Post-Primary Languages Ireland

Languages Connect

ETBI / Post-Primary Languages Ireland invites applications for the position of

Director of Operations

Information Booklet

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Director of Operations at Post-Primary Languages Ireland/Languages Connect (nested business unit of ETBI)

Introduction

Post-Primary Languages Ireland (PPLI) is fully funded by the Department of Education and Youth (DEY) and is currently a nested business unit of Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI).

PPLI works to implement the policy of the DEY of diversifying, enhancing and expanding foreign languages education in Ireland. PPLI implements key actions in *Languages Connect - Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026* (new strategy to be developed in 2027).

PPLI is driven by a passion to see increased levels of participation in modern languages education based on: the increased opportunities that learning a language affords in the world of employment and mobility; the intercultural skills which equip citizens to participate equally in a multicultural global context; the capacity of languages education to support inclusion, well-being, and access to educational opportunity; and the transformative potential of language learning to open the mind and broaden horizons.

The PPLI team brings together a diverse range of experts who consistently deliver high-quality programmes and initiatives in foreign language education and awareness raising. PPLI is recognised for its professionalism, innovation, versatility, and strong work ethic. The team has experienced sustained and significant growth in recent years, including expansion of programme delivery across both primary and post-primary sectors; significant increases in participation across national programmes; increased support to the Department of Education and Youth and other national stakeholders; expansion of partnerships with national and international agencies and an associated growth in staffing, budgets, programmes and operational complexity. This growth has largely been driven by demand and emerging national priorities.

The Appointment

ETBI/PPLI wishes to appoint a Director of Operations, at senior management level. This new and important appointment will lead the operational, organisational and structural development of PPLI. It will be responsible for streamlining efficiencies to optimise PPLI's reach, building upon significant growth over a relatively short space of time. An important part of this will be the consolidation and integration of organisational structures, systems, processes and delivery models across all areas of activity.

The successful applicant will be responsible for ensuring that PPLI evolves from a highly responsive, demand-led organisation, into a strategically planned, research-informed and systematised national organisation – capable of delivering sustainable, high-quality programmes at greater scale.

It is envisaged that the role will strengthen organisational resilience, enhance governance and operational effectiveness, support statutory readiness, and ensure that the leveraged delivery model[1] for national programme delivery remains coherent, efficient and sustainable.

[1] Incorporating the deployment of Language Development Officers and Associates

Reporting directly to the PPLI Director, the role will support the PPLI Director with provision of organisation-wide leadership by assuming responsibility for coordinating and streamlining operational performance across multiple programme areas and activities. The Director of Operations will deputise for the PPLI Director as required.

The post is a full-time position; a six-month probationary period which can be extended to eleven months will apply. In line with ETBI practice, the appointment will be made on an initial three-year fixed-term contract. The role is a permanent requirement within the PPLI structure.

Competencies

- Leadership and Strategic Direction
- Judgement and Decision Making
- Management & Delivery of Results (Projects, Processes and Resources)
- Building Relationships & Communication
- Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development
- Drive & Commitment to Public Service Values

Qualifications and Experience

Qualifications: essential

- A Level 8 qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications, or equivalent recognised qualification in Management, Business, Education, Public Administration, Operations Management, Project/Programme Management or equivalent.

Qualifications: desirable

- A postgraduate qualification in Management, Education, Public Administration, Business, Project/Programme Management or a related discipline would be advantageous.
- A recognised qualification in project or programme management would be beneficial.

Experience: essential

- Significant senior management experience with responsibility for the operational delivery of a complex service, programme or function.
- Proven experience of leading and managing teams, including workforce planning, resource allocation, performance management and staff development.
- Demonstrable experience of translating strategic objectives into operational plans and delivering agreed outcomes.
- Significant experience of managing complex programmes, projects or services involving multiple stakeholders, competing priorities and deadlines, and of building effective relationships with senior stakeholders and external partners.

