



Skills Funding Agency

Post-occupancy Evaluation Guide

The rationale for Post-occupancy Evaluation

It is good estate management practice to evaluate the outcome of major capital projects, including acquisition and disposals where applicable. Evaluation is an essential performance management and continuous improvement tool and adopt it as best practice. It is essential that the Agency is able to access this information to help inform future funding bids and capital investment policy.

The purpose of a post-occupancy evaluation is to provide a structured evaluation of the process of delivering a project, as well as to demonstrate how the project has impacted on educational provision, property/estate issues (including space and costs), and the organisation's current and future financial health.

When to carry out a Post-occupancy Evaluation

It is recognised that organisations will need to have occupied and benefited from the completed project for a period of at least 12 months to be able to provide sufficient detail to make the evaluation worthwhile. All organisations are therefore required to provide an evaluation, to include functional performance, between 12 and 18 months from occupation, when the impact that the project has on educational delivery, finances and estates performance is known. The evaluation should also include an assessment on overall project delivery, taking on board final project outturn costs as approved by the Governing Body or Board.

Format of Post-occupancy Evaluation

The format of the evaluation is a matter for the organisation but, as a minimum, it should contain the following:

- sufficient information to compare and analyse the changes made to the estate from inception to completion
- an evaluation of the benefits to learners
- any economic benefits, including an analysis of the impact that the project has had on estates running costs and lessons learnt

The evaluation should also include any material changes made after approval and any further changes made or planned post-completion of the project.

As part of the preparation of the evaluation it is important that users (students, staff and other stakeholders) are involved to obtain information on the different aspects of the project and their experiences.

Content of Post-occupancy Evaluation

As a guide, the evaluation should contain the following information:

1. Introduction, to include:

- organisation name
- address and postcode
- project title and Agency reference number
- organisation project contact, to include position within the organisation
- date of the evaluation and date presented to Governors/Board

2. Organisation project background:

To include the key drivers for the development, including property strategy, feasibility study as applicable, statement of needs, funding and consent issues, programme.

3. Brief project description:

- Location.
- Building design and vision.
- Pre- and post-project floor areas (state new, refurbished, demolished, mothballed, retained, sold/acquired and total change in GIA).
- Change in condition and suitability of the estate.
- Type of construction.
- Uses.

4. Project delivery process:

- Adherence to the design brief. This should cover any issues in developing the project brief in relation to design and cost control.
- Procurement, to cover issues with team selection, contractual and technical aspects, the reasons for any changes made to the team during the course of the project and impact on the delivery of the project.
- Construction, to include contractor performance, programme and change management issues.
- Handover, to include operational and technical issues which arose at handover (for example commissioning) and immediate improvements to operation and functionality.

5 Educational evaluation:

- Did the project meet its educational objectives and outcomes?
- If the capital works were as a result of issues raised in an inspection report, comment on whether they resolved those issues.
- Describe the changes made to the curriculum and/or the method of delivery that the organisation now offers.

- In particular has the project facilitated any innovative changes in curriculum delivery?
- What changes have been made to the location of the curriculum?
- Indicate the effect on specialist provision (if applicable).
- Advise on actual changes to learner numbers and how this compares to numbers anticipated in the original application.
- How has the project impacted on young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)?
- Outline how the project has supported the expansion and growth of Apprenticeships and employer engagement.
- Outline how the project has supported measurable improvements in the quality of teaching and learner success.

6 Property evaluation

6.1 Capital costs to include:

- Outturn cost compared to the estimated / approved cost.
- Building cost analysis for new build/refurbishment.
- Outline of issues such as value engineering, unforeseen/exceptional costs, sustainability costs, material changes to the project following approval by Governors.

6.2 Space utilisation:

- How has the project changed the gross internal area, its impact on space utilisation, and efficiency and condition of the estate?
- How has the future management of rooms and facilities changed as a result of the project?

6.3 Design:

- Did the project meet the original design brief?
- If any additional works were undertaken after the Agency's approval of the project, indicate the nature of the additional works and the reasons for them.
- Why were late changes necessary and how were they integrated into the project?

- Has the original estimated life of the asset changed and, if so, what are the reasons for this?
- Describe the formal system of signing off project changes and additional costs in place.
- Indicate whether there has been any change in the estimated future refurbishment costs of the asset or the year for which it is planned.
- How has the design transpired in reality?
- Adaptability – how has the design allowed for flexibility?

6.4 Sustainability:

- Should cover both the physical elements of the development and how it has contributed to other aspect of sustainability in the estate.
- Where applicable this should include educational benefits, BREEAM rating, impact on carbon footprint/carbon-management plan, recycling, feed-in tariff benefits, whole-life costs and payback periods, travel planning, energy, water usage, ventilation and cooling.

6.5 Facilities Management:

- The technical performance of the buildings.
- Implementation of physical systems (that is, Building Management Systems (BMS) and training).
- Changes in facilities management costs.

6.6 Programme:

- Project Programme - Pre-contract and Construction.
- Compare planned programme against actual, to include date contract was let, date started on site, date of practical completion, client occupation and the reasons for any delays on programme.

6.7 Acquisitions and Disposals:

- Did the project include any acquisitions or disposals? If so, did these progress as planned, did any issues arise and if so what lessons could be learned?

6.8 Professional advice and contractor performance:

- Who were the main consultants and the contractor? How did they perform as a team, including value for money, communications and dispute resolution?

7 Finance evaluation:

- Analyse the planned funding against actual to include Skills Funding Agency grant, other public sector grants as applicable, disposal proceeds, loan finance (secured and unsecured) and organisation reserves.
- Effect on revenue costs to include reference to property and energy costs.
- Post-project investment appraisal highlighting any significant change to the initial investment appraisal.
- How has the project impacted on the organisation's financial health (either positively or negatively), and how does that compare to the forecast impact at the time of the project?
- Running costs / savings – actual to forecast in the investment appraisal at application stage.
- Financing source – where has the funding come from and how does that vary to what was expected?
- The cost of financing, including interest rate, compared to what was expected.
- Expenditure profile – whether project expenditure has varied from the original monthly profile and if so by what degree?

8. Occupant questionnaires and focus groups

It is expected that students, staff and other relevant stakeholders will be involved in the evaluation process to obtain information on the different aspects of the project and their experiences. The evaluation should include the methodology and any findings of surveys/consultations, which may include:

- Temperature, lighting, acoustics, ventilation, building entrance, control, storage, décor, facilities and amenities, security and building management, energy efficiency.
- How the design has impacted on the learners, staff and stakeholders and their experience/involvement?
- Impact on wider regeneration.

9. Organisation benefit summary

- How would the organisation use its learning experiences from this project to improve the management of the next project?
- What have been the positive aspects of the project?
- What have been the negative aspects of the project?

10. Conclusion and recommendations

- Overall customer benefits.
- What next?
- Future property strategy.

NOTE: It is also important to consider who should receive a copy of the evaluation. It may be a requirement of public funding, such as Skills Funding Agency and Regional Growth Fund capital grant, to submit details of a post-occupancy evaluation. The Skills Funding Agency is required to account for the public investment made in the further education estate and the impact it has made and therefore usually requires, as a condition of capital grant, a post-occupancy evaluation. Details and form are available on the [Capital page on GOV.UK](#).