

# Facilities Management from A to Z



Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard  
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## **F**acilities Management

Facilities Management (FM) is a term used to describe the practice of co-ordinating and integrating support services and the related design and operation of the built environment. There are references to such a role and to facilities in general going back hundreds of years but the modern and general usage of the term began in the late 1970s.

Facilities Management (or facility management as it is more commonly known outside of the United Kingdom) has many definitions. The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), who offer the only Chartered FM designation, describes FM as *'a discipline that improves and supports the productivity of an organisation by delivering all appropriate services and infrastructures that are needed to achieve business objectives.'*

It is important to recognise that FM is a discipline which has evolved from different influences around the world leading to a variation in emphasis from one country to another and sometimes between sectors. As a result there is no standard international definition.

Facility managers invariably have extensive and wildly variable remits related to the specific needs of the organisations they serve. These might include support services like catering, cleaning, maintenance, security or document management; They often include property related responsibilities such as portfolio management, space planning or interior design; A common thread is the management of compliance with health, safety, environmental or employment policy and regulation; The scale of FM invariably results in large amounts of financial and administrative activity from budgeting and procurement to business continuity and corporate social responsibility.

With so many variable responsibilities, the work day of a facility manager is never routine requiring a complex web of personal, technical and management competences and a wide ranging knowledge of technical, market and stakeholder issues. A positive service attitude, a range of professional knowledge and strong management skills are essential attributes for a successful career in FM.

The market that has developed to supply goods and services to facility managers and the organisations they serve is commonly referred to as the FM industry and many businesses now offering a full range of FM services are known as FM companies. Some of these contractors offer facilities management as a stand-alone outsourced management service while others combine FM with the provision of other facilities services either through direct delivery or via a managed supply chain.

*There are few comprehensive books on the history and development of Facilities Management. Links to ten of the best can be found at <http://thefmguru.wordpress.com/2010/09/26/ten-top-fm-books>*