Criteria

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

- Hold a relevant third level qualification and a minimum 2 years' experience in a similar role.
- In-depth knowledge of Data Protection legislation and the GDPR;
- Demonstrated experience in compliance and risk management
- Experience in developing and implementing best practice and process improvements, including policies and guidelines
- Excellent planning and organisational skills and the ability to prioritise effectively and manage a significant workload
- Excellent attention to detail and a track record of delivering on targets
- Evidence of effective judgment, decision making, initiative, and problem solving
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, including an ability to communicate effectively and diplomatically with a range of stakeholders
- Ability to work both on own initiative and work as part of a team
- Proficient in using Microsoft applications (e.g. Office365, Word, Excel, Outlook, Teams, SharePoint)

Desirable Requirements

- Have or be in the process of completing a recognised qualification in Data Protection
- Irish Language proficiency
- Experience in developing training and development programme
- Knowledge of the Irish Education Sector

Key Information

Application Process and Closing Date

If you are interested in applying for this position, please submit:

1. A short cover letter (1 page 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 **three 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 via the [ERC Careers page](#).

Only applications submitted electronically will be accepted. If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your application within 48 hours of applying, please contact hr@erc.ie. Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 1997 as amended, applications will be treated in strict confidence.

The closing time and date for applications is: **17.00 (Irish time), Wednesday 11th March 2026**. Applications will not be accepted after the closing date and time.

Salary Scale

The appointment will be made on the Higher Executive Officer (HEO) Scale of the ERC (€79,086 - €98,559 - Personal Pension Contribution (PPC) Scale), at 1st August 2025 at a point in line with current Government Pay Policy. All new entrants to the Public Service will commence at the first point of the scale (€79,086 per annum). 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 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.

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 United Kingdom (UK); or
- 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 has a stamp 4 visa; 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 visa; 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 the UK or Switzerland and has a stamp 4 visa.

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).

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.

Panels

Arising out of this competition, the ERC may create a panel or panels from which future similar vacancies may be filled. Appointments from the panel will be made on a permanent, fixed term or specified purpose basis depending on the vacancy. 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 who apply may be placed on one or more panels. However, candidates may be ranked higher on one panel than the other and inclusion on one panel does not guarantee inclusion on other panels created through this recruitment process.

The panels will remain in place for 12 months from the date of its creation or until its expiry (whichever occurs first), and may be renewed once for a further 6 months. Candidates not appointed at the expiry of a panel 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.

Data Protection Act

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.

Reasonable Accommodation

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 HR.
- ✓ 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.

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.

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.