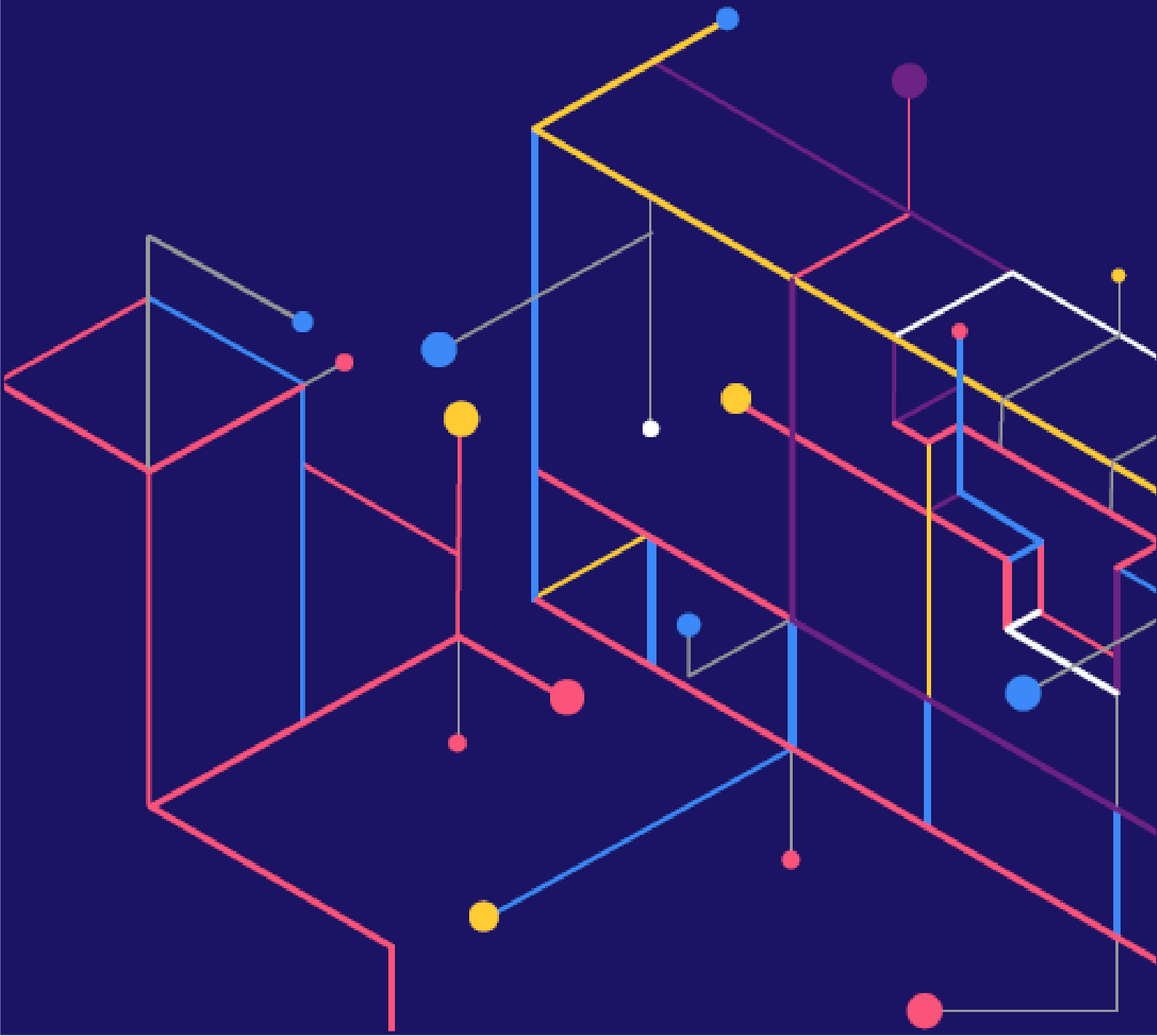


The home of Engineering and Materials

2022/23 Evaluation Report





As we reach the end of our first academic year based in the home of Engineering and Materials, I'd like to take a moment to look back on what's been an admittedly challenging but rewarding time for our community, and let you know what's planned for the year ahead.

