The Evolving Relevance of Quantity Surveyors in the Modern Construction Industry

By Seán Hollywood FRICS, MCIArb, MSc Construction law and Dispute Resolution, BSc Quantity Surveying. A Professional Quantity Surveyor with Nearly Three Decades of Global Experience

Over the course of nearly thirty years working across multiple continents, I have been fortunate to hold senior commercial roles within government organisations, major international contractors, and project management consultancies. My experience spans a wide range of sectors, including nuclear facilities, aviation hubs, railway infrastructure, high-rise developments, and international sports stadiums across North America, the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA), and Europe. This diverse exposure has not only honed my technical expertise but also provided me with a broad perspective on how the Quantity Surveying (QS) profession has evolved.

Despite these changes, one persistent challenge remains: Quantity Surveyors are often misunderstood and, at times, undervalued. Informal terms such as “bean counters” or “accountants with Wellington boots” still appear in industry circles. While often said in jest, these descriptors do not reflect the depth and breadth of the Quantity Surveying role. More importantly, they can contribute to a limited understanding of the profession’s real value.

A. Origins of Quantity Surveying

The origins of Quantity Surveying date back to ancient civilisations, notably Egypt, where measurement and resource control were essential for monumental construction. As illustrated below, a grown man's body provided the reference for standard units such as the digit, palm, foot, and cubit, albeit primitive yet effective tools of quantification. Egyptian builders used these consistent measures to plan, allocate, and record materials and labour with surprising precision. While today's Quantity Surveyors rely on digital models and cost management software, the fundamental principles of accurate measurement, detailed documentation, and resource accountability have remained unchanged across millennia. This ancient legacy forms the foundation of the modern QS profession.

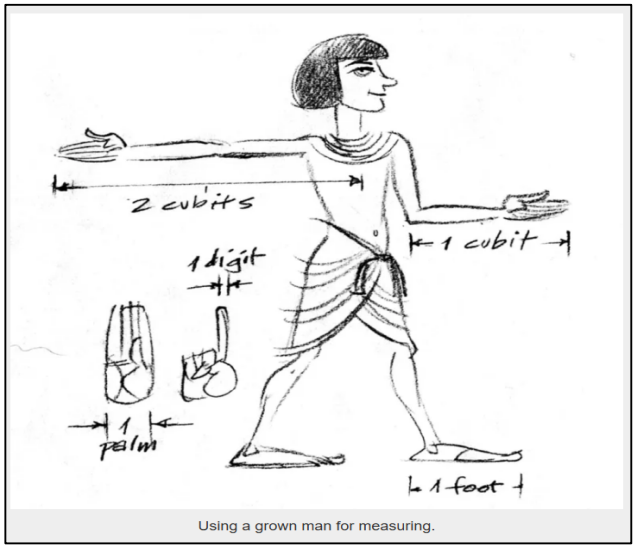

Figure 1. Egyptian Cubit

Source: https://johnmanders.wordpress.com/2019/02/13/measuring-length-in-ancient-egypt/

A Professional Quantity Surveyor (PQS) plays a central role in guiding commercial strategy, managing costs, and ensuring contractor clarity. Whether supporting a government body, private developers, owners, or a multinational consortium, the PQS helps clients make informed financial decisions throughout the lifecycle of a project. Our work supports the delivery of projects that are not only on time and on budget, but also legally sound, commercially sustainable, and fit for purpose. As construction projects grow in scale and complexity, the importance of the Quantity Surveyor has only increased. Far from being confined to cost counting, we work across disciplines to balance cost, quality, risk, and value while navigating technological shifts, regulatory pressures, and evolving sustainability goals.

From their early training, Quantity Surveyors are equipped with a wide range of skills and knowledge, including: -

1. *Planning and Budgeting*

Before any construction starts, a Quantity Surveyor plays a vital role in estimating project costs and collaborating with the design and planning team to ensure the proposed budget is accurate and achievable. This early involvement helps clients, whether governments, developers, or homeowners, avoid expected financial challenges later in the project.

2. *Cost Control*

As the project progresses, the Quantity Surveyor monitors expenditures, verifies that completed work aligns with the payment claims, and ensures the project remains within budget. In this role, they serve as a financial steward, safeguarding public and private funds from misuse or unnecessary overspending.

