

## What is a PrQS

A Professional quantity surveyor (PrQS) is a professional working within the construction and engineering industry concerned with building costs.

The profession developed during the 19th century from the earlier "measurer", a specialist tradesman (often a guild member), who prepared standardised schedules for a building project in which all of the construction materials, labour activities and the like were quantified, and against which competing builders could submit priced tenders.

The modern-day QS often reports to either Client, Project Manager, Principle Agent or Architect and provides advice in the decision-making process throughout the management of a project from initial inception to final completion. The QS handles estimating and cost control, the tendering process and, after contract award, the commercial interface. QSs should be able to carry out estimating and measurement of construction works prior to tender, producing the bill of quantities; produce tender documentation and manage the tender process; clarify and evaluate tenders; and manage the resultant contract through monthly valuations, variations control, contract administration and assessment of claims.

As well as in professional quantity surveying practices, the QS finds employment in all parts of industry and government including primary and secondary industry, national and local government bodies and agencies, contractors and subcontractors, developers, and financial and legal companies.

The functions of a consultant quantity surveyor :

- Professional Quantity Surveyors are broadly concerned with contracts, measurement and costs on construction projects. The methods employed, however, cover a range of activities which may include cost planning, value engineering, value management, feasibility studies, cost benefit analysis, life-cycle costing, risk analysis, tendering, valuation, change control, dispute resolution, claims management, project management, cost estimation and value for money assessments.
- The QS's traditional independent role on the team comprising client, architect, engineers and contractor has given him a reputation and appreciation for fairness. This, combined with his expertise in drafting and interpretation of contract documents, enables him to settle issues, value the works fairly and regularly, project final costs, avoid disputes and ensure the effective progress of a project.
- QS control construction costs by accurate measurement of the work required on a regular basis, the application of expert knowledge of costs and prices of work, labour, materials and plant required, an understanding of the implications of design decisions at an early stage to ensure that good value is obtained for the money to be expended.
- The technique of measuring quantities from drawings, sketches and specifications prepared by designers, principally architects and engineers, in order to prepare tender/contract documents, is known in the industry as taking off. The quantities of work taken off typically are used to prepare bills of quantities (BoQ), which usually are prepared in accordance with a published Standard Method of Measurement (SMM) as agreed to by the QS profession and representatives of the construction industry. This activity is usually completed before the commencement of work on site on a traditional (BoQ) project, the Contractor will then price this document in

competitive tender and be paid according to a measure undertaken on site and applied to each specific work item.

- QS is prevalent in many industries (not just construction) as they are procurement and contract specialists with the ability to adapt techniques to suit the form of contract or work being undertaken.