

Global Projects Services AG

Quantity Surveyor Interview Questions

What is the role of a Quantity Surveyor in construction projects?

A Quantity Surveyor is responsible for managing all costs related to building and civil engineering projects, from the initial calculations to the final figures. The main goal is to minimize the costs of a project without compromising on quality. This involves preparing estimates, cost plans, tender documents, contract administration, managing variations, and final accounts. A Quantity surveyor also has to ensure compliance with legal and contractual obligations.

How do you identify and manage risks in a construction project from a cost perspective?

We can start by identifying potential risks during the planning phase, such as price fluctuations, delays, or unforeseen ground conditions. We should assess the probability and impact of each risk and include appropriate contingencies in the project's budget. Risks should be continuously monitored and reassessed and the risk register should be assessed as needed. For example, if a supplier's prices rise unexpectedly, we may have to explore alternative suppliers or negotiate better terms to mitigate the cost impact.

What software tools do you use to perform your duties as a Quantity Surveyor?

I am proficient in using a range of software tools for quantity surveying tasks. For cost estimation and measurement, I use software like CostX and Bluebeam Revu, which allow for detailed digital take offs and cost planning. For contract administration and project management, I use Microsoft Project and Asta Powerproject to track timelines and resources. I also use Excel for data analysis and

financial reporting. These tools are very efficient and helpful in managing project costs and timelines.

How do you prepare an accurate cost estimate for a construction project?

The first step is to thoroughly review the project drawings, specifications, and site conditions to understand the scope of work. Then break the project down into measurable components to prepare a detailed Bill of Quantities (BOQ). I use current market rates for materials, labour, and equipment to calculate costs. It is also a good idea to engage with suppliers and subcontractors to gather reliable price data. Factor in contingencies for any potential risks or unknowns to ensure the estimate covers all possible expenses.

How do you manage contract variations?

To manage contract variations, I always ensure that the variation request is properly documented and authorized before any additional work is carried out. I assess the impact of the variation on the project's cost and timeline, prepare a cost estimate, and present it to the client for approval. I also negotiate with contractors to ensure that the variation is executed in a cost-effective manner while maintaining the project's overall objectives.

What procurement strategies have you used, and how do you evaluate tenders?

I have used different procurement strategies, like traditional lump-sum contracts, design and build, and construction management. In evaluating tenders, I assess the contractor's experience, capacity to deliver, the accuracy of their pricing, and any exclusions or assumptions in their bid. I also ensure that the selected contractor has a comprehensive understanding of the project's requirements.

How do you prepare and settle final accounts?

I first review all interim payments, variations, and any claims made during the project to ensure that they are fully accounted for. I cross-check the quantities and prices to

confirm accuracy. I then meet with the contractor to agree on the final value of the works, making adjustments for any outstanding issues, such as incomplete work or defects. Once the final value is agreed upon, I prepare the final account document, ensuring that all parties sign off on it.

How do you incorporate sustainability into cost planning and management?

I incorporate sustainability by considering the life-cycle costs of materials and systems, not only just the initial capital expenditure. This includes factoring in energy efficiency, durability, and maintenance costs. I work with the design team to explore sustainable alternatives, such as eco-friendly building materials or energy-efficient systems. For example, in a recent project, we opted for a green roof system, which initially had a higher upfront cost but offered long-term savings in terms of energy efficiency and water management.

How do you ensure that a project stays within budget?

I ensure that a project stays within budget by constantly monitoring costs throughout the project's lifecycle. This involves regularly updating cost plans, managing cash flow, and ensuring that all costs are tracked against the original budget. Variations are carefully controlled, and I work closely with contractors and suppliers to avoid cost overruns. Early identification of potential cost issues allows for corrective actions to be taken.

What is value engineering, and how do you implement it?

Value engineering is a method of improving the value of a project by optimizing function and cost. I implement it by reviewing the project's design, materials, and construction methods to identify areas where savings can be made without compromising quality or performance. For instance, using alternative construction materials or methods can reduce costs while maintaining structural integrity.

How do you manage disputes related to costs?

I manage disputes by ensuring all communications and agreements are well-documented and transparent. If a dispute arises, I review the contract and all related documentation to assess the situation objectively. I aim for an amicable resolution through negotiations but, if needed, I escalate the issue to mediation or arbitration, always maintaining a clear and professional approach to minimize project delays and financial losses.

What role do you play in project tendering?

In project tendering, I am responsible for preparing the tender documents, evaluating bids, and assisting the client in selecting the most suitable contractor. I ensure that the bids are evaluated based on cost, quality, experience, and the contractor's understanding of the project. I also analyze any assumptions or exclusions in the bids to ensure the best value for money.

How do you calculate contingency amounts for a project?

To calculate contingencies, I assess the potential risks associated with the project and their possible impact on costs. This includes reviewing historical data from similar projects, understanding market trends, and considering any unique challenges the project might face. The contingency is typically expressed as a percentage of the total cost, depending on the level of uncertainty in the project.

