

# What is a Quantity Surveyor (QS)?

A **quantity surveyor (QS)** is a professional working within the **construction industry** concerned with building costs.

Traditionally referred to as a Professional Quantity Surveyor or Private Practice Quantity Surveyor they are broadly concerned with contracts and costs on construction projects. The methods employed, however, cover a range of activities which may include cost planning, value management, feasibility studies, cost benefit analysis, lifecycle costing, tendering, valuation, change control, dispute resolution and cost estimation.

## The process

Quantity surveyors get their name from the Bill of Quantities, a document with all the quantities of materials and labour in a construction project. This is measured from the architect and engineers design drawings, to be used by the contractors for tendering and for progress payments, for variations, changes and valuations.

At feasibility stage, quantity surveyors use their knowledge of construction methods and costs to advise the owner on the most economical way of achieving his requirements. Quantity surveyors use techniques such as Cost Planning, Estimating, Cost Analysis, and Value Management to establish a project budget.

During the design stage the QS will liaise with the architect to make sure the design is within the client's specified budget, and where possible to make cost savings through value management.

Once the design has been finalised, then the quantity surveyor will measure and prepare a Bill of Quantities which is issued with the specification and contract drawings, for use by contractors in submitting tenders.

The quantity surveyor is also involved in preparing the tender analysis report, advising the client of the appropriate procurement route and contract type for the specific project.

During the construction phase the quantity surveyor is called in, to fairly value progress payments and additional works to the contract known as variations.

On completion of the project, the quantity surveyor will agree the final account for the project and is often called on as an expert witness, and some quantity surveyors act as arbitrators.

In addition to new projects, quantity surveyors also use their skills in refurbishment of old buildings and alterations to existing buildings.