

What is Post-Occupancy Evaluation?

Worksheet

Post-occupancy evaluation is a structured assessment - combining surveys, measurements and observation - of how well a completed building meets the needs of its occupants and performs against its original design goals.

Questions

1. What is the main purpose of a post-occupancy evaluation?

- A) To approve construction permits
- B) To assess how a building performs for occupants after it's in use
- C) To design the building's structural system
- D) To calculate construction costs

2. Which of these is a typical POE data collection method?

- A) Structural load calculations
- B) Occupant satisfaction surveys and physical measurements
- C) Zoning permit review
- D) Site excavation reports

3. What does the 'performance gap' refer to in a POE?

- A) The gap between two building phases
- B) The difference between predicted and actual building performance
- C) A structural design flaw
- D) A gap in the construction schedule

4. Why is a POE valuable for future projects?

- A) It has no effect on future design
- B) It only affects the evaluated building
- C) Lessons learned feed forward into design guidelines for future buildings
- D) It replaces the need for building codes

5. A new office building's energy bills are 30% higher than the design model predicted. The team runs a POE to find out why.

6. Employees in an open-plan office report they can't concentrate. A POE is conducted to investigate.

7. A school district wants to know if a new daylighting design actually reduced electric lighting use as predicted.

8. Define: What is post-occupancy evaluation (POE)?

9. Define: What are the main data sources in a POE?

10. Define: Why do architects conduct POEs?

Answer Key

1. B) To assess how a building performs for occupants after it's in use - POE evaluates real-world building performance and occupant experience after occupancy.
2. B) Occupant satisfaction surveys and physical measurements - POEs rely on surveys plus measured data like temperature, light and energy use.
3. B) The difference between predicted and actual building performance - It's the mismatch between design-stage predictions and real measured performance.
4. C) Lessons learned feed forward into design guidelines for future buildings - POE findings inform design standards and decisions on future projects, closing the feedback loop.
5. Define goal: identify the cause of the energy gap Collect data: review energy meters, interview facilities staff, survey occupant thermostat overrides Analyze: find that occupants are running HVAC overtime because the automated schedule doesn't match actual usage hours Report and feed forward: recommend reprogramming the HVAC schedule and update future design guidelines to include a buffer for actual occupancy patterns
6. Define goal: assess acoustic and visual comfort Collect data: occupant satisfaction survey plus on-site sound level and daylight measurements Analyze: sound levels exceed comfort thresholds near collaboration zones, with no acoustic separation from focus areas Report and feed forward: recommend adding acoustic panels and rezoning focus areas away from collaboration zones; update future layouts to separate loud and quiet zones from the start
7. Define goal: verify daylighting performance against the energy model Collect data: light-level sensors across classrooms, lighting energy submeters, teacher surveys on glare Analyze: daylighting reduced electric lighting use close to predictions, but some south-facing rooms report glare complaints Report and feed forward: recommend adding adjustable shading in south-facing rooms; confirm the daylighting strategy for reuse in future school designs
8. A structured study of how a completed building actually performs for its occupants, compared to design predictions.
9. Occupant surveys, physical measurements (temperature, light, acoustics, energy use), and walkthrough observations.
10. To close the feedback loop between design intent and real-world performance, improving both the current building's operations and future designs.

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