20 Quantity Surveyor Interview Questions and Answers (2025 Edition)

1. What is the role of a Quantity Surveyor in a construction project?

Answer:
A Quantity Surveyor (QS) plays a crucial role in managing the costs and contracts of a construction project. They ensure that the project stays within budget, evaluate tenders, prepare cost estimates, and handle valuations and final accounts. QSs also liaise with clients, engineers, architects, and contractors to make financially informed decisions.

2. What is a Bill of Quantities (BOQ)?

Answer:
A Bill of Quantities is a document that itemises all the materials, parts, and labour required for a construction project. It serves as the foundation for tendering and budgeting. BOQs help QSs estimate project costs accurately and allow contractors to submit competitive bids.

3. How do you ensure cost control throughout a project?

Answer:
Cost control is achieved through continuous monitoring of actual vs. estimated costs, regular site inspections, and keeping accurate records. I use cost reports, variation tracking, and change order management to ensure the budget aligns with real-time progress. Communication with project teams is also vital to identify cost risks early.

4. What are the main components of construction cost?

Answer:
Construction costs generally include direct costs such as materials, labour, and equipment, as well as indirect costs like supervision, overheads, permits,

and contingency. A QS breaks down each component to prepare accurate estimates and manage resources effectively.

5. Explain the difference between direct and indirect costs.

Answer:

Direct costs are those that are directly related to a specific activity, like materials and on-site labour. Indirect costs, on the other hand, are not linked to a specific task but support the overall project, such as administration, utilities, and insurance. A good QS understands and allocates both accurately.

6. What is the purpose of a variation order?

Answer:

A variation order is issued when there is a change in the original scope of work in the construction contract. It may involve changes in design, materials, quantity, or time. As a QS, it's my job to assess the cost and time implications of these changes and update the contract accordingly.

7. Which software tools are you proficient in as a Quantity Surveyor?

Answer:

I am proficient in MS Excel, AutoCAD, and specialised QS tools like CostX, Candy, and Buildsoft. I also have experience with BIM (Building Information Modelling) and ERP software. These tools help me streamline quantity take-offs, cost estimation, and documentation.

8. How do you perform a quantity take-off from drawings?

Answer:

A quantity take-off involves reviewing architectural and structural drawings to calculate the quantity of materials and work required. I use tools like AutoCAD and Excel to extract measurements and categorise them according to the BOQ. Accuracy and attention to detail are critical in this process.

9. What’s the difference between a lump-sum and a re-measurable contract?

Answer:

A lump-sum contract fixes the total project price, regardless of actual quantities used. A re-measurable contract allows payment based on actual work done and quantities measured on-site. Each has its pros and cons, and the choice depends on the project type and risk allocation.

10. How do you handle cost overruns?

Answer:

Cost overruns are addressed by identifying the root cause—whether it's due to design change, inaccurate estimate, or unforeseen conditions. I prepare a cost impact report and suggest mitigation strategies, such as value engineering or alternative materials, to bring the project back within budget.

11. What is tendering, and what role do you play in it?

Answer:

Tendering is the process of inviting bids from contractors to undertake a project. As a QS, I prepare tender documents, evaluate bids based on technical and financial criteria, and assist in contractor selection. Transparency and fairness are key to a successful tender process.

12. How do you estimate labour productivity?

Answer:

Labour productivity is estimated using past project data, standard rates, and benchmarking. Factors such as weather, skill level, and equipment availability also affect productivity. Accurate labour estimation helps in realistic scheduling and cost planning.

13. What is life-cycle costing, and why is it important?

Answer:

Life-cycle costing (LCC) considers all costs associated with a project over its lifetime, including maintenance, operation, and disposal. It's important for

clients who value long-term savings over short-term investment. As a QS, I use LCC to help clients make cost-effective design and material decisions.

14. Have you ever faced a dispute during a project? How did you resolve it?

Answer:

Yes, disputes are common in construction. I believe in resolving issues amicably through negotiation and documentation. I rely on clear contracts, regular communication, and proper record-keeping to address disagreements before they escalate into legal issues.

15. What is value engineering?

Answer:

Value engineering is a systematic method to improve the value of a project by examining its functions. It focuses on optimising costs without compromising quality or performance. I conduct value engineering workshops with stakeholders to explore alternatives that offer better value.

16. What are preliminaries in a BOQ?

Answer:

Preliminaries refer to the general project costs not tied to a specific building element, like site setup, insurances, temporary works, and project management. They're critical for pricing and should be well understood by both contractors and clients.

17. How do you ensure compliance with contract conditions?

Answer:

I regularly review contract terms, specifications, and drawings throughout the project lifecycle. I ensure all changes, approvals, and claims are documented. Compliance is also maintained through meetings, inspections, and communication with legal and project teams.

18. What are IS codes or standards commonly used in Quantity Surveying?

Answer:

IS codes such as IS 1200 (Method of Measurement), IS 456 (Concrete), and IS 875 (Structural Loads) are essential for standardising measurements and cost analysis in Indian projects. I refer to these frequently during estimations and quality control.

19. What's the role of a QS in post-construction phase?

Answer:

Post-construction, a QS is responsible for preparing the final account, handling claims, and verifying payments. I also ensure that all documentation is completed and lessons learned are recorded for future projects. This phase is crucial for financial closure.

20. Why should we hire you as a Quantity Surveyor?

Answer:

With a strong background in cost control, estimation, and contract administration, I bring both technical expertise and a collaborative mindset. I'm proactive in identifying risks and opportunities, and I stay updated with current tools and industry standards to deliver value on every project.

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