3. *Contracts and Legal Protection*

Construction projects involve numerous contracts and legal agreements; a Quantity Surveyor plays a key role in drafting, reviewing, and managing these documents to ensure all parties understand their obligations. When disputes arise, whether over delays, unforeseen costs, or additional work, the Quantity Surveyor helps resolve the disputes objectively, relying on detailed records and a solid understanding of contract terms.

4. *Change and Risk Management*

Plans can change, and often do, especially during construction and when they do, the Quantity Surveyor assesses how those changes impact both the project timeline and overall cost. They ensure that all modifications are properly documented, fairly valued, and formally agreed upon before additional work proceeds, helping to avoid misunderstandings or budget overruns.

5. *Negotiation*

Due to their involvement from project inception to Final Account, Quantity Surveyors develop extensive expertise in negotiation. Their deep understanding of negotiation tactics enables them to manage complex commercial discussions with precision and confidence.

6. *Project Close-Out*

At the conclusion of a project, the Quantity Surveyor is responsible for finalising the accounts, verifying that all financial claims are accurate and ensuring that the work delivered aligns with the contractual obligations.

7. *Trusted Advisor*

Ultimately, a Quantity Surveyor helps clients, whether governments, developers, or private owners, make informed financial decisions throughout the construction process. They balance quality, cost, and risk to ensure that projects are delivered on time, on budget, and aligned with their intended purpose. While other professionals may engage in aspects of this work, Quantity Surveyors are uniquely trained in these techniques and skills from the outset of their career.

B. Quantity Surveying under the Canadian Context

Recently, a well-respected construction recruiter posed the question on LinkedIn, "Why is there no Quantity Surveying undergraduate Degree in Canada?[1]"

This is something I have found to be interesting and never understood because Canada is a Commonwealth country and other non-Commonwealth countries, such as those in MENA, would not even consider starting a project without a Chartered Quantity Surveyor of a Quantity Surveying firm being in place. When I looked at the conundrum further, I found that, typically: -

1. *Different Professional Traditions*

The Canadian construction industry historically developed under the North American model, where cost management and commercial roles are performed by:

- Professional Engineers (P.Engs),
- Architects, or
- Construction Managers with degrees in civil engineering, construction management, or architecture.

In contrast, countries such as the UK, Australia, and South Africa follow the Commonwealth QS model, where Quantity Surveying is a distinct profession with its own university pathway and chartered designation (e.g., RICS, AIQS).

2. *Lack of Professional Regulation and Recognition for QS*

Unlike in the UK or Australia, there is no statutory recognition or regulatory body in Canada specifically for the QS profession. The Canadian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (CIQS) accredits and certifies professionals (e.g., PQS or the Professional Quantity Surveyor), but it operates independently and does not drive university curriculum development like Engineers Canada or provincial engineering associations do for engineering programmes.

3. *University Programme Focus*

Canadian universities prioritise degrees that align with licensed professions:

- Engineering programmes are structured to lead to a Professional Engineer (P.Eng) designation.
- Architecture programmes prepare graduates for registration with provincial architectural bodies.

[1] https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ruairispillane_quantity-surveyor-role-emergence-in-canadas-activity-7355980266026262531-HM7k?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAAPfn28BNdHkPk9PEGXEFb64Hv23rr-52SE

- Construction Management degrees or diplomas are offered primarily at polytechnics and colleges, not research universities.

There is little incentive for universities to offer QS degrees when:

- The job market in Canada does not explicitly demand QS degrees, and/or,
- Employers typically hire engineers, project managers, or cost consultants trained in other disciplines.

4. Overlapping Roles

In Canada, many of the typical QS responsibilities are absorbed into:

- Cost consulting firms (often staffed by engineers or CIQS-certified QSs),
- General Contractors' estimating departments,
- Contract administration is carried out by in-house lawyers or non-practicing lawyers,
- Client-side project controls or finance teams,
- Quantity surveyors trained abroad (especially from UK, Australia, South Africa, India) who adapt to the local model.

Thus, the market demand for a QS-specific degree is diluted, especially when many QSs in Canada enter the field via civil engineering or construction management and later obtain CIQS or RICS accreditation.

5. Availability of Alternative Pathways

Instead of QS degrees, aspiring professionals often pursue:

- Diplomas or postgraduate certificates in construction estimating or cost control,
- CIQS certification through accredited programmes or work-based pathways,
- RICS membership, especially for internationally trained QS professionals.

