



Foras Taighde ar Oideachas
Educational Research Centre

Educational Research Centre (ERC)

Privacy Statement

The Educational Research Centre (ERC) is an internationally recognised centre of excellence in research, assessment and evaluation in education. The Centre carries out research at all levels of the education system. Research is undertaken 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 acts as a Data Controller in respect of personal data that it processes. The ERC respects your right to privacy and complies with the obligations set out under the Data Protection Acts 1988, 2003 and 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 and the Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019. We are committed to upholding the principles outlined in the GDPR when collecting and processing your data: being lawful, fair & transparent, limiting the purpose of the data gathering, only collecting the data that is necessary, ensuring the data is accurate, limiting how long we store your data, ensuring the security of your data and demonstrating accountability for our data processing actions. This statement outlines how the ERC uses personal data shared with our organisation. It is important that you read this Privacy Statement, together with other Privacy Notices or Data Protection Declarations, we may provide on specific occasions when we are collecting or processing personal data about you so that you are fully aware of how and why we are using your data. This Privacy Statement supplements the other notices and is not intended to override them.

The ERC acts as a Data Processor in respect of all personal data processed through the provision of the Drumcondra Online Testing System (DOTS). The relevant school acts as the Data Controller for personal data uploaded to the platform and determines the means and purposes for processing such data. The ERC processing personal data solely on the documented instructions of the school and in accordance with applicable data protection legislation. Appropriate technical and organisational measures are implemented to protect personal data, as set out in the Terms of Service and Data Processing Addendum.

Privacy statements of other websites

The ERC website contains links to other websites. This Privacy Statement applies to the ERC website only, if you click on a link to another website, you should read that website's privacy statement.

1. What Personal Data does the ERC collect?

We gather data to perform tasks carried out on behalf of the Department of Education and Youth (DEY) and other public bodies to conduct independent research. Personal Data and Special Category Personal Data are gathered to fulfil the ERC's obligations under the establishment order, S.I. No. 392 of 2015, and amendment, S.I. No. 309 of 2017. Details of the ERC's functions and responsibilities can be found by clicking the following link to the Statutory Instrument: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/si/392/made/en/print>

Processing of personal data is carried out pursuant to section 38(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018. Processing of special category data is necessary for the operation of the ERC in accordance with section 49(b) of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Data gathering can occur in conjunction with schools and other agencies as outlined in Appendix 1 below

2. How is your Personal Data Collected?

2.1 Directly From the Individual

We collect your personal data directly from when you are engaging with us for various purposes, such as employment, accessing ERC premises, or direct engagement with our website.

2.2 Directly From the School

School led assessments (e.g. Drumcondra tests): Data is collected directly from schools for the purpose of providing assessment support to schools. The ERC acts as a data processor to provide these services. Data such as school name, school roll number, school contact details, school payment details are gathered directly from the school administration.

ERC led assessments (e.g. large scale assessments, test development): Data gathered during the administration of study assessments from participating students (who complete tests and may also complete a questionnaire), parents, teachers and principals (who may be asked to complete a questionnaire), is gathered directly from study participants and the sharing of this data with the ERC is facilitated by a teacher in the participating school appointed as the school coordinator for that study.

2.3 From the Department or another Educational Organisation

For the administration of research studies, the Department of Education and Youth (DEY) provides the ERC with data, such as the number of classes in each year of study, pupil/student name, pupil/student gender, and pupil/student date of birth. This information is shared with schools in the initial stages of administering a study to validate that the data is still accurate for those students participating in a study.

For certain research studies involving students at post-primary level, the State Examinations Commission (SEC) provides student name, date of birth, gender, ID number school roll number, exam level, and results for specific subjects.

For other pieces of work involving the ERC the Department of Education and Youth (DEY) and/or other public bodies provides the ERC with data relevant to the study.

Copies of the Data Sharing Agreements that govern these data transfers are available here: [Data Governance Board Data Sharing Agreement Register](#)

The purpose for collecting data is outlined in the table in Appendix 1 below.

3. How is Your Personal Data Used?

In the majority of cases, the ERC may use your personal data for conducting tasks in the public interest or in exercising official authority where necessary and proportionate for it to fulfil its statutory functions.

The ERC may also process your personal data where necessary for the performance of a contract for services or goods.

The ERC may on occasion, process your personal data where it is necessary in order to protect the vital interests or you or of another person.

As a public sector research organisation, the ERC does not rely on consent as a legal basis other than for limited purposes where the processing is optional and where you can freely provide your consent for processing by the ERC, e.g. inclusion in an e-mail distribution list or completing a survey.

We may utilise Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools for some of the processing activities that we conduct. Where AI is used, we will explicitly communicate this in information provided to you prior to the processing (for example: in our Data Protection Declarations).

