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1824

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started

THE HOME OF ENGINEERING AND MATERIALS

23/24 EVALUATION REPORT



JULY 2024

INTRODUCTION



**MATTHEW FOULKES,
OPERATIONS MANAGER (MECD)**

As we reach the end of the 23/24 academic year, I'd like to reflect on our last 12 months in the building. December 2023 marked completion of the final technical move into Engineering Buildings A and B, as we handed over vacant North Campus Buildings to our partners at Bruntwood SciTech. Together, the University and Bruntwood SciTech are shaping a new legacy across the site through [ID Manchester](#).

Now that the Engineering buildings are fully occupied, we are continuing to learn what working life looks like in our new home; whether that's our everyday workspace operations, teaching activity or the breadth of research conducted here every day.

We're continuing to gather your feedback and experiences over the course of our three-year evaluation programme and working collaboratively across leadership and Operations teams to improve facilities and building processes where we can, as well as amplify what's already working well.

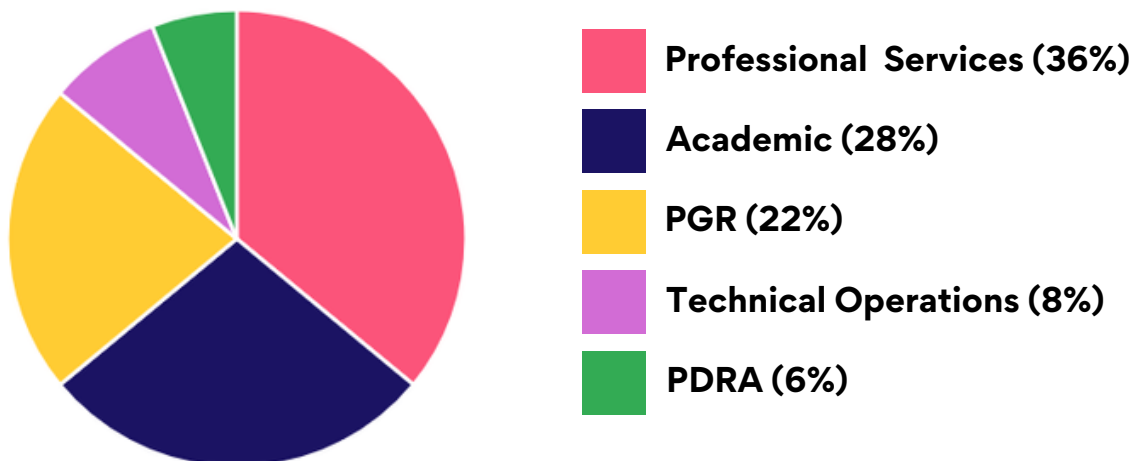
Your experience matters, so please take the time to read through the contents of this report. It outlines key takeaways from our first year of evaluation activity and highlights improvements already made and those coming up in the next few months as a direct response to your feedback.



YEAR 1 EVALUATION ACTIVITY

In December 2023, MECD's Year 1 post-occupancy evaluation survey was conducted - providing an opportunity for colleagues based in the MECD workspace or using facilities to undertake research or teaching activity to share their experience of the new building facilities and processes.

A total of 888 colleagues and PGRs took part in the survey, with a breakdown by role type provided below:



DAY TO DAY BUILDING EXPERIENCE

All colleagues who took part, fed back around their everyday experience in the building and their impression of the new facilities and building processes.

- Colleagues were broadly positive, in particularly around support provided by our Service Delivery Team in resolving issues, the building opening hours and the Wi-Fi and wired connectivity provision in the building.



- Wayfinding was identified as an issue, particularly for those based outside of the building's workspace, and colleagues expressed difficulty in being able to find appropriate information about the building and its processes.

WORKSPACE AND WAYS OF WORKING

Workspace occupants – whether based in open plan, shared academic offices or laboratory-adjacent workspaces – provided feedback around their immediate working environment, as well as their impressions of the new shared workspace facilities, processes and elements impacting their everyday role (including issues such as noise, confidentiality management, collaboration and community).

- PS colleagues, PGRs and academic colleagues based in the open plan workspace were predominantly positive around the new workspace, with the exception of some problems acclimatising to noise levels, issues around confidentiality management and satisfaction with their allocated storage provision.
- Academic colleagues based in shared offices and Technical Operations colleagues based in laboratory-adjacent spaces expressed lower rates of satisfaction, citing issues with environmental conditions, issues around confidentiality management and noise levels, and a lack of collaborative working or feelings of community in the new space.
- Colleagues across all role types were positive around the quality and availability of new auxiliary spaces provided throughout the workspace (e.g. meeting rooms, informal meeting spaces and social spaces).

RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL SPACES

Colleagues conducting research activity shared their experience using the new facilities, operational processes impacting their activity and to what extent they felt the space was supporting collaboration and community between different research groups and themes.