The move from North Campus has presented a massive change for all of us, not only in our working environment but in the way we deliver teaching, work more flexibly and carry out our research activity going forward.

I recognise that you may still be acclimatising to new ways of working and familiarising yourself with the facilities on offer, and acknowledge that there are outstanding operational defects we are working hard with Faculty Estates colleagues and our external partners to put right. The role of the Service Delivery Team is in providing support to you around all of this – whether it's answering queries, providing on-hand support or using your feedback and suggestions to improve how we do things in this building.

As a building user, your experience matters so please take the time to read through the contents of this report. This will take a look at key takeaways and recommendations that have come from your feedback and evaluation activity over the last six months, as well as look forward to some key priority areas for us over the next year and ways you can get involved and have your say.

Matthew Foulkes, Service Delivery Manager

Evaluation

Since the home of Engineering and Materials was conceived as part of the 2012 Campus Masterplan, we appreciate a lot has changed. And with changing working patterns and technological approaches, and a project of this scale and complexity, we know we won't have gotten everything right first time.

That's why, in January 2023, we launched *We're Just Getting Started*, our post-occupancy evaluation campaign aimed at capturing data and feedback around all aspects of working life here. Through focus groups, building user groups and user feedback, the first six months of evaluation activity has focused on initial acclimatisation to the new space and ways of working, exploring building users' experiences with new facilities, and the effect of the move on morale, productivity and sense of community.

Focus groups

Between January – March 2023, focus groups were held to better understand how staff were acclimatising to their new workspace and surroundings. In the case of academic colleagues, PGRs and PDRAs, these also explored the impact of new ways of working and the new facilities on collaboration and the quality of their teaching and research respectively.

Due to strike action across the University and other public bodies (rail networks, schools), engagement was significantly lower than we had originally hoped, with 47 colleagues taking part across nine focus groups. Whilst this sample size is small, a number of key insights have emerged. These insights are being taken forward for review, with emerging themes informing the development of further evaluation metrics and delivery going forward.



Findings across all role types were generally positive about the quality of the new facilities. PGRs and PS colleagues cited an improvement in overall experience from North Campus, particularly in reference to collaborative working and morale. Academic colleagues were less positive across the board, citing lower morale and engagement due to shared academic offices, with fewer and lower quality interactions with students due to workspace restrictions.

You can view the full report of findings from these sessions [here](#).

Teaching and learning surveys

This academic year, 89 responses have been collated from academic colleagues across the Faculty, providing feedback around their experience delivering taught sessions in Engineering Buildings A & B.

Of those, an average of 69% enjoyed teaching in these facilities, 71% felt confident using the new facilities and 72% looked forward to teaching in the building next semester. However, 85% of colleagues reported issues managing AV in the first instance and almost half (47%) reported issues in connecting to Solstice, both of which caused delays in starting teaching sessions on time.

In response to issues, we're continuing to issue digital guidance and resources to teaching colleagues ahead of the 23/24 academic year, as well as working with Media Services to better highlight support and information for colleagues encountering issues.



Continuous improvements

Over the last 12 months, we've worked closely with colleagues across the community to identify areas of improvement and deliver better facilities and more agile processes wherever possible. Highlights to date include:



Meeting rooms

- Increased access to bookable meeting rooms for all colleagues.
- Additional AV installation to better support hybrid meetings.
- Ongoing trial of acoustic soundproofing to enhance confidentiality.



Wayfinding

- Launch of our digital map and touchscreens to support wayfinding and promote more accessible routes through the building.



Connectivity

- Installation of 332 additional wired network ports to better support the complexity of research colleagues' computational work.
- Increased high density Wi-Fi provision across the basement.
- Improved management of network printers with regular servicing and quicker resolution of issues.