4. Will my Personal Data be Shared with Any Third Parties?

The ERC uses third parties to assist with certain data processing tasks. Any third parties engaged by the ERC will be engaged in compliance with data protection legislation. We do not allow our third-party service providers to use your data for their own purposes and only permit them to process your personal data for specified purposes and in accordance with our instructions. Details of sharing of data will be outlined in the specific privacy notice for a processing activity.

Where data is shared with third parties associated with international studies such as PISA (OECD), PIRLS or TIMSS (IEA), only pseudonymised data is shared with the third-party contractors. These shared pseudonymised data sets have the participant names removed but include personal data and may include or infer special category data. The data is fully anonymised (i.e., identifying information is deleted) after the administration of the study. These third-party contractors, engaged by the OECD and IEA, are engaged in compliance with data protection laws and strict data protection policies and processes. As subcontractors can change from one study cycle to the next, a Data Protection Declaration or Statement is prepared by the ERC, for each new study cycle, detailing the third parties involved for that particular cycle, along with the data protection information specific to that study.

The ERC will publish reports using aggregated data in accordance with our obligations under S.I. No. 392 of 2015 and amendment, S.I. No. 309 of 2017. Individual student test results and data are not shared with any external bodies. However, where reliable individual data have been generated, e.g., test scores, these are typically shared with the relevant school.

The ERC will disclose your personal data if required in order to comply with any applicable law, summons, search warrant, court or regulatory order, or other statutory requirement.

5. Data Security and Other Protective Measures

To protect your rights and freedoms in relation to the processing of personal data, the ERC has appropriate technical and organisational measures in place to ensure that the requirements of the GDPR are met. These measures include internal policies and procedures, documentation of data protection by design and data protection by default measures, minimising the processing of personal data, pseudonymising and anonymising personal data as soon as possible, transparency with regard to the functions and processing of personal data, the provision of regular data protection training for our employees and limiting access to your personal data to those employees, agents, contractors and other third parties who have an official capacity from their role in the ERC to process your personal data.

6. Data Storage

We will only retain your personal data for as long as necessary to fulfil the purposes we collected it for. Details of retention periods for different studies are available in the Data Protection Declarations or Statement for the associated processing activities, which are made available where your data is being collected or being processed by the ERC.

7. What are your Data Protection Rights

The ERC would like to ensure that you are fully aware of your data protection rights. Every person is entitled to the following:

- **The Right to Access:** you have the right to request copies of your personal data from the ERC.
- **The Right to Rectification:** You have the right to request that the ERC correct any information you believe is inaccurate. You also have the right to request the ERC to complete information you believe is incomplete, under certain conditions.
- **The Right to Erasure:** You have the right to request the ERC erase your personal data, under certain conditions.
- **The Right to Restrict Processing:** You have the right to request that the ERC restrict the processing of your personal data, under certain conditions.
- **The Right to Object to Processing:** You have the right to object to the ERC's processing your personal data, under certain conditions.

- **The Right to Data Portability:** You have the right to request that the ERC transfer the data that have been collected to another organisation or directly to you, under certain conditions.

If you would like to exercise any of these rights, please contact us at Data.Protection@erc.ie

7.1 How do I make a Subject Access Request (SAR) for my data?

Before submitting a Subject Access Request, we encourage you to refer to our SAR Policy on our website.

School led assessments:

In order to confirm the identity of the data subject (the person to whom the data belongs) and to ensure the protection of your data, where the request is in relation to a student's assessment data (e.g. Drumcondra test results), we would ask you to contact the school directly to initiate your request. Where the school does not hold the data, the school will liaise with the ERC to submit the completed request form on your behalf.

SARs must be submitted directly to the school:

- By a parent or guardian for students under the age of 18
- By the student, parent or guardian of students 18 years or over.

If you would like to access your personal data, please complete our Subject Access Request Form, which can be found in the Subject Access Request section of our Data Protection & Corporate Governance pages on our website.

NOTE: If your data has been anonymised or deleted in accordance with our Data Retention and Disposal Procedure, we will not be able to facilitate your request to access your data.

7.2 How do I Update, Verify or Delete my Data?

You may contact us directly to inform us of any changes in your data, and we undertake to update your data in accordance with our obligations under current Data Protection legislation.

NOTE: The ERC advises study participants that there is a four-week window from the date of testing or from the date of completing a questionnaire to amend their factual data. This does not apply to test answers or to questionnaire data intended to capture views at a particular point in time. After this four-week window, data are submitted for processing, and it is not possible to delete or make changes to data from that point. Student data are pseudonymised or anonymised as early in the process as possible, to make it difficult or impossible to link the answers back to an individual.