These alternative routes allow entry into QS roles without a standalone QS degree.

6. Overview

The following provides an overview of the key points discussed above.

UK and Australia: Quantity Surveying as a Recognised Academic Discipline

- In countries like the UK and Australia, Quantity Surveying is widely recognised as a standalone academic discipline. Numerous universities offer specialised Bachelor's degrees in Quantity Surveying, which are formally accredited by professional associations such as the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) in the UK, and the Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (AIQS) in Australia[2].
- Students in these programmes graduate with the professional and technical competencies explicitly tailored to QS roles, including cost planning, contract administration, procurement, and dispute resolution.

[2] https://e2studysolution.com/news/quantity-surveying-whats-the-difference/

Canada: No Standalone Quantity Surveying Degrees

- A review of education providers in Canada, including CIQS-accredited programmes, reveals that while some institutions offer diplomas or degrees in Construction Management or Construction Project Management, none offer a dedicated university-level Quantity Surveying degree. For instance, George Brown College, Fanshawe College, (both in Ontario) and the British Columbia Institute of Technology offer relevant diplomas or Bachelor of Technology (B. Tech) programmes not QS degrees[3].
- Even larger public universities, such as the University of British Columbia (UBC), Dalhousie, the University of Calgary, and the University of Toronto, list construction management or civil engineering degrees, not quantity surveying degrees, among their offerings[4], with only 14 Construction Management Bachelor's Degree Programmes in Canada[5].

To provide further context, the following table presents a summary of the typical functions performed by Quantity Surveyors (QS) across various regions, along with an overview of how their roles are recognised within the respective Construction Industry Markets, as projected for 2025.

QS Activity	UK	Australia	MENA	Canada
Cost Estimation & Planning	Highly specialized and central to role	Core function with strong industry reliance	Essential for mega-project budgeting	Emerging role, often under the Estimator title
Contract Administration	Standard QS responsibility	Key QS task with legal compliance focus	Critical in managing complex contracts	Often shared with Project Managers
Tender Analysis & Procurement	Strategic advisory role	Substantial involvement in procurement strategy	Vital for project delivery and cost control	Limited recognition, sometimes outsourced
Risk & Claims Management	Integral to QS duties	Necessary for dispute resolution and risk	High-value role in mitigating financial risks	Sometimes handled by PMs or Risk Managers
Cost Control & Reporting	Continuous monitoring throughout the lifecycle	Real-time tracking with advanced tools	Crucial for managing budgets on large projects	Growing importance on large infrastructure
Lifecycle Costing & Sustainability	Increasingly emphasised for net-zero goals	Embedded in green building practices	Emerging in sustainable mega-developments	Rarely emphasized
Dispute Resolution & Mediation	Often QS-led with legal support	QSs play mediator role in contract disputes	Key role in avoiding costly delays	Occasionally involved
Professional Recognition	High (MRICS widely respected)	High (AIQS,MRICS recognised)	High (MRICS, international standards valued)	Moderate (CIQS, PQS, Construction Estimator Certified (CEC) designations)
Integration in Commercial Teams	Standard across all major projects	Strong presence in infrastructure and buildings	Embedded in large-scale development teams	Growing but not universal
Construction Industry Value (USD)	$400 billion[6]	$300 billion[7]	$500 billion[8]	$250 billion[9]

Table 1. Comparison Table of Quantity Surveying Activities & Recognition Per Region
Source: Seán Hollywood, Hollywood Associates Inc. (2025).

[3] https://ciqs.org/web/web/03-Education-Pages/windows/Accredited-Programs.aspx
[4] https://www.constructionplacements.com/construction-management-courses-in-canada/
[5] https://www.bachelorsportal.com/study-options/269353302/construction-management-canada.html
[6] https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2025/05/01/3072633/28124/en/UK-Construction-Industry-2025-2034-Government-Led-Infrastructure-Boom-and-Private-Sector-Momentum-Propel-the-Market-at-4-3-CAGR.html
[7] https://www.nextmsc.com/report/australia-construction-market
[8] https://www.techsciresearch.com/report/middle-east-construction-market/15658.html
[9] https://www.nextmsc.com/report/canada-construction-market

C. Current Dynamic Climate

In an environment shaped by global tariff volatility, evolving project scopes, and geopolitical uncertainty, the role of an experienced Quantity Surveyor has never been more critical. As we move through 2025, recent trade tariffs introduced by the U.S. administration have disrupted supply chains and inflated procurement costs, as identified in Figure 2 below. Governments, including Canada's, are being forced to respond with agility and foresight. It is in these moments of economic and logistical uncertainty that the strategic insight of a seasoned Quantity Surveyor is not just valuable, it is essential.