- Experience of financial and budget management, including monitoring expenditure and ensuring effective use of resources.
- Track record of developing, implementing and reviewing operational systems, policies and processes, and of using KPIs and management information to monitor and improve delivery.
- Experience of managing operational risk, governance and compliance.
- Proven experience of leading organisational change and implementing new initiatives in a complex environment.
- Experience of managing HR and staff-relations matters within established policies and procedures.
- Experience of working in a multicultural environment

Experience: desirable

- Knowledge of contract, supplier and service-level management.
- Experience of delivering services within, or working with, public bodies, government departments, education providers or not-for-profit organisations.
- Practical perspective of working within a national or geographically dispersed service environment.
- Demonstrable knowledge and understanding of the Irish education system.
- Competency in a foreign language.

Key Responsibilities

The Director of Operations will provide leadership for the development, integration and continuous improvement of PPLI's delivery model – to incorporate systems and operational structures which will support the sustainable growth of foreign language education at primary and post-primary level. The successful candidate will assume overall responsibility for the development of research-informed but practically based Modern Foreign Language (MFL) project delivery processes. The position will review, develop and refine current systems and processes, not only to optimise efficiency and cost-effectiveness, but also to respond to meet ever-increasing demands on a sustainable operational basis.

Leadership and Organisational Development

- Lead the development and implementation of organisation-wide operational systems, processes and structures.
- Drive organisational consolidation and change to support PPLI's evolving remit and future growth.
- Develop and implement integrated and customised operational strategies, aligned with national language education strategy and organisational growth objectives.
- Support long-term workforce planning, succession planning and organisational sustainability.
- Contribute to the development and execution of PPLI's strategic priorities and annual business plans.

Delivery Model Development and Innovation

- Research and propose/recommend process design/redevelopment solutions to deliver a sustainable model for provision of MFL supports at PPLI.
- Lead the review, redesign and continued improvement of PPLI's languages provision delivery models.
- Develop scalable, research-informed approaches to language provision across PPLI primary and post-primary teams.
- Identify and evaluate innovative delivery solutions, including blended learning, online learning, and other alternative models of efficient provision.
- Ensure delivery approaches remain responsive to curriculum developments, demographic change and future educational needs.
- Promote evidence-informed decision-making and continuous improvement across all areas of work.

Operational Excellence and Service Delivery

- Oversee the management and logistical coordination of the teaching and learning functions across PPLI Primary and Post-Primary teams.
- Ensure consistency, quality and optimum efficiency across programme delivery and support services.
- Lead the development of standardised systems, procedures and operating frameworks across the organisation.
- Drive process optimisation, efficiency initiatives and organisational effectiveness.
- Monitor performance and ensure the achievement of organisational objectives, targets and KPIs.

Coordination and Integration

- Strengthen integration and collaboration across primary and post-primary activities.
- Promote shared approaches, resource utilisation and knowledge transfer across all teams.
- Ensure the effective coordination of project support resources to maximise organisational impact.
- Foster cross-functional working between programme delivery, corporate services, and marketing and communications functions.
- Intervene in cases of operational, financial or human resources issues and problems.

Governance, Risk and Compliance

- Ensure robust governance, accountability and compliance frameworks are maintained.
- Lead organisational risk management activities and business continuity planning.
- Support and ensure compliance with public sector requirements, financial controls, procurement regulations and data protection obligations.
- Promote a culture of quality assurance, transparency and continuous improvement.

Leadership and People Management

- Provide effective leadership, direction and support to managers and staff across the organisation.
- Foster a collaborative, inclusive and high-performing organisational culture.
- Support staff development, capability building, knowledge retention and succession planning.

- Lead and manage organisational change initiatives and encourage innovation across teams.

Future Planning and Sustainability

- Respond proactively to emerging developments in language education and identify associated opportunities and risks for PPLI.
- Develop sustainable operational models capable of supporting increasing demand on an efficient and cost-effective basis.
- Lead initiatives that enhance organisational resilience, knowledge retention/transfer, scalability and long-term impact.
- Ensure PPLI remains well-positioned to deliver on national language education priorities and future strategic objectives.

This list is not exhaustive, the post-holder may be required to undertake other duties appropriate to the role as may be assigned as necessary.

