

**Educational Research Centre (ERC)
MEETING OF THE BOARD
1.30pm, 20 October 2025
ERC offices**

Board Members Present:

Eugene Wall, Chairperson, Sharon Feeney, Deputy Chairperson, Paula Fyans and Orla Barry.

In Attendance:

John Regan, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Damian Downes, Principal Officer (PO) and Secretary, Anne Comey (AP) who took the minutes.

Apologies: Eilish Broderick

1. Open Meeting

1.1 Opening remarks from Chair

AGREED - The Agenda, as uploaded to Board X.

1.2 Reflection on the session with Better Boards and last Board meeting

NOTED: High level of satisfaction reported by the members. A number of action items highlighted some already actioned at last meeting. Board will look into a second training after the end of year self-assessments.

1.3 Agenda

AGREED - As circulated.

AGREED - All titles to be removed except for formal reports.

2. Minutes

2.1 Minutes of meeting of 12 September 2025 (BMin – 092025)

AGREED - As circulated, pending the following update: in relation to the use of reserves over the next 2/3 years, the Board highlighted concerns about the ERC being funded adequately in the future and its overreliance on reserves.

AGREED - Once Standing Orders are finalised, comments on Minutes to be emailed prior to the meeting to the Chair. Action table in Minutes to be on a separate document with traffic light system.

3. Conflict of Interest

3.1 Conflict of Interest Register

NOTED - No new conflicts of interest were reported.

4. Matters arising from previous minutes

4.1 Matters arising not included in the agenda.

NOTED: Update to April Minutes not implemented. Need to include note on valuation for test department.

NOTED: CEO updated the Members on the building development.

AGREED: Board to write to DCU to get confirmation of date for signing of the lease.

AGREED: Members to return their completed skills matrix by November 7th.

5. CEO Report

5.1 CEO Report (B 5-25-1)

NOTED – As Read. Verbal update on DOTS at the December meeting.

AGREED: Letter from Society of Actuaries to Department of Education on Inequality in Maths to be circulated to research staff internally.

5.2 Corporate Services and Operations report (B 5-25-2)

NOTED - As read.

6. Finance

6.1 Income & Expenditure Report Q3 (B 5-25-3)

NOTED - As read.

6.2 Engagement with Department on Reserves verbal update

NOTED – As shared.

7. Risk and Internal Audit

7.1 ARC Minutes June 25 (B 5-25-4)

NOTED - As read.

7.2 ARC Report (B 5-25-5)

NOTED - As read.

7.3 Internal Audit – Verbal audit

NOTED – As shared.

8. Policies

8.1 Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy (B 5-25-6)

AGREED: To approve the policy, as circulated.

NOTED: ERC to consider pre-employment screening.

8.2 Policy Schedule (B 5-25-7)

AGREED: To approve the Policy Schedule, noting the evolving nature of the document and the potential need to include other policies as required.

NOTED: ERC to consider including employment screening and garda vetting policy.

8.3 Signature Policy (B 5-25-8)

AGREED – Comments to be issued to the Secretary by November 15th.

NOTED: Review consistency of language around Head of Corporate Services / PO Corporate Services.

8.4 Blended Work 2026 (B-5-25-9)

NOTED: CEO outlined the discussions with staff that had taken place.

NOTED: The need to provide clarity to staff regarding work arrangements by agreeing policy changes for a specified duration.

AGREED: Updated policy to be presented at the December Board meeting.

9. Governance

9.1 Standing Order (B 5-25-10)

AGREED – To approve the Standing Orders as presented pending removal of Section 2 except for paragraph Re confidentiality.

AGREED: These are a set of standards of conduct/action and should not tie the Board down.

AGREED: Board ToR to be updated to include:

In case of Chair absence, Deputy Chair role acts as Chair until Chair return.

Annual Board agenda/workplan.

AGREED: To refer standing orders to ARC chair with the suggestion that they might develop a similar set for the ARC.

9.2 Statutory Instruments (B 5-25-11)

NOTED – Discussion document setting out a range of possible changes to the Statutory Instrument.

AGREED:

- Re note 9h and 9j, 9j, only should be kept.
- Re note 11, remove second option and leave “the Centre shall have 7 members”.
- No changes to the number of annual meetings are required,
- All other proposals are agreed.

AGREED: Add item on Committees to the Agenda of the December meeting.

9.3 Topics for meeting with Tómas O Ruairc (B 5-25-12)

NOTED: As circulated.

9.4 Performance Management of the CEO (B 5-25-13)

NOTED: As circulated.

AGREED: Process agreed. 2025 review will be done using the current form. Board to meet in 2026 to agree on new form for 2026.

9.5 Self-Assessment (B-5-25-14 A&B)

NOTED: As Read

AGREED: Add a box for Matters Board think it should look at.

10. Research

10.1 Research Strategy (B 5-25-15)

NOTED: As circulated.

AGREED: Comments to be sent by the end of the week (24/10/2025).

10.2 ERC @ 60 (B 5-25-16)

NOTED: As circulated.

NOTED: Opportunity to thank previous Chair for his role on the Board.

11. AOB

10.1 Dates for 2026

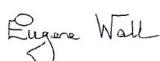
AGREED – Proposed dates for the 2026 meetings to be recirculated to the members who will confirm availability.

10.2 Miscellaneous

NOTED: The Next Board meeting is on December 9th in the ERC.

The meeting concluded.

JR, DD and AC left the meeting. The Board reflected on the meeting outcomes.

Eugene Wall

Appendix 1: Action Table Meeting October 2025

On track
Minor delays/issues, managed at present
Major delays/Issues, requiring significant management
Completed

No	Item	Status at 20/10/2025
1	Action Log to be included in minutes	
2	Add Professional and Consultancy Services costs	
3	Draft standing orders to be updated and circulated at the October meeting	
4	Roll out corporate services update report at October meeting	
5	Chair to meet with CPU in 2025	
6	Assist Sec to meet with Board	
7	Update annual report and include Chair intro. Publish post translation.	
8	Circulate updated Matrix to Board members for completion.	
9	Draft Board work programme to be circulated at the October meeting.	
10	Proposed 2026 meeting dates to be circulated to the members.	
	Management Letter to be sent back to C&AG	
12	Action proposal for use of T Kellaghan funds	
13	ERC to look at Primary fair	
14	Publish the Customer Charter	
15	Update the Policy tracker and circulate priorities for the Board at next meeting.	
16	Update policies to 5-year reviews.	
17	Circulate approved Parent's Leave	
18	ARC update to be issued for October meeting	
19	Organise second Board training session post end of year 2025 self-assessments.	
20	Update April and September Minutes	
21	Letter to DCU to get confirmation of lease signing date	
22	Members to complete skills matrix	
23	Letter from Society of Actuaries to Department of Education on Inequality in Maths to be circulated to research staff internally.	
24	ERC to consider Garda Vetting and Pre Employment screening policy	
25	Finalise standing orders	
26	Discuss standing orders with ARC	
27	Board Terms of Reference to be updated	
28	Circulate SI change document to the DoE	
29	Add discussion on Committees to the December agenda	
30	Develop form for 2026 CEO appraisal	
31	Update self-assessment form	
32	Members to confirm availability for proposed 2026 meeting dates	