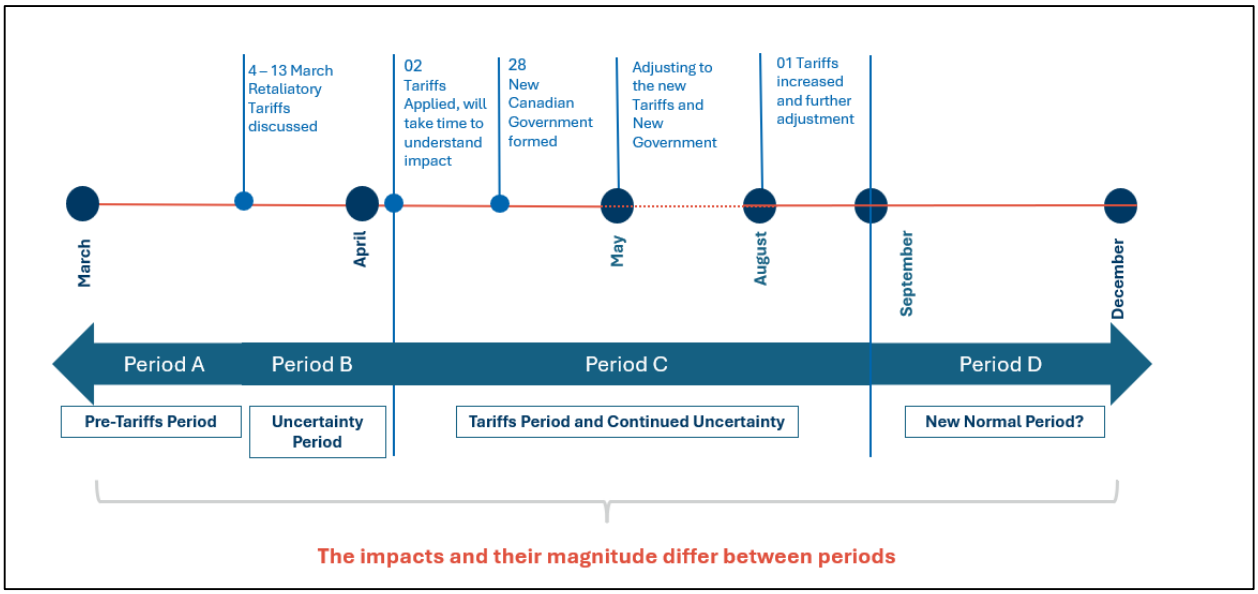

Figure 2. North American Tariffs from a Canadian Perspective
Source: Seán Hollywood, Hollywood Associates Inc. *(2025).*

On July 31, 2025, President Trump signed an executive order increasing tariffs on Canadian goods imported to the United States from 25% to 35% and the tariff would cover all products not covered by the US-Mexico-Canada trade agreement. Goods transhipped to another country to evade the new tariffs would be subject to a transhipment levy of 40%. Prime Minister Carney added that US duties and tariffs would heavily affect lumber, steel, aluminium and automobiles.[10]

Additionally, it was report that Canada sends around 75% of all its exports south of the border and since March 2025, President Trump had imposed several tariffs on Canadian goods and energy resources, including a 25% tariff on all goods, excluding potash and energy products, and a separate 10% tariff on energy resources, including potash. There was also a 50% tariff on steel and aluminium imports and a 25% tariff on autos and auto parts.

To date, despite various discussions, both countries have not reached a trade deal. In June, Prime Minister Carney stated that if the two countries did not reach an agreement by August 1, 2025, Canada would probably impose more counter-levies on US exports of steel and aluminium.

Therefore, there does not appear to be an end to the "tit for tat" tariffs in the immediate future, and based on this, I have provided an Indexed Price Trajectory for key construction materials.