If you wish to amend or delete data we have stored in our systems, please send an email to Data.Protection@erc.ie with your name, email address, contact information, and any other identifying information which will assist in processing your request, outlining the information you would like to amend or delete. Please put '**Personal Data - Change Request**' or '**Personal Data – Delete Request**' in the subject

heading of the e-mail in order to facilitate and expedite your request. We may need to contact you in order to complete any request in order to verify your identity and/or clarify any requests.

If your data has been anonymised or deleted in accordance with our Data Retention, Erasure and Disposal Policy, we will not be able to facilitate your request to make changes or delete your data.

8. Changes to our Privacy Statement

Any changes to this Privacy Statement will be posted on our website so you are always aware of the information we collect, how we use it, and under what circumstances, if any, we disclose it.

The ERC keep its Privacy Statement under regular review and places any updates on this web page. This Privacy Statement was last updated on 31 July 2026.

9. How to Contact Us

If you have any questions about our Privacy Statement, the data we hold in relation to you, or you would like to exercise one of your data protection rights, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Email: Data.Protection@erc.ie

Post: The Data Protection Officer,
The Educational Research Centre,
DCU, St. Patrick's Campus,
Drumcondra Road Upper,
Dublin D09 AN2F

Telephone: (01) 837 3789

10. How to contact the appropriate authorities:

Should you wish to report a complaint or if you feel that the ERC has not addressed your concern in a satisfactory manner, you may contact the Data Protection Commissioner's Office.

Details for contacting the Irish Data Protection Commissioner can be found at: [How to contact us | Data Protection Commission](#)

Appendix 1

Types of Personal Data	Purpose	Lawful Basis (GDPR)
Independent Research, National & International Studies, and Test Development		
School Roll number, School name Contact information (address, e-mail, phone number, point of contact name) Student Name Date of Birth Gender Class Program of study Assessment responses Questionnaire responses Special Educational Needs (SEN) English as an Additional Language (EAL) Status Principal Principal name Questionnaire responses Teacher Teacher Name Questionnaire responses	Data gathered for independent research, national and international studies, test development to inform educational policy and practice. Student responses to assessments and, in some cases, on questionnaires are gathered as part of the research initiative. Some studies also invite parents/guardians, teachers, and principals of participating students to complete a questionnaire to help researchers understand how the student's home environment, class environment, school environment, and early learning activities affect their learning. As the only centre in Ireland undertaking these studies on behalf of the Minister of Education and Youth there is substantial public interest in carrying out these studies pursuant to our statutory functions. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is carried out prior to project commencement.	Article 6 (1)(e) GDPR Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller. Schools, parents and students/pupils are also communicated with, sharing the study-specific privacy statement to explain the purpose of the study, why the data being collected is required, with whom the data will be shared, when the data will be anonymised/deleted.

Parent Questionnaire responses		
Drumcondra Tests and PPAD-E Data		
School Data Roll number, School name Contact information (address, e-mail, phone number, point of contact name) Student Data Name Date of Birth Gender Assessment responses Questionnaire responses Special Educational Needs (SEN) English as an Additional Language (EAL) Status	This information is provided by schools when purchasing tests, or when submitting a query to the ERC regarding test purchases. This information is provided to the ERC by schools which have purchased tests from the ERC. The data is used to provide Drumcondra tests (online and paper) to schools that purchase tests from the ERC and to provide test scores to schools for the students who take the Drumcondra tests.	GDPR Article 6 (1)(c) Processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation to which the controller is subject.
Suppliers, Contractors and Business Contacts		
Name Contact details of suppliers, contractors and business contacts Personal Data relevant to performance of contract	Performance of services / supply of goods. Maintenance of tools and IT infrastructure.	Article 6 (1)(b) GDPR Processing is necessary for the performance of a contract to which the data subject is party or in order to take steps at the request of the data subject prior to entering into a contract.
Visitors		

Visitors to ERC buildings Date & time of arrival/departure Full name Signature Name of the visitor's organisation	For safety & security purposes, we require staff and visitors (including, contractors, suppliers, interview candidates, etc.) to provide information in the sign-in book at reception.	Article 6 (1)(d) GDPR Processing is necessary in order to protect the vital interests of the data subject or of another natural person (ERC staff and visitors).
Recruitment		
Applicant name CV (contact details, educational history, details of previous employment) Letter of application Contact details of referees*	Personal Data is gathered to process any application for ERC vacancies advertised and to assist with the selection process. Data is provided by applicants for positions that arise in the ERC that are advertised, for example, on www.PublicJobs.ie , on the ERC's website, or in other publications. * Only candidates actually being considered for appointment are requested to furnish contact details of referees.	Article 6 (1)(a) GDPR The data subject has given consent to the processing of his or her personal data for one or more specific purposes