How do you ensure compliance with health and safety regulations in cost planning?

Compliance with health and safety regulations is a priority in cost planning. I include cost allowances for safety measures such as protective equipment, safety training, and risk mitigation strategies. Additionally, I work with the project manager to ensure that all health and safety guidelines are followed, and any non-compliance is addressed promptly to avoid legal or financial repercussions.

How do you handle subcontractor payments?

I handle subcontractor payments by verifying the work completed through site inspections and progress reports. Once the work is confirmed, I prepare the payment

certificates based on the agreed contract terms. I also ensure that any variations or discrepancies are resolved before issuing payments, and I follow up with regular audits to ensure all payments align with the project's financial plan.

How do you ensure accuracy in Bills of Quantities (BOQs)?

To ensure accuracy in BOQs, I thoroughly review the project drawings and specifications, and I use software tools like CostX for digital measurement. I cross-check all quantities and rates against market benchmarks and verify them with suppliers and subcontractors when necessary. I also collaborate with engineers and architects to resolve any discrepancies in the design or specifications before finalizing the BOQ.

What strategies do you use to manage inflation in project costs?

To manage inflation, I build in price escalation clauses in contracts to account for potential increases in material or labor costs. I also lock in prices with suppliers early when possible and consider forward contracts for key materials. Regularly updating cost estimates with current market data helps ensure that the project budget remains accurate.

How do you integrate Building Information Modelling (BIM) in quantity surveying?

BIM allows for more accurate quantity take-offs and cost estimation by providing detailed 3D models of the project. I use BIM to analyze the project's quantities directly from the model, ensuring precision in cost calculations and reducing manual errors. BIM also improves collaboration between the design and construction teams, allowing for real-time updates on changes and their cost implications.

How do you assess the financial health of a construction contractor?

I assess the financial health of a contractor by reviewing their financial statements, cash flow reports, and historical performance on previous projects. This includes analyzing their balance sheet to ensure they have sufficient liquidity to handle the

project. I also check their credit ratings and references from past clients to ensure they can meet their financial and contractual obligations.

What is lifecycle costing, and how do you apply it?

Lifecycle costing involves assessing the total cost of ownership of a building over its life, including the initial capital costs, operating costs, maintenance, and eventual disposal costs. I apply lifecycle costing by working with the design team to select materials and systems that balance upfront costs with long-term savings. This might include choosing energy-efficient systems or low-maintenance materials that reduce overall expenses.

How do you manage cash flow in a construction project?

I manage cash flow by preparing a cash flow forecast that aligns with the project's schedule. This forecast accounts for expected costs and income over time, ensuring that there is sufficient liquidity to meet payments as they arise. I regularly update the cash flow forecast to reflect any changes in the project, such as delays or variations, and work closely with the finance team to manage payments to contractors and suppliers.

How do you handle cost overruns in a project?

When cost overruns occur, I first analyze the root cause and assess whether they were due to unforeseen circumstances, poor planning, or changes in scope. I work with the client and contractors to explore options for mitigating the overruns, such as renegotiating prices, revising the project scope, or utilizing contingency funds. Communication with stakeholders is key to managing expectations and minimizing financial impact.

How do you manage change orders in a construction project?

I manage change orders by ensuring that they are properly documented and approved before any additional work is done. I assess the cost and schedule impact of the change and provide the client with a detailed breakdown of the financial

implications. I then work with the contractor to ensure that the change is executed efficiently and within the agreed-upon budget.

How do you ensure a fair valuation of work completed on-site?

To ensure a fair valuation of work completed, I conduct regular site visits to verify the work against the contract and drawings. I measure the quantities of work completed and compare them to the approved schedule of rates. I also collaborate with the project manager and site team to ensure that any discrepancies are addressed before issuing progress payments.

What steps do you take to prepare for contract negotiations?

For contract negotiations, I thoroughly review the project's requirements, the contractor's bid, and any relevant legal and contractual documents. I also prepare detailed cost estimates and identify key areas where negotiations may be needed, such as pricing, timelines, or payment terms. Having a clear understanding of the client's objectives and being prepared with supporting data helps me negotiate effectively.

How do you ensure cost transparency with clients?

To ensure cost transparency, I provide clients with regular, detailed cost reports that outline all project expenditures and forecasts. I use clear and concise documentation to track variations, claims, and payments. I also maintain open communication with the client throughout the project, ensuring they are aware of any changes or potential risks to the budget.

What is retention money, and how do you manage it?

Retention money is a percentage of the contractor's payment that is withheld until the project is completed and any defects are rectified. I manage retention by ensuring that the correct amount is withheld from each payment and is released according to the terms of the contract, typically after the defects liability period has expired and all work has been satisfactorily completed.

How do you handle project closeout and handover?



During project closeout, I ensure that all contractual obligations have been met and that all work has been completed to the required standard. I prepare the final account, ensure that all payments have been made, and hand over all project documentation, including warranties, operation manuals, and as-built drawings. I also coordinate any final inspections and ensure that any remaining defects are addressed before the final handover.

