

CALL FOR PAPERS: special issue

Building performance evaluation: achieving better outcomes

Guest editors:

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Deadline for abstracts: 23 March 2026 noon (GMT)

What is the potential for BPE to support better outcomes? How can BPE become mainstreamed?

As the built environment confronts accelerating climate change, rising energy demands, health crises, and social inequality, the imperative to ensure new and upgraded buildings perform as well or better than intended—both technically and experientially—has never been stronger. Building Performance Evaluation (BPE) offers a powerful way to assess how buildings function in real-world use, and provides evidence-based insights into operational performance, occupant experience, and long-term sustainability.

The terms BPE and Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) are often used interchangeably. The editors prefer to use POE for BPE that is fully integrated into the activities of client, design and building teams. Such routine POE can focus the procurement of building works on achieved outcomes and can help close the gaps between design intent and actual performance. This feedback also provides insights that could greatly improve the performance and cost-effectiveness of future projects, practices and policies.

Aims of this special issue

1. **Map** the state-of-the-art in BPE and POE, and **explore** how they can support **better outcomes**—for **people, buildings, systems and the environment**—in an increasingly complex and dynamic world
2. **Examine** how outcome-driven practices and processes can be addressed in the activities of everyone involved in work to buildings; and point to achievements where BPE and POE has been embedded in practice and education
3. **Consider** what is inhibiting BPE and POE in practice; and what needs attention for their full potential to be realised
4. **Identify** fruitful new directions for research and practice, including any projects already underway
5. **Learn** rapidly from all these experiences, insights and results, and consider how they can be disseminated better
6. **Open space** for new research directions and cross-disciplinary debates and collaborations.

This disjunction between research, methods and practice outcomes raises several concerns:

- Why is BPE still not routine in education and outcome-driven building procurement and POE in practice?
- Where are BPE and POE happening and what circumstances helped to bring this about?
- What impact is BPE actually having? To what extent is it influencing professional practice through feedback?
- What innovations are underway in BPE and POE that promise to ensure better outcomes from projects?

Researchers, practitioners and policymakers are invited to critically examine the evolving roles of BPE and POE in addressing the pressing challenges facing buildings and cities. Submissions may span theoretical, methodological, empirical, organisational, governance or practice-based perspectives. We particularly encourage work that pushes the boundaries of BPE as evidence-based learning in architecture, construction, engineering, urbanism and social science.

Context

Apart from the occasional crisis that hits the press, it is unclear to what extent briefing, design, construction and regulation of building work is actually driven by how well buildings perform once in use. Are appropriate drivers and incentives in place? Sixty years from the first attempts to embed in-use BPE into practices of client, design, construction and management teams, have we

made that much progress? POE is still not routine. Practitioners and policymakers have usually been slow to take notice of powerful lessons as they emerge from BPE studies.

The 2001 [special issue on POE](#) of *Building Research and Information* (BRI) covered the strategic and more detailed findings from 16 published case study POEs of recent buildings from the Probe project, together with independent commentaries. In a quest to make POE and feedback routine for building teams, in 2005 BRI also published three papers on techniques being developed, as part of a larger special issue on BPE: Bordass & Leaman (2005a), Way & Bordass (2005) and Bordass and Leaman (2005b).

Since then, numerous special issues of research journals have covered BPE as a socio-technical entity, including:

- Building Performance Evaluation, BRI 33(4), 2005: <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rbri20/33/4>
- Housing Occupancy Feedback: Linking Behaviours and Performance, BRI 38(5), 2010; <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rbri20/38/5>
- Energy Retrofits of Owner-Occupied Homes, BRI 42(4), 2014; <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rbri20/42/4>
- Building Performance Evaluation, BRI 47(3), 2019; <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rbri20/47/3>
- Multi-Domain Investigations in the Built Environment for Occupant Health, Well-Being, and Performance, *Building and Environment*, 2024 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/special-issue/106J926186T>

In practice, there has been a variety of attempts to embed BPE through UK buildings standards (e.g. BS40101, PAS2035, BS EN 13187, BS EN ISO 6781-3) and internationally (e.g. ISO 9869-1 for co-heating or U-value tests, ISO 16813:2024, NABERS (Australia and elsewhere), GreenMark (Singapore) and ASHRAE performance measurement protocols (US)). Attempts to bring BPE into building regulations have only met with partial success, including measuring actual airtightness and compliance aspects of some building services installations. Professional bodies (e.g. AIA, RIBA, CIBSE) have also attempted to incorporate POE into procedures and awards. Yet the number of clients, architectural and engineering practices carrying out BPE routinely remains low.

Papers in this special issue will address key questions and offer new insights in areas including:

- Case studies of how BPE has informed briefing/programming, design, build quality, commissioning and aftercare
- Use of BPE in education of designers, builders and managers, participatory design or co-design processes
- Investigations into discrepancies between predicted and actual performance (e.g. energy, IEQ, thermal comfort)
- Longitudinal studies of building use, adaptation and degradation over time
- Occupant satisfaction, comfort, health and productivity across building types
- BPE in residential settings, schools, healthcare or under-served communities
- Methods for involving occupants as co-evaluators or citizen scientists
- Innovations in BPE platforms, tools, methods, data management, and feedback to practitioners and policy makers
- BPE in the Global South, indigenous contexts or informal settlements
- Culturally situated understandings of comfort, quality and usability
- The role of BPE in public procurement, building standards and ESG/green finance
- Developments in institutional and professional obligations and procedures
- Client-led requirements, new forms of contract and improved industry practices
- Government- and industry-led frameworks (e.g. Government Soft Landings, NABERS Commitment Agreements)
- Ethical considerations around monitoring, data ownership and surveillance
- Whose voices count in post-occupancy narratives and how are they heard?
- Opportunities and barriers, including those associated with insurance companies
- Do researchers and practitioners have very different needs? Are these addressed effectively?

Timeline

Deadline for abstract submission	23 March 2026	
Full papers due	11 September 2026	NB: authors can submit sooner if they wish
Reviewers' comments to authors	15 January 2027	
Revised papers due	19 February 2027	
Publication of the special issue	May 2027	NB: papers are published as soon as they are accepted

Briefing note for contributors

We welcome contributions from a wide range of disciplines within the research community in both the Global North and Global South, as well as the building industry including engineers, architects, researchers, building code officials, and software developers.

You are invited to submit an abstract for this special issue. We are seeking two types of contribution:

1. **Research papers**, subject to the this journal's requirements for style, referencing and peer review (see our Guidance for Authors).
2. **Commentaries**, which will be shorter, simpler, and reviewed by the editors only. It is hoped that this form will appeal to practitioners.

Please send a **500 word (maximum) abstract** to editor **Richard Lorch** and state whether this is a **research paper** or a **commentary**. richard@rlorch.net by **23 March 2026 (noon GMT)**. Your submission must include these 3 items:

1. the author's and all co-author's names, institutional & departmental affiliations and contact details, email addresses
2. the question(s) or topic(s) in this Call for Papers that the abstract and intended paper address
3. the abstract (500 words maximum) defining the research question(s), scope, methods and results

Abstracts will be reviewed by the editors to ensure a varied, yet integrated selection of papers around the topic. Authors of accepted abstracts will be invited to submit a **full paper (6000-7500 words)**, which undergoes a double-blind review process, or a **commentary (1500-2000 words)**.

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Questions?

The Editors are happy to discuss ideas with potential authors. Please contact: **Richard Lorch** richard@rlorch.net

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