- Colleagues across all role types who use these types of spaces were largely positive around the quality of the new facilities, with PGRs and Technical Operations colleagues in particular reporting the space enables them to achieve their best work.
- Some issues were raised by colleagues around stores processes and waste management in the building, while academic and Technical Operations colleagues raised issues with storage provision in new technical spaces.
- Around half of colleagues reported the move to MECD had had a positive impact on forming of communities and networks within the research community. Conversely, a similar proportion felt the design and co-location of different research groups was not enabling the intended higher levels of interdisciplinary collaboration.

TEACHING AND LEARNING



Colleagues timetabled to teach in MECD, whether based in the workspace or elsewhere on campus, fed back around their experience delivering both practical and traditional taught sessions (e.g. in lecture theatres, meet and teach rooms, computer clusters), as well as wider and non-timetabled interactions with students taking place in the building.

- Satisfaction with the quality of new teaching spaces was high for both traditional taught and practical teaching spaces, and the vast majority of colleagues who had previously worked at North Campus had found the transition to teaching in the new space easy.
- Colleagues reported they experienced some difficulty accessing spaces to meet with students for ad-hoc meetings and interactions, as well as a need for more building-specific induction materials prior to teaching.



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Based around findings from the survey and feedback gathered across the academic year, a number of process changes have been carried out to improve colleague experience in the workspace and wider building.

NOISE AND DISRUPTION

- Successful pilot of an additional Fourth Floor boardroom space to provide more enclosed collaborative space and reduce noise levels in the open plan.
- Work to establish codes of practice around meeting room use to reduce disruption in open plan workspace areas.



SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY MANAGEMENT

- Application of window frosting to all workspace meeting rooms has been completed, plus frosting installation to open plan workspace areas and labs to increase privacy.
- Increased security measures throughout the Engineering Building A workspace, including an ongoing review of access arrangements in consultation with different staff groups.
- Installation of IT peripheral locks across workspace taking place in Summer 2024.



ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

- Extensive testing and maintenance to extract and ventilation systems in shared offices and labs to ensure more comfortable levels of temperature control and ventilation.
- Updates to Building Management System to better monitor temperature and ventilation levels in open plan workspace.
- Adjustment to blinds and light settings in open plan workspace to provide more optimum light levels and improve wellbeing.



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



STORAGE PROVISION

- Full audit of workspace lockers to ensure availability of storage space for new starters and improve workspace security.
- Repurposing of basement rooms to provide additional storage space for colleagues.

WELLBEING

- Opening of new dedicated multi-faith space for staff.
- Opening of new welfare room and baby change facilities.

IMPROVED FACILITIES AND PROCESSES

- Launch of simplified workspace postal process.
- Upgrades to colleague changing facilities.
- Ongoing work with departmental teams to improve open plan workspace and social spaces.



TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Set-up of new user group, as a means of establishing and sharing best practice around the use of teaching spaces throughout the building.
- Improvements to computer cluster software over the Summer to ensure smoother teaching sessions.



SUPPORT, SUGGESTIONS AND QUERIES

Whilst the Service Delivery Team will continue to be on hand to support colleagues around operational matters, such as building maintenance and defects, I'd like to reiterate your continued role in helping to create a cleaner, safer and collegiate workspace environment.

With issues arising over pest control and workspace security, colleagues have risen to the challenge of coming together and helping to maintain one another's health and safety; we ask that this continues into the new academic year.

Now many of us have been based in the workspace for almost two years and are more familiar with building processes and facilities, as well as those working around us, colleagues should feel empowered to resolve issues and come to common resolutions in their local area - whether that's around noise and disturbance or management of communal areas.

WHEN REPORTING OPERATIONAL ISSUES TO THE SERVICE DELIVERY TEAM, WE ALSO ASK THAT COLLEAGUES USE OUR REPORTING FORM. THIS PROVIDES ADDITIONAL INSIGHT INTO SPECIFIC OPERATIONAL TRENDS AND HELPS US TO IMPROVE THE BUILDING AND OUR SERVICE OVER TIME.



SCAN HERE

BUILDING USER GROUP

I'd also like to highlight the ongoing work of our [Building User Group](#) who have been instrumental in driving some of the process and facilities improvements over the last 12 months. Working with your local representative gives you the raise any local issues for escalation to our MECD Management Group and, more importantly, share your ideas and suggestions for how to improve how we work in the building in future.

Ahead of the 24/25 academic year, we'll be recruiting new members to the group to ensure all workspace areas and staff groups are represented, so please look out for this opportunity in the coming weeks if you're interested in helping to drive change across the site.

LOOKING AHEAD

We'd like to once again thank colleagues for their continued feedback over the past 12 months, whether that be through the Year 1 survey, raising issues and feedback directly to the Service Delivery Team or engaging via your Building User Group representative.

This first year of evaluation has been a crucial phase in helping to establish initial benchmarks and insights around your experience in the new building and these will lay the foundation for the next two years of evaluation activity and continuous improvement works.

In 2024/25, we'll be launching our Year 2 evaluation survey to help identify trends and any recurrent issues, as well as identify what's working well and how we can embed success more widely. Please do take the time to complete this once it goes live, as your feedback is more important than ever in shaping how we do things in the building.

GET IN TOUCH  TEAM@manchester.ac.uk

