In the highly pressurised world of spiralling costs and large-scale development, the quantity surveyor’s role within the building industry is even more essential now than in 1785, when the profession was established in England.

Quantity surveying is a fascinating career for men and women who have the desire to involve themselves in the exciting world of construction and property development.

A quantity surveyor is a highly trained, independent professional with outstanding analytical and organisational abilities. Quantity surveyors are construction economists who fulfil varied and comprehensive duties to support cost-effective construction and property development projects. They enjoy the challenges of the dynamic construction industry and they offer essential, expert project management skills.

Anyone who is considering building or investing in construction projects needs expert advice on financial and contractual matters. No matter how simple or complex the project may be, the quantity surveyor provides valuable advice throughout the various stages of project development.

**Quantity surveying as a career**

The work of a quantity surveyor

Architects and engineers are responsible for the design aspects of construction projects, contractors are responsible for the execution of those projects, and quantity surveyors are responsible for planning and control of expenditure on construction and other projects and for accounting accurately for that expenditure.

Acting as the financial consultant to the construction and development industry, the quantity surveyor is involved from conception to final completion of project.

The quantity surveyor is well qualified to prepare initial budgets and feasibility studies prior to detailed design. Once the client is committed to the project, the quantity surveyor is employed to monitor design in terms of capital expenditure, operating and maintenance costs and long-term depreciation.

The quantity surveyor advises the client on tendering and contractual options, prepares tender and contract documentation, receives tenders from potential contractors and advises on the appointment of a suitable contractor.

During the construction phase, the quantity surveyor manages cash flow, arranges payments to contractors and evaluates the final cost of the project.

The quantity surveyor’s involvement need not cease on completion of the construction phase, but may be extended to include operations and maintenance management and leasing.

The quantity surveyor’s financial, contractual and legal skills can be applied to ongoing property or facilities management.

**Employment opportunities**

Employment opportunities vary considerably depending on the economic climate – as with many other careers. In general, most quantity surveyors find employment in private quantity surveying practices, but a career as a quantity surveyor cultivates qualities of leadership and allows members of the profession to excel in many other fields as well, such as in:

- Construction companies – managing the construction process on site
- Property development companies – initiating and managing new building projects
- Industrial development companies – mining, petro-chemical installations, airports, shipbuilding, motor industry, power stations
- Financial institutions (banks and building societies) – initiating the development of new projects and liaising with professional consultants during the construction process
- The Public sector (government departments, local authorities, municipalities) – providing quantity surveying services for government projects, maintenance of government buildings and liaison with professional consultants
- Community service projects – providing consultancy services for the provision of housing, development of infrastructures, initiating “design and supply” projects, preparation of material lists and ordering of building materials for emerging contractors and owner-builders, advising on contract types and tendering procedures
- Other specialist opportunities – research (at universities, technikons, Council for Scientific Industrial Research and Human Sciences Research Council), education and training (as lecturers at universities, technikons, colleges and informal sector training programmes), legal advice, consultancy services (settlement of disputes related to building work), valuations of buildings for

**Personal attributes**

The quantity surveyor works in conjunction with architects, consulting engineers and contractors, safeguarding the client’s interests as an independent professional with specialist skills.

Quantity surveyors must be able to liaise with other people at all levels – whether they are developers, architects, engineers, land surveyors, builders, manufacturers, lawyers, accountants, or colleagues in other sectors of commerce and industry.

Quantity surveyors are expected to maintain the highest level of professionalism ensuring fair and accurate finalisation of projects. In performing their duties, quantity surveyors need to be innovative, ambitious, able to “think on their feet” and willing to take risks. They should also have an aptitude for arithmetic, and the ability to express themselves clearly and concisely in the spoken and written word. They should be able to cope with pressure and have excellent negotiation skills.

A quantity surveyor is often called upon to lead the professional team as project manager.
Quantity surveying is an internationally recognised profession and a degree awarded by any of the six South African universities is recognised in several other countries.

Anyone who wishes to become a quantity surveyor can qualify to enter the profession at various levels, by studying at university to become a practising quantity surveyor, or at a technikon to become a quantity surveying technician with a development path that will lead to full registration:

- A four-year full-time or five-year part-time B Sc (Quantity Surveying) university degree
- A three-year technikon diploma advancing to a B-Tech (Quantity Surveying) degree after a further year of study
- A three-year QCP certificate course through distance learning presented by the UOFS

Within all these levels of entry, a route exists for advancement to full registration as a professional practising quantity surveyor.

Qualification as a quantity surveyor or quantity surveying technician

UNIVERSITIES

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<td>021-480-7594</td>
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<td>Witwatersrand (Johannesburg)</td>
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TECHNIKONS

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<td>021-467-954</td>
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<tr>
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<td>031-498-0001</td>
<td>031-490-7509</td>
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<td>021-948-8301</td>
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<td>Witwatersrand (Johannesburg)</td>
<td>011-406-2227</td>
<td>011-406-2590</td>
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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