

**Subject:**

FW: New submission from Research Form

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**From:** The Electoral Commission <noreply@electoralcommission.eu>

**Sent:** Friday 12 January 2024 19:52

**To:** ELC Research <research@electoralcommission.ie>

**Subject:** New submission from Research Form

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**1. What is your view on the five proposed research strands? Are there amendments or additions you would suggest?**

Speaking on behalf of the Theoretical Physics Student Association, a student group which recently took an interesting in electoral matters from a research perspective, these research strands are coherent. Strand A is the prerequisite for asking the questions within any other strand. Stratifying into strands makes sense from an operational standpoint, although of course they are not mutually exclusive, and one can think of research projects which hit on multiple strands simultaneously. Strand E especially stands out to our organisation, where it is great to see the Commission plainly interested in the proactive sourcing of solutions to difficult, open-ended problems.

**2. Which of the research questions under section 4 would you consider most important and why?**

Our organisation has been researching Constituency Reviews from a mathematical and computational perspective over the past year. Historically, and across nations, electoral redistricting has been a pinchpoint for electoral integrity. Despite being a strand B research item, electoral redistricting decisively informs the fairness aspect of strand C, and, as evidenced by the flurry of public debate arising from the recent Review, decisions in this respect have the capacity to draw tremendous public engagement, invoking strand D.

**3. Are there additional research projects that you consider important to promote and enhance Ireland's democracy and electoral events? If yes, please specify?**

This is less of a research question, and more of a request. As an organisation with a scientific background, we have a strong preference for open-access information, having seen what it can do for collective progress and institutional trust. The open-availability of data, and a record of the way in which that data was used to infer the conclusions and design decisions arrived at during the scientific process, is what lets us continue to iterate as a field. Wherever data is used in the electoral context, the same opportunity is there to build trust and provoke innovation.

**4. Are there any other comments or observations that you wish to make regarding An Coimisiún's research programme?**

It is excellent to see the will towards innovation in the public sector.

**Name**

Michael A.J. Mitchell

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Are you replying as an Individual or representing an Organisation?**

I represent an Organisation

**Name of Organisation**

Theoretical Physics Student Association