

Post Occupancy Evaluation

This guideline provides agencies with a structured approach to the conduct of a post occupancy evaluation (POE) of a new or existing facility when it is fully operational – after at least 12 months of occupancy.

In this guideline, the term ‘agencies’ has the same meaning and is used interchangeably with ‘departments’ (as defined in s8 of the [Financial Accountability Act 2009](#)).

Key concepts and requirements are explained in the policy documents listed below:

[Capital Works Management Framework](#)

[Capital Works Management Framework guideline: Project Review](#)

A POE (also referred to as a building performance review in the Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF):

- focuses on the users’ interaction with the building after sufficient time has elapsed for them to experience and adjust to the building
- assesses the degree to which the building supports service delivery objectives
- assists continuous improvement in the planning process, by identifying positive and negative aspects of the building; and by incorporating this information into the planning and design of future facilities
- informs the preparation of defect action plans, at an operational level. This entails the correction of deficiencies by improving maintenance, minor works and management decisions.

The [Project Assessment Framework](#) (administered by Queensland Treasury) promotes benefits realisation reviews which focus on ensuring that a project or a program delivers the anticipated benefits and value for money documented in its business case. In this context the business case can be for service delivery initiatives of which a government building may be a component. The POE has a key role in the process efficiency improvement and in contributing to improved service delivery outcomes.

Benefits

Evaluating the performance of buildings post-occupancy will result in improved:

- project briefing that promotes increased functionality and cost effectiveness
- building management that identifies maintenance and other recurrent costs
- operational processes that better service the needs of clients.

Risks

Risks which need to be managed when planning and undertaking a POE include:

- inadequate definition and management of the POE
- an undisciplined approach
- invalid or unreliable data collection
- an exclusive focus on negative aspects
- unavailability of participants.

Potential consequences of not conducting a POE may result in:

- lost opportunities to improve future facilities
- reduction of asset performance in support of service delivery needs
- repetition of current deficiencies in future facilities.

1.0 Post occupancy evaluation process

A POE is a structured approach to the collection and analysis of data in relation to building performance and the translation of these findings into action plans. The three phases of the POE process (pre-evaluation, evaluation and post evaluation) are described in detail below.

1.1 Pre-evaluation phase

1.1.1 Planning – deciding to conduct a post occupancy evaluation

The decision to conduct a POE should take into account the:

- necessity for a rigorous review or audit
- desire to improve the functionality of the building
- need to enhance project briefs
- criticality of the building type to the service delivery requirements of the agency.

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As per policy requirement 18 of the CWMF, all departments (as defined in s8 of the [Financial Accountability Act 2009](#)) that control or administer buildings are required to undertake building performance reviews (commonly referred to as POEs) for:

- High Risk/Significant (HRS) government building projects¹
- a representative sample of repetitive government building projects which may not be HRS projects (e.g. prototypes and standard building types).

1.1.2 Initiating a post occupancy evaluation

The building owner is responsible for initiating a POE. Information on initiating and undertaking building performance reviews is provided in the CWMF guideline: [Project Review](#).

1.1.3 Defining the scope of a post occupancy evaluation

The scope of the POE should be identified early and it should be designed to focus on the outcomes of a specific project.

The following aspects should be assessed by a POE:

- **functional performance** - general planning and design associated with functional spaces in and around the building; space allocation and fitout; quality and standards of the design and construction and the site and building generally, including physical characteristics, circulation and access, safety, operational aspects of the building/s (including cleaning and maintenance)
- **technical and environmental performance** - health, safety and security; building services provisions (heating and cooling; lighting and acoustics; plumbing and electrical); equipment; materials and information technology provisions
- **economic performance** - the performance of the building/s as an investment in resources; and whole-of-life issues, including those relating to recurrent costs associated with building occupancy and operations, leasing and lease management, and maintenance
- **symbolic performance** - the aesthetic and image characteristics of the building/s for the community; and integration of art and design.

1.1.4 Selecting the level of review

The level of review required will depend on the objectives and scope of the particular POE. Refer to Table 1 of the CWMF guideline: *Project Review* for a description of the different level of reviews.

1.1.5 Identifying stakeholders

Stakeholders in the POE process usually include building users (staff and clients), the building design team and the building manager.

¹The term 'High Risk/Significant (HRS) government building projects' is a specific term defined by the Capital Works Management Framework as those where:

- failure to meet project objectives of time, cost and quality would critically affect the delivery of services to the community; and/or
- the lack of clear and transparent processes in the procurement of high value projects may impact on Government as a whole in terms of industry development and consistency of approach.

1.1.6 Establishing a management framework

An appropriate framework for the management of the POE should be established which contains a clear definition of the scope and level of the POE and the roles and responsibilities of the evaluation team. A reference group may facilitate the management of a POE.

1.1.7 Selecting an evaluation team

The selection and appointment of resources to undertake the evaluation should be based on the scope, level and complexity of the POE to determine the type of expertise required.

A broad, more general level POE may be undertaken by a single person. However, a complex review addressing a variety of issues may require a combination of external consultants and 'in house' resources with a wider range of skills to ensure an appropriate degree of objectivity. Team membership should be based upon an individual's expertise in relation to the anticipated issues.

1.2 Evaluation phase

1.2.1 Conducting a post-occupancy evaluation study

The study should address the following activities:

- communication with stakeholders (individuals or groups who may affect or be affected by the POE e.g. the building owner, the building manager and building users)
- determining an appropriate data collection methodology, including the selection of data collection instrument/s and preparation of a review plan²
- conducting the study, analysing the results and developing an action plan
- writing the POE report.

A POE report may be a brief document for a general study; however, for a more in-depth investigative study a comprehensive, structured report should be presented.

In all cases, the report should include:

- a summary which provides a quick overview
- the methodology used
- data analysis
- findings
- recommendations and action plans.

Recommendations and action plans may include tasks/activities that are linked to building project processes and outcomes (including project briefs, strategic maintenance plans or minor works programs). In some instances further investigation may be necessary to allow an adequate interpretation of results. These investigations may be targeted at project planning and delivery processes that impact on building performance (referred to as process reviews in the CWMF guideline: *Project Review*).

² A review plan should include: activities established by the methodology for the review; the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved; and the time and resource schedules.

1.3 Post-evaluation phase

1.3.1 Implementing actions and measuring effectiveness

This phase entails:

- seeking approval of the recommendations and action plans
- addressing recommendations and action plans
- reviewing the effectiveness of these actions.

The recommendations and action plans of the POE report may identify enhancements/modifications to the design and performance of the building to improve energy and water use, occupant comfort, workplace health and safety and the proper operation of all building systems. The results of this evaluation, together with the actions and recommendations from the process review, will contribute to the continuous improvement of an agency's internal control procedures.

The suite of guidelines which comprise the *Strategic Asset Management Framework* (available online at www.hpw.qld.gov.au) is organised under the following categories:

1. **Overview** - explains the principles and concepts of strategic asset management as they apply to buildings.
2. **Guidelines** - expand on key aspects of strategic asset management to inform decisions over the entire life-cycle of the asset.
3. **Decision-making methodologies and guidelines** - support agencies to implement best practice strategic management of buildings.

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