

Facility management

Facility management (or **facilities management** or **FM**) is a professional management discipline focused upon the efficient and effective delivery of support services for the organizations that it serves. The ISO defines FM as the "organizational function which integrates people, place and process within the built environment with the purpose of improving the quality of life of people and the productivity of the core business."

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Definitions and scope

Professional FM as an interdisciplinary business function has the objective of coordinate demand and supply of facilities and services within public and private organizations. The term "Facility" (pl. facilities) means something that is built, installed or established to serve a purpose,^[1] which, in general, is every "Tangible asset that supports an organization."^[2] Examples are real estate property, buildings, technical infrastructure, (HVAC), lighting, transportation, IT services, furniture, Custodial, grounds and other user-specific equipment and appliances.

The European standard for facilities management defines it as "the integration of processes within an organization to maintain and develop the agreed services which support and improve the effectiveness of its primary activities."

In April 2017 the International Organization for Standardization published the ISO 41011:2017 standard for facility management defining it as the "organizational function which integrates people, place and process within the built environment with the purpose of improving the quality of life of people and the productivity of the core business."^[3] A Management System Standard for Facilities Management has also been developed.^[4]

Scope

FM covers these two main areas: 'Space & Infrastructure' (such as planning, design, workplace, construction, lease, occupancy, maintenance and furniture) and 'People & Organisation' (such as catering, cleaning, ICT, HR, accounting, marketing, hospitality).^[5] These two broad areas of operation are commonly referred to as "hard FM" and "soft FM". The first refers to the physical built environment with focus on (work-) space and (building-) infrastructure. The second covers the people and the organisation and is

related to work psychology and occupational physiology. According to the International Facility Management Association (IFMA): “FM is the practice of coordinating the physical workplace with the people and work of the organization. It integrates the principles of business administration, architecture and the behavioral and engineering sciences.”^[6] In a 2009 Global Job Task Analysis, IFMA identified the core competencies of facility management as:

- communication
- emergency preparedness and business continuity
- environmental stewardship and sustainability
- finance and business
- Hospitality Management
- human factors
- leadership and strategy
- operations and maintenance
- project management
- quality
- real estate and property management
- technology.

The British Institute of Facilities Management adopts the European definition and through its accredited qualification framework offers career path curriculum ranging from school leaver level through to master's degree level that is aligned with the European Qualifications framework.

FM may also cover activities other than business services; these are referred to as non-core functions, and vary from one business sector to another. FM is also subject to continuous innovation and development, under pressure to reduce costs and to add value to the core business of public or private sector client organisations.^[7]

Facility management is supported with education, training and professional qualifications often co-ordinated by FM institutes, universities and associations. Degree programmes exist at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels.

As a defined academic discipline

Facility Management^[8] has been recognised as an academic discipline since the 1990s. Initial FM research work in Europe started in universities in the UK, the Netherlands, and the Nordic countries, where academies funded research centres and started to establish courses at Bachelors, Masters and PhD levels. Early European FM research centres include: the Centre for Facilities Management (CFM) founded in Glasgow in 1990, the Centre for People and buildings at Delft University of Technology, and metamorphose at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Today 50 universities and research institutions are represented in EUROFM.^[9] The German Facility Management Association (GEFMA) has certified 16 FM study programs and courses at universities and universities of applied sciences in Germany.^[10] University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka is leading the Facilities Management academic background in Asian region by providing B.Sc. (Hons) Facilities Management since 2006.

Role of the facilities manager

Facilities managers (FMs) operate across business functions. The number one priority of an FM is keeping people alive and safe. Facility managers have to operate in two levels:

- Strategically-tactically: helping clients, customers and end-users understand the potential impact of their decisions on the provision of space, services, cost and business risk.
- Operationally: ensuring corporate and cost effective environment for the occupants to function.

This is accomplished by managing:

EHS: environment, health and safety

The FM department in an organization is required to control and manage many environment and safety related issues. Failure to do so may lead to unhealthy conditions leading to employees falling sick, injury, loss of business, prosecution and insurance claims. The confidence of customers and investors in the business may also be affected by adverse publicity from safety lapses.

Fire safety

The threat from fire carries one of the highest risk to loss of life, and the potential to damage to property or shut down a business. The facilities management department will have in place maintenance, inspection and testing for all of the fire safety equipment and systems, keeping records and certificates of compliance.

Security

Protection of employees and the business often comes under the control of the facilities management department, in particular the maintenance of security hardware. Manned guarding may be under the control of a separate department.

Maintenance, testing and inspections

Maintenance, testing and inspection schedules are required to ensure that the facility is operating safely and efficiently, to maximize the life of equipment and reduce the risk of failure. Statutory obligations must also be met. The work is planned, often using a (computer-aided facility management) system.

Building maintenance

Building maintenance comprises all preventative, remedial and upgrade works required for the upkeep and improvement of buildings & their components. This works may include disciplines such as painting and decorating, carpentry, plumbing, glazing, plastering, and tiling.

Cleaning

Cleaning operations are often undertaken out of business hours, but provision may be made during times of occupations for the cleaning of toilets, replenishing consumables (such as toilet rolls, soap) plus litter picking and reactive response is scheduled as a series of periodic (daily weekly, monthly) tasks.

Operational

The facilities management department has responsibilities for the day-to-day running of the building, these tasks may be outsourced or carried out by directly employed staff. This is a policy issue, but due to the immediacy of the response required in many of the activities involved the facilities manager will often require daily reports or an escalation procedure.

Some issues require more than just periodic maintenance, for example those that can stop or hamper the productivity of the business or that have safety implications. Many of these are managed by the facilities management "help desk" that staff are able to be contacted either by telephone or email. The response to help desk calls are prioritized but may be as simple as too hot or too cold, lights not working, photocopier jammed, coffee spills, or vending machine problems.

Help desks may be used to book meeting rooms, car parking spaces and many other services, but this often depends on how the facilities department is organized. Facilities may be split into two sections, often referred to as "soft" services such as reception and post room, and "hard" services, such as the mechanical, fire and electrical services.

Business continuity planning

All organizations should have a continuity plan so that in the event of a fire or major failure the business can recover quickly. In large organizations it may be that the staff move to another site that has been set up to model the existing operation. The facilities management department would be one of the key players should it be necessary to move the business to a recovery site.

Space allocation and changes

In many organizations, office layouts are subject to frequent changes. This process is referred to as churn, and the percentage of the staff moved during a year is known as the (churn rate). These moves are normally planned by the facilities management department using (computer-aided design). In addition to meeting the needs of the business, compliance with statutory requirements related to office layouts include:

- the minimum amount of space to be provided per staff member
- fire safety arrangements
- lighting levels
- signage
- ventilation
- temperature control
- welfare arrangements such as toilets and drinking water

Consideration may also be given to vending, catering or a place where staff can make a drink and take a break from their desk.

See also

- [1:5:200](#)
- [Activity-based working](#)
- [Activity relationship chart](#)
- [AM/FM/GIS](#)
- [Institute of Workplace and Facilities Management](#)
- [Building information modeling](#)
- [Computerized maintenance management system](#)
- [Global Facility Management Association \(Global FM\)](#)
- [Janitor](#)
- [Physical plant](#)
- [Property management](#)

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