Remuneration

Remuneration is aligned with the Principal Officer salary scale but please note this position does not include public service status. However, the role is open to secondment of an existing public servant where deemed appropriate and in agreement with the Department of Education and Youth.

Non-Personal Pension Contribution (Non-PPC):

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Salary	€102,744	€107,097	€111,425	€115,791	€119,467	€123,282 LSI1	€127,086 LSI2

This rate will apply where the appointee is not required under law to make a Personal Pension Contribution.

PPC:

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Salary	€108,152	€112,741	€117,294	€121,883	€125,753	€129,768 LSI1	€133,775 LSI2

LSI[1] After 3 years satisfactory service at the maximum.

LSI[2] After 6 years satisfactory service at the maximum.

The post to be filled would usually mean being placed on the first point of the scale. However, a person appointed on secondment from the Civil Service who has higher earnings than the first point of the scale may be placed on an appropriate point on the relevant scale in accordance with Government pay policy. Please note that the rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy and that the salary is subject to all statutory deductions including Pension Related Deduction where applicable.

Annual Leave

The annual leave allowance will be 30 working days per annum exclusive of public holidays. This allowance, which is subject to the usual conditions regarding the granting of annual leave, is based on a five-day week and is exclusive of public holidays.

Location

PPLI is currently based at The Digital Hub, Dublin 8. PPLI offers a hybrid work model with a three day in office requirement for this role.

Equal Opportunities

ETBI/ Post-Primary Languages Ireland is an equal opportunities employer.

Format of the Competition

PPLI reserves the right to shortlist applicants. Shortlisting of candidates for Stage 1 interview will be done on the basis of the CV and letter of interest when assessed against the criteria outlined in the advertisement and this information booklet.

Selection will be on the basis of competitive interviews. Candidates who are successful at the Stage 1 interview will be shortlisted for a final interview. The Stage 1 interview will assess the competencies required to perform the duties and responsibilities set out in the role description.

A final interview will be held for this smaller number of candidates shortlisted at Stage 1 interview and will focus more closely on compatibility and cultural alignment.

A job offer is dependent on the provision of two current professional references and one character reference. Referees will not be contacted without the candidate's prior agreement.

Application

This competition is being managed on behalf of ETBI/PPLI by Steering Point Executive Search. To apply, please send a detailed CV and a letter of interest, setting out how your experience meets the essential requirements for the role, to sdalton@steeringpoint.ie

Application timeframe

Please submit your application by 16:00 on 19th November 2026. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the application is submitted in advance of the deadline.

Shortlisting will be based on the CV and letter of interest, assessed against the criteria set out in this booklet. Candidates shortlisted for Stage 1 interview will be asked to complete PPLI's application form in advance of interview.

Preparing for Stage 1 interview

Please prepare a 10-minute presentation on why you believe your skills and experience make you the best candidate for the role in the context of the job responsibilities outlined in the Key Responsibilities section of this booklet.

Please also be prepared to expand on the examples you provided in your application form to the interview board of how you have demonstrated the relevant competencies required for the position.

In addition, as part of the interview process you will be asked to write a response to an unseen prompt related to the content of the work.

Confidentiality

Subject to the provisions of the F.O.I. Act, 1997 applications will be treated in strict confidence.

Attendance at interview/s

It is envisaged that Stage 1 interviews will be held in early December 2026, with final interviews shortly afterwards. Calls to interview will be made at least one week beforehand by email, so please ensure that the email address you provide is monitored.

The onus is on all applicants to make themselves available for the interview/s and to make whatever arrangements are necessary to ensure that they receive communications sent to them via the e-mail address provided. PPLI will not be responsible for expenses incurred by applicants.

Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn

Applicants who:

(a) do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as PPLI requires regarding any matter relevant to their candidature;

(b) or do not attend the interview/s at the time and place appointed,

(c) or, when offered appointment, do not accept appointment and take up duty as arranged;

shall, unless PPLI in its absolute discretion decides otherwise, be deemed to have withdrawn their candidature.

Queries

Please contact Shay Dalton, Steering Point Executive Search, at

sdalton@steeringpoint.ie