

FAQ's

1. Why should I use the self-assessment tool? What are the benefits?

A self-assessment approach is being adopted to give users control over the assessment. As a consequence, users will be able to control when the assessment takes place, the frequency, the number of stakeholders participating in the assessment and the degree of rigor i.e. the level of evidence that users provide to support their response to questions.

Since the NAO and internal audit community will draw upon the model, by using the tool, organisations will have visibility of the broad audit and review framework.

By undertaking self-assessment using the PAM Capability Model, users will be provided with the 'gap' between their current arrangements and leading practice which brings a range of benefits including:

- The basis on which to highlight to senior managers structural constraints to improvement e.g. governance, resources;
- The information on which to identify improvement opportunities; and
- The evidence to support building a business case for investing in strengthened capabilities.

The tool will also increase visibility of continuous improvement within an organisation, across a departmental family and cross central civil government.

2. How does the PAM Capability Model fit with the OGC Maturity Matrix? When should I stop using the Maturity Matrix?

The OGC Maturity Matrix and the NAO asset management performance toolkit have now been consolidated into a single, self-assessment tool for use across central civil government.

The assessment areas of the Maturity Matrix have been incorporated within the PAM Capability Model and are reflected in the new assessment areas. Any evidence collated as part of a Maturity Matrix capability review exercise will assist organisations in responding to the questions that comprise the PAM Capability Model and is unlikely to be redundant.

Going forward, the PAM Capability Model should be used by departments and arms length bodies who wish to undertake an objective, evidence based assessment of their property asset management capability.

Take-up of the PAM Capability Model will be monitored by OGC as part of the HPP Programme. The tool will also be used by the NAO to audit asset management practice within central government as part of an ongoing programme of value for money studies.

3. When should my organisation undertake a self-assessment and how often?

Departments and arms length bodies have the ability to determine when and how often they complete the self-assessment tool depending upon the business planning cycle and resource availability.

Larger, more complex organisations with a significant property portfolio may be minded to complete the self-assessment tool on an annual basis whilst smaller, less complex organisations with fewer properties may have good reason to complete the tool less frequently.

The expectation of the HPP Programme is that all organisations with significant usage of property will have reached 'excellence' by March 2011.

4. Who should undertake a self-assessment?

It is anticipated that the senior officers responsible for estates and facilities management (or equivalent) within a department or arms length body will complete the questionnaire on behalf of their organisation. These individuals are referred to as 'department leads' within the PAM Capability Model.

Department leads have the facility to export the self-assessment survey in a range of formats (Excel, PDF, CSV or Web Page) to allow other members of the estates team to review the questions and evidence and to inform and/or provide responses as appropriate. Responses from team members can not automatically be added to the model. Department leads will be responsible for ensuring that any responses are added to their self-assessment.

It will be the responsibility of the department lead to collate all responses, to generate score reports for discussion with key stakeholders (e.g. estates team, wider business unit) and to finalise the self-assessment survey in order that it can be shared with the OGC and the parent department (if the user is an arms length body).

5. Will parent departments be required to answer on behalf of their arms length bodies?

No. Questions should be answered from the perspective of your specific organisation i.e. a sponsoring department OR a sponsored body unless specifically stated during the survey.

6. How long will it take to complete an assessment?

The experience of the pilots is that Department leads should initially allow approximately 1.5-2 days to complete the self-assessment tool. Thereafter users may wish to allow half a day to 1 day per annum to review and update their assessment.

Smaller, less complex organisations with a limited property portfolio should be able to complete the tool in less time than larger, more complex organisations as the number of questions that they are required to answer will be reduced according to their organisation profile (see question 7).

7. Should we use the PAM Capability Model given our organisation's distinctive circumstances?

The PAM Capability Model is applicable to all organisations across central civil government irrespective of their size, property portfolio and complexity.

A central design principle of the tool is that the assessment takes into account the varying size and complexity of organisations. For example, a small organisation consolidated on a couple of sites and experiencing minor change will require fewer formal and less frequent processes to manage its property asset base efficiently and effectively than a large, complex organisation. The PAM Capability Model requires users to profile their organisation before starting the questionnaire. The profile chosen will affect the content of the questionnaire.

