

**Appointments to the Board of the Educational Research Centre**

**Closing Date: 15:00 on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019**

**State Boards Division  
Public Appointments Service  
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stateboards.ie operates under the auspices of the Public Appointments Service and is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.

The Public Appointments Service (PAS), established under statute in 2004, provides an independent shared service in recruitment, assessment and selection to organisations across the Civil and Public Services. On 30 September 2014, the Government decided that the PAS should also be given responsibility for putting in place an open, accessible, rigorous and transparent system to support Ministers in making appointments to State Boards. Our dedicated website, [www.stateboards.ie](http://www.stateboards.ie), is the channel through which the PAS advertises vacancies on State Boards. It is also the means through which accomplished, experienced and qualified people, including people who might not previously have been identified as available for appointment, can then apply to be considered for particular vacancies.

## Membership of State Boards

High standards of corporate governance in all State Agencies, whether in the commercial or non-commercial sphere, are critical to ensuring a positive contribution to the State's overall social and economic development.

Members of State Boards are appointed to act on behalf of the citizen to oversee the running of the affairs of state bodies. State bodies must serve the interests of the taxpayer, pursue value for money in their endeavours (including managing risk appropriately), and act transparently as public entities. Members of State Boards, and the relevant management team, are accountable for the proper management of the organisation.

Board members should act on a fully informed basis, in good faith, with due diligence and care, and in the best interest of the State body, subject to the objectives set by Government. In that regard and in accordance with 13.2 of the Guidelines on Appointments to State Boards, "it is advisable that no member of a State Board should serve more than two full terms of appointment or should hold appointments to more than two State Boards."

The [Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016](#) (the Code) provides a framework for the application of best practice in corporate governance by both commercial and non-commercial State bodies.

In order to be an effective contributor on a State Board it is recommended that members should:

- bring independent and objective scrutiny to the oversight of the organisation;
- be prepared to be challenging when necessary while being supportive to the delivery of organisational strategy and objectives;
- be equipped to offer considered advice on the basis of sound judgement and experience;
- be prepared to make a time commitment to their work commensurate with their role.

## Appointments to the Board of the Educational Research Centre

<b>Location:</b>	Dublin
<b>Number of Vacancies:</b>	1
<b>Remuneration:</b>	Nil. Travel and subsistence is payable at appropriate Civil Service rates.
<b>Time Requirements:</b>	Minimum of 6 half day meetings per annum with additional time required for Committee meetings and preparatory work. A total of 10 – 15 days per annum would be required.

Candidate's attention is also drawn to the provisions of the Code in relation to Audit and Risk Committee membership which can be found [here](#).

### 1. Background

The Educational Research Centre (ERC) is a statutory body, separate from the Department of Education and Skills, responsible for conducting research, assessment and evaluation in education. The ERC, located on the campus of St Patrick's College (*now DCU St Patrick's Campus*) in Drumcondra, was founded in the 1960s. In view of its strategic importance, the Government decided to formally establish it as an agency under section 54 of the Education Act, 1998.

The legal basis for the Centre is [S.I. No. 392/2015 - Educational Research Centre \(Establishment\) Order 2015](#)

Its main responsibilities are to:

- Conduct independent research on all aspects of education and at all levels of the education system including research that will inform policy making and the improvement of educational standards.
- Provide an assessment support service to schools and centres for education (including the development and provision of standardised tests and other assessment instruments) and at all levels of the education system including research that will inform policy making and the improvement of educational standards.

### History

- The Educational Research Centre (ERC) at Drumcondra was founded on the joint initiative of the Department of Education and St Patrick's College Drumcondra (SPD) in 1966 under the direction of Dr. Thomas Kellaghan.
- Early ERC tasks included the evaluation of the Rutland Street preschool project (the first of its kind in Europe) and the development of a number of standardised tests (Drumcondra tests). The ERC also began an important longitudinal study which looked at 500 students who were completing primary schooling in 1967 until they reached early adulthood. This

resulted in several publications including a book entitled *Equality of Opportunity in Irish Schools* with Vincent Greaney (published in 1984).

- Since its foundation, the ERC has become an internationally recognised centre of excellence in research, assessment and evaluation in education. The work of the ERC has contributed significantly to the development and evaluation of educational policy and practice in Ireland.
- The core functions of the ERC relate to research, assessment and evaluation in education. In particular, the ERC continues to develop assessment and test instruments. The most well known and most used of the ERC's tests are part of the Drumcondra series of norm-referenced achievement tests for first to sixth class in primary schools.
- The work of the ERC has been crucial to the success of major national surveys and Ireland's involvement in international comparative studies, such as PISA<sup>1</sup>, TIMSS<sup>2</sup>, PIRLS<sup>3</sup> and others. These studies are conducted in conjunction with the Department's Inspectorate. They are important initiatives that allow us as a country track our students' progress in terms of that of our international partners and set targets for improvement as necessary. This data is critical in ensuring that our education system is progressive, fit for purpose and serving the needs of our students and of our economy in the 21st century.