Facilities

- Enhanced welfare and baby change facilities now open.
- Two dedicated multi-faith spaces for staff and students opening in late 2023.



Security

- Introduction of MECD-specific lanyards and changes to door closure times in order to reduce tailgating and enhance workspace security.
- Changes to access arrangements and alarms added to entrances.
- Launch of 'Leave It, Lose it' campaign to raise awareness and reduce theft in student-centric areas.

Recommendations and next steps

As we enter our second full year based in the home of Engineering and Materials, we're focussed on capturing building users experiences in order to make immediate improvements, whilst we gauge whether anything more significant might be required through future Capital Planning exercises. Without this input, we're not yet in a position to consider larger structural changes to the building or workspace design.

We do recognise however that there are a number of emerging recommendations which will form the basis of key themes for the year ahead.

Defects



Through evaluation activity and staff feedback, common environmental issues and building defects have been identified as priority areas, which we are working with Faculty Estates colleagues and our external contractors to resolve between now and the appropriate contractual deadlines. These include:

- a two-month programme of ventilation and extractor testing and maintenance, to better manage environmental conditions in shared offices and labs;
- servicing of windows in open plan workspace to regulate air quality and temperature;
- maintenance work to resolve whistling sounds present in open plan areas and walkways.

Community

We understand that sense of community and more collaborative ways of working aren't where you want them to be yet and that there's more work to be done.

That's why your feedback around this is more important than ever - whether that's helping us understand any specific barriers preventing this, providing ideas and solutions for ways this can be improved or even measures you're already taking at a local level that could be more widely adopted. These can be sent to our Service Delivery Team (page 6) or via your local [Building User Group representative](#).

In tandem with this, we'll be trialling a number of local and building-wide initiatives to better support community-building across the site which will be introduced across the year.



Workspace personalisation



It's important that your immediate workspace and communal areas feel community-owned and, over the next 12 months, we want to ensure we're giving colleagues the tools and space to put their stamp on their working environment.

A number of measures will be rolled out over the coming months, from community boards to designated wall space and apparatus to showcase the work of your teams and research groups.



Support, suggestions and queries

Whilst the Service Delivery Team are on hand to support you, I'd like to reiterate the role all colleagues have in helping to maintain a cleaner, safer and more productive working environment. Particularly as we enter our second full year in the building, everybody should feel empowered to work with other colleagues in their area to resolve issues and come to common resolutions, whether it's etiquette around noise and disturbance or management of communal areas.

I'd also like to highlight the ongoing work of our [Building User Group](#). Made up of representatives from across workspace, members act as a way of collating feedback at a local level and proactively designing solutions. If you have any ideas, from local process improvements to building a better sense of community, members are always happy to listen to and take your feedback to bi-monthly meetings.

The Service Delivery Team is always here to help when it comes to operational queries and issues such as building faults and maintenance, access, meeting rooms and space bookings, or just finding out more about our facilities and building processes. You can reach out via any of our standard channels below.



TEAM@manchester.ac.uk



**In-person—Room 1A.045,
Core 3, First Floor, Eng A**
(Mon—Fri, 9am—5pm)



0161 529 4187
(Mon—Fri, 9am—5pm)



**Online
reporting
form**



Get involved

This evaluation has huge implications, not only for those of us based in the building but the wider University and its approach to building design and ways of working going forward. That's why it's important to take the opportunity to get involved and share your feedback anyway you can.

In the next semester, we'll be launching our first building-wide survey, to explore building user experience after our first full academic year and evaluate progress against our original project vision.

In the meantime, please remember that any issue or suggestion, big or small, feeds into this project and helps to ensure that any future decision making reflects the needs of the entire community.

MANCHESTER
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The University of Manchester

we're just
getting
started

To keep up to date with the latest ways to get involved, visit
staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/fse/meed