If there are compelling reasons why the organisation believes it should achieve a higher score to an assessment area whilst being unable to meet the prescribed

evidence level, it will have the ability to override the model. In such cases, the assessor should provide full reasons for increasing the score in the absence of the prescribed evidence and should be confident that the NAO's audit opinion would support their judgement.

8. *Are we expected to achieve a maturity profile of excellence given our organisation's circumstances e.g. we are a small arms length body?*

All organisations should be aiming for excellence. Questions and weightings within the PAM Capability Model are adjusted according to the user organisation's profile in order that the final output score reflects its characteristics. It is therefore possible for smaller, less complex organisations to achieve excellence without un-necessarily complex process activities and an onerous self-assessment exercise. Having said this, an organisation may decide that investment in achieving PAM excellence may not be possible at the current time due to competing corporate priorities.

9. *What is the role of the parent department in encouraging family members to undertake an assessment?*

Parent departments have a responsibility for embedding HPP and raising PAM capability across the departmental family. They will therefore have an interest in encouraging their sponsored bodies to engage with the PAM Capability Model, for sharing good practice across the departmental family and for providing support as appropriate to facilitate continuous improvement in property asset management across the departmental family.

10. *How will the OGC use the information*

The PAM Capability Model provides functionality to allow the OGC to monitor take-up of the self-assessment tool across central civil government as part of the HPP Programme i.e. 5 out of 10 departments and arms length bodies have finalised their self-assessment as at 12/03/09.

The tool also provides the OGC with a mechanism to monitor capability levels across central civil government i.e. what maturity levels have been recorded for those departments and arms length bodies that have finalised their self-assessment survey and what proportion of the central civil estate is occupied and managed by these organisations.

As part of its responsibility for delivering HPP and reporting progress on milestones OGC will monitor and report on take-up and the overall scores achieved, however, there is no intention to publish league tables. Indeed, league tables would only be meaningful if self-assessments have been validated and profiles and evidence moderated. Take-up and scores will be picked up in the discussions OGC has with individual organisations about HPP progress. Survey responses and scores will not be visible to OGC until approved and finalised by the organisation concerned.

Property and estate procurement capability is also considered by the OGC's Procurement Capability Reviews. If such a Review, or any other evidence, highlighted a need for improvement in this area OGC would encourage the department to undertake a PAM Capability Assessment using this Model in order to identify more clearly the capability 'gaps' and help with the development of an improvement action plan.

OGC's primary purpose in monitoring is to encourage and track improvement.

11. How does the data link to other data capture initiatives? Property Interrogator, benchmarking, ePIMS etc

All property related data is captured through ePIMS and its associated applications. Information already held within ePIMS will be automatically captured for use within the PAM Capability Model where appropriate. Departments will not need to input data more than once. It is anticipated that the results of a PAM Capability Assessment will, in due course, be available through the Property Interrogator so that it will be possible to see a summary of the performance of the estate together with the maturity of the department's Property Asset Management capability.

12. What support to users will the OGC provide?

The PAM Capability Model had been developed in such a way that it is easy to use and follow, with step-by-step prompts on what and how to do things.

If additional help and assistance is required this can be obtained from OGC who will direct you to the appropriate person for technical and non technical queries.

OGC:

Tel: 0845 000 4999

Email:

servicedesk@ogc.gsi.gov.uk

13. What additional help and support can I access in completing the PAM Capability Model and for taking forward improvement planning initiatives?

The OGC have recently completed the External Resources Framework, which is a framework, which contains consultants who can be called upon to assist departments with the completion of their PAM CAM and to assist them with peer reviews.

For more information on how to obtain help and assistance from these consultants please contact the OGC Service Desk:

Tel: 0845 000 4999

Email:

servicedesk@ogc.gsi.gov.uk

14. How will the NAO use the PAM Capability Model?

The PAM Capability Model will be the standard approach for the NAO to audit asset management practice within central government as part of an ongoing programme of value for money studies. The assessment framework will also be used by the NAO to support management style reporting on specific organisations.