The ERC carries out research and provides advice and support to several agencies including the Department and the Inspectorate, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the State Examinations Commission, the National Council for Special Education and *Túsla* - The Child and Family Agency..

## 2. Functions of the Board

The board is responsible for the governance of the Centre. This includes overseeing the planning of the Centre's work, the submission of annual plans and reports to the Minister, the appointment and management of staff, including the Chief Executive, the expenditure of the Centre and the general supervision of the activities of the Centre. Full details of the board's responsibilities are set out in the Establishment Order for the Centre in paragraphs [30, 31, 40, 42, 45, 51, 52 and 53](#).

Further information on the Educational Research Centre can be found [here](#).

Current membership of the Board: -

Name	First Appointed	Expiry Date	Position type	Basis of appointment
Denise Burns (Dr.)	13/07/2016	12/07/2021	Deputy Chair	PAS process
Edward Murtagh	13/07/2016	12/07/2021	Board Member	PAS process
Michael Martin (Prof.)	13/07/2016	12/07/2021	Board Member	PAS process
Pauric Travers (Dr.)	13/07/2016	12/07/2021	Chair	PAS process

<sup>1</sup> Programme for International Student Assessment

<sup>2</sup> Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

<sup>3</sup> Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

### 3. Person Specification

The Minister for Education and Skills invites applications from suitably qualified candidates to fill a vacancy on the Board of the Educational Research Centre.

Candidate's attention is drawn to the provisions of the Code in relation to the role of a Board member, where the principle states: -

- Each State body should be headed by an effective Board which is collectively responsible for the long-term sustainability of the body.
- Non-executive Board members should bring an independent judgement to bear on issues of strategy, performance resources, key appointments and standard of conduct.

Details on the role of Board Members can be found in Section 3 of the Code which can be found [here](#).

#### **Essential**

Applicants must demonstrate in their application evidence of one or both of the following: -

#### **Corporate Governance and Compliance**

Significant senior level experience in the areas of corporate governance and/or compliance in either a public, private or community & voluntary sector organisation.

#### **Finance and Audit**

Significant senior level practical experience in finance and audit in either a public, private or community & voluntary sector organisation.

#### **Desirable**

In addition to the above is desirable that applicants have experience in **at least one** of the following:

- a. Experience of board membership
- b. Experience of test development
- c. Experience of providing educational assessment type services
- d. Experience in the field of educational research and evaluation

In order to qualify for appointment a person must not have any conflicts of interest likely to interfere with his/her ability to assume the role of a member of the Board. Please give careful consideration to the possibility of any potential conflict of interest that may exist and address this in your cover letter. The Assessment Panel may decide, based on the perceived level of conflict, not to forward your name for consideration.

The Minister shall have regard to the desirability for gender balance on the Board as the Minister considers appropriate and determines from time to time when making appointments.

#### 4. Term of Appointment

Appointments to the Board will be for an initial period of 5 years with an option to extend the term of engagement for a second term, subject to:

- The membership of any member of the Board may be terminated by the Minister at any time, on the basis of reasons to be stated by the Minister.
- A member of the Board may resign his or her membership of the Board by notice in writing sent or given to the Minister, and the resignation shall take effect on the day on which the Minister receives the notice.
- Members of the Board shall, subject to the provisions of this Schedule, hold office upon such terms and conditions as the Minister may, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, from time to time determine.
- The roles and responsibilities of Board Members are described in the Revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 which is available on the website of the Department of Finance [Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies](#).
- A board member shall cease to be a member of the board if he or she is nominated as a member of Seanad Éireann, is elected as a member of either House of the Oireachtas or as a representative in the European Parliament, elected to the European Parliament, or becomes a member of a local authority.

#### 5. Submitting your Application

Before submitting your expression of interest, please review the self-assessment questionnaire which can be found [here](#). This questionnaire is designed to help you in considering whether to submit an expression of interest - you are not required to submit the questionnaire as part of the application process.

Having considered the general suitability criteria for membership of a State Board, you should consider carefully how your background and experience fits with the specific appointment criteria set out in the Person Specification section in this booklet.

Your submission should be made via the following link [www.stateboards.ie](http://www.stateboards.ie) together with your **Curriculum Vitae** and a **cover letter** (see Appendix 1 of this booklet for help with the online process).

