

Research Alive! Terms of Reference

Background and objectives of Research Alive!

The Research Alive! group was established in 2013. Its initial purpose was to host a one-day event to share the experiences of teachers using evidence in their work, and the results of a national survey on their evidence needs. From this, the Research Alive! group has continued to collaborate to promote the use of research in educational practice and to promote greater sharing by teachers of their experiences of implementing research in their work.

The Research Alive! group is a collaboration between the Teaching Council, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the Centre for Effective Services (CES). As illustrated by the mission and objectives of the three individual organisations outlined below, together they provide a collection of mutually reinforcing objectives to enhance the connections between research, policy and practice in the context of both everyday classroom practice, curriculum and assessment.

The Teaching Council

The Teaching Council was established on a statutory basis in 2006 to promote teaching as a profession, to promote the professional development of teachers and to regulate standards in the profession.

The Teaching Council's principal functions are:

- To establish and maintain the Register of Teachers.
- To protect standards of entry to the profession and standards in teacher education.
- To maintain and improve standards of professional practice and conduct.
- To promote research related to teaching, learning and assessment.
- To advise the Minister for Education and Skills on a range of professional matters.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is a statutory Council and its brief is to advise the Minister for Education and Skills on matters relating to curriculum and assessment for early childhood education and for primary and post-primary schools.

The NCCA's mission is:

- To advise the Minister for Education and Skills on curriculum and assessment from early childhood to the end of second level
- To engage with learners, teachers, practitioners, parents and others to support innovation in schools and other educational settings
- To undertake, use and share research as a basis for advice and debate on education.

The Centre for Effective Services

The Centre for Effective Services connects research, policy and practice to improve outcomes for communities, children and young people across the island of Ireland. We work to influence policy and systems change; champion innovative service design and implementation; and build knowledge, skills and capacity for government departments, organisations, researchers and practitioners.

Part of a new generation of intermediary organisations, CES is a not-for-profit that helps communities, children and young people thrive.

Functions

The Research Alive! group will work collaboratively on: the development of resources, the organisation of, and participation at, relevant events, and general promotion of the utilisation of evidence in practice by education professionals. Initially, the areas on which the Group will focus include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The promotion of greater access to research evidence for and by teacher
- Fostering enhanced use of research by teachers in their practice
- The provision of opportunities for teachers to come together to share experience of using research in their work
- The promotion and facilitation of engagement between researchers, teachers and policy makers.
- The development of Communities of Practice in relation to evidence-informed teaching practice and also in relation to bridging the gap between researchers and practitioners
- Awareness-raising in relation to teachers' evidence needs
- The support of better outcomes for children and young people through the increased use of an evidence-informed approach to educational practice
- The establishment of relationships with international bodies in the area of knowledge translation/mobilisation.

It is anticipated that the functions of the Research Alive! Group may evolve over time.

Composition of the group

The group will be comprised of leadership and additional representatives from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the Teaching Council and the Centre for Effective Services.

Frequency of meetings

Meetings of the Research Alive! group will normally be convened every two months and hosting of meetings will rotate on a bi-annual basis between the Teaching Council, the Centre for Effective Services and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

Meetings will be scheduled in advance and the required documentation will be circulated in advance of meetings.