NAO users will have access to the PAM Capability Model in the same way as departmental users and users within arms length bodies via an ePIMS username and password. The NAO audit team will be able to select the organisation that they wish to audit from a drop down box and can then commence a survey, select an organisation profile, respond to questions, collate evidence for each assessment area and generate a report output in the same way as departmental and arms length body users.

15. Will departments be able to see the reports/scores of other departments?

No. Within departmental families it is intended that parent departments should be able to monitor the participation of its arms length bodies as part of their responsibility for embedding HPP across the whole family.

The PAM Capability Model categorises surveys as 'not started', 'started', 'data complete' and 'finalised'. 'Data complete' status recognises that all questions have been answered but have yet to be agreed/signed-off by departmental stakeholders. When a survey status is recorded as 'data complete' department leads have the facility to amend responses, update evidence and generate updated score reports.

It is anticipated that department leads may wish to discuss their maturity profile, score breakdowns and detailed responses with key stakeholders before they finalise their survey and make it available to the OGC and their parent department (if an arms length body).

16. How does the PAM Capability Model link to the Procurement Capability Review?

Procurement Capability Reviews (PCR) are a central element of Transforming Government Procurement. They assess how far government procurement meets the demanding standards required to deliver value for money services now and in the future. Working with departments in together with other OGC workstreams and HM Treasury, the reviews will drive improvements in procurement capability where the greatest impact can be achieved.

How departments manage their property assets is an integral part of procurement. This is fully reflected and integrated in the PCR process. Reviewers will have access to departments PAM capability scores either directly from the department or from OGC. The expectation is that PCR reviewers will focus on development areas identified in an organisation's PAM capability score breakdown.

Further details on the PCR approach can be found on the OGC website:
<http://www.ogc.gov.uk/>

17. How does the PAM Capability Model fit with the Internal Audit Assessment matrix?

One of the action areas in HPP relates to the important role of the Internal Audit team in monitoring the performance of the Property Asset Management function in a department. By supporting the development of the Internal Audit Assessment Matrix alongside the PAM Capability Model OGC has recognised that internal auditors are likely to take a focussed risk based approach to particular areas of investigation rather than the complete overview provided by the PAM Capability Model.

The Internal Audit Assessment Matrix provides a risk-based approach to audit and assurance of an organisation's PAM capability covering the same areas of capability but offering a 'pick-list' from which auditors can choose activities to investigate from time to time at differing levels of detail depending on their assessment of current risks to VFM and business objectives. Internal auditors may also wish to see PAM Capability Model reports and scores.

The Internal Audit Assessment Matrix can be downloaded from:

http://www.ogc.gov.uk/documents/HPP_IA_Assurance_Matrix.pdf

For queries regarding the Internal Audit Assessment Matrix please contact the OGC Service Desk on 0845 000 4999 or email: servicedesk@ogc.gsi.gov.uk

18. How does the PAM Capability Model relate to other guidance and how has leading practice been identified?

Leading practice has been identified by:

- Drawing on over 100 property related Value for Money reviews, audits, change programmes and transactions undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers over the last 5 years;
- A review of guidance and literature in the public domain e.g. NAO study findings, RICS guidelines, the OGC Maturity Matrix, PAS55 and publications by the Audit Commission, DCLG, HEFCE, OGC and 4Ps.

The leading practice statements have been reviewed and agreed by NAO and OGC and a range of pilot organisations.

19. How will the tool be evolved?

The PAM Capability Model will evolve over time, particularly in its early years. Scope exists to develop additional functionality within the web-based application to meet user requirements, to adjust content to question wording and/or evidence, to provide revised guidance and to adjust question weightings subject to user feedback.

A small user group will be set up to regularly review take-up of the tool, to explore usability issues raised by the different user groups and to address any concerns regarding content and score reports.

20 Why have I lost data already entered when I go back to the survey?

The ePIMS application has a 15-minute time out after which, if there has been no activity, the user is logged out. This is standard practice for many systems. Answering questions and entering text in the evidence boxes is not registered as activity by the application so it is essential that you save your entries frequently using the 'save' button. When you move to work on another section your entries are automatically saved. If you do not actively save your entries there is a risk that the application will 'time-out' and your entries in the section you are working on be lost due to the time out. You will not lose any data that you have added to other sections.