#### IMPORTANT NOTE

Please take care when submitting your expression of interest. As the Assessment Panel will generally make its recommendation(s) based on consideration of the documentation which you submit, it is most important that you do the following:

1. *Ensure your Cover Letter (and supporting CV) clearly specifies how your particular background and experience meets the requirements of the Authority position(s) specified in this booklet, and*
2. *That you fully answer any supplementary questions which are presented to you as part of our online application process.*

This will help ensure that the Assessment Panel is as informed as possible as to the basis for your candidature and why you believe you are a person who could potentially be appointed to this State Board. **Please only include information that is directly relevant to the particular role for which you are applying.**

If you have any questions regarding the application process please email [info@stateboards.ie](mailto:info@stateboards.ie).

## **6. Assessment Process**

An Assessment Panel (the “Panel”) will be convened by PAS to consider and assess the applications received by PAS. The Panel will:

- review and discuss the expressions of interest received against the specific appointment criteria for the role, as advertised in this Information Booklet;
- assess potential candidates further once they meet the specified appointment criteria by undertaking any or all of the following steps:
  - Consideration of the written applications; and/or
  - Meeting<sup>4</sup>/conference call; and/or
  - Referee checks; and/or
  - Any other selection or verification method deemed appropriate (this may include PAS requiring statutory declarations from shortlisted applicants as to the bona fides of the qualifications and experience contained in their applications).
- arrive at a shortlist of suitable candidates to be sent forward for consideration by the Minister.

Please note that the Public Appointments Service will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by candidates as part of our selection process.

## **7. Confidentiality**

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts, 2014, applications will be treated in strict confidence. All enquires, applications and all aspects of the proceedings are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, outside those directly involved in that aspect of the process.

Certain items of information, not specific to any individual, are extracted from computer records for general statistical purposes.

## **8. Data Protection**

The Data Protection Act 2018 provides that the processing of personal data shall be lawful where such processing is necessary for the performance of a statutory function of a controller. PAS is mandated by statute under the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act, 2004 to act as the centralised assessment and selection body for the civil service and to carry out all the procedures necessary to undertake the recruitment, assessment and selection of suitable candidates for appointment. By submitting your personal data (including your name, address, contact details and details of your education and work history contained in your curriculum vitae and cover letter) via publicjobs.ie, you acknowledge

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<sup>4</sup> The Public Appointments Service will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates.

that such data may be used by the Public Appointments Service and disclosed to and used by client departments, in connection with its statutory roles to assist and advise relevant Ministers in relation to appointments to the boards of State bodies. The information contained in your publicjobs profile is yours to manage, amend, update or delete as appropriate. For more detailed information on our Data Protection Policy, please see our [Code of Practice for the Protection of Personal Data in the Public Appointments Service](#).

If your application is assessed and you are considered to be suitable for appointment your c.v. and cover letter (and any additional supplementary information requested as part of the application process), will be forwarded to the State Board Liaison Officer in the relevant Department. Once it obtains your personal data, the Department will act as data controller of such data and will retain it for up to one year following the appointment/s. Unless you request the withdrawal of your application such data may be used in considering your suitability for other similar vacancies/roles that arise for a period of up to one year for this Board.



## APPENDIX 1

### Submitting your application:

In order to submit your application, you should take the following steps:

1. Go to [www.stateboards.ie](http://www.stateboards.ie).
2. On the bar at the top of the page click on "Available Appointments".
3. This brings you to a page with all our advertised vacancies. Select whichever position you would like to apply for (you are welcome to apply for more than one position if you wish).
4. On the relevant page please click on the "apply for position" button at the bottom of the page
5. This will bring you to a page on [www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie) and, if you already have a publicjobs.ie account, will prompt you for your username and password. If you do not have an account, you will be asked to create one.
6. Once you input your details you will be brought to a page where there is a prompt in the middle of the page which says "apply here". Click on the link to the online application form beside it.
7. A form will appear on your screen, some of the text boxes will be populated with information from your publicjobs.ie profile (Name, address etc.). You will need to complete the rest of the fields and enter your name and the date at the bottom of the form.
8. If there is a supplementary question, ensure that your response complies with the word limit and that it does not contain any special characters (i.e. %, & etc.) or you may receive an error message and will be unable to submit your application.
9. Click on "continue".
10. You will then be brought to a screen where you should upload your CV and Cover Letter. These are required documents and your application cannot be processed without them. Once you have selected these and uploaded them, please click on the "submit" button at the bottom of the page.
11. You will receive an e-mail confirmation (to the address listed in your publicjobs.ie profile) to confirm that your application has been submitted.

You must confirm that you do not have any conflicts of interest or legal impediment which would be likely to interfere with your ability to play a full part on the Board. You must also confirm that you can make yourself available to attend meetings and to carry out the duties of a Board member.