[10] https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jul/31/trump-canada-tariffs-order

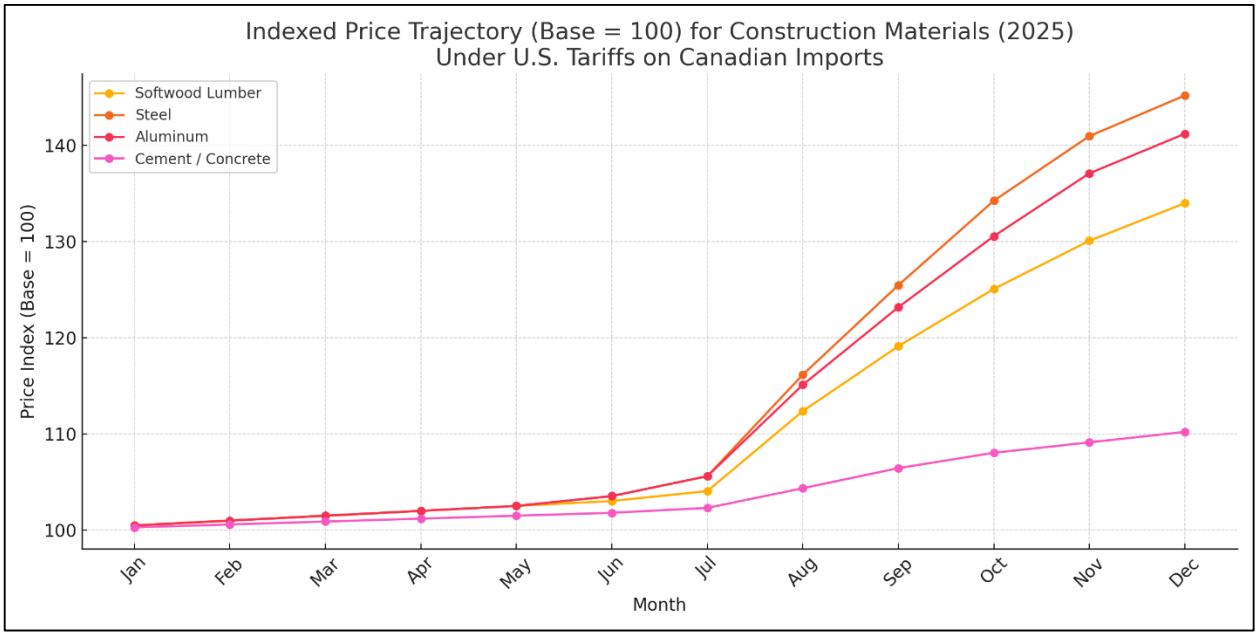

Figure 3. Potential Impacts on Tariffs on Key Construction Material for Canadian Imports as of August 1, 2025
Source: Seán Hollywood, Hollywood Associates Inc. *(2025). AI Generated.*

The graph above uses the data date of August 1, 2025 and a baseline index of 100.

The projections assume full tariff pass-through over four months (August–December), which is fair based on the uncertainty from April 2, 2025, when Tariffs were first applied. It should be noted that these indices do not account for consequential inflationary pressures beyond tariffs (e.g. labour or energy costs). There may also be a lag in the timing of the price hikes depending on the "stock in store" as of August 1, 2025. However, the consequence will definitely affect bidding, procurement, and budgets.

1. *Steel*

- As of June 2025, Canadian steel prices stood at approximately US $883/MT [11]
- On August 1, 2025, the U.S. increased tariffs on Canadian goods, including steel to 35%[12]
- Assuming full pass-through, prices could rise by ~35% from the August baseline

2. *Aluminium*

- U.S. tariffs on aluminium were elevated to 25% in March 2025 (from 10%), applying to all Canadian-origin shipments including downstream goods[13]
- Projected aluminium price impact: roughly +25% by year-end

3. *Lumber*

- U.S. duties on Canadian softwood lumber increased from ~14–15% to ~35% in late July–August 2025[14]

[11] https://www.imarcgroup.com/steel-price-trend
[12] https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jul/31/trump-canada-tariffs-order
[13] https://gowlingwlg.com/en-ca/insights-resources/articles/2025/tariffs-and-the-cost-of-building
[14] https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/jobs-report-today-stock-market-08-01-2025/card/lumber-prices-hit-a-three-year-high-6U0qc0XnDxvXId1g48KS

- The Wall Street Journal reported on August 1, 2025, that "Lumber futures for September delivery increased 39% from a year ago and were the highest price since summer 2022, with expectations that November will trade even higher."[14 above]
- Therefore, it is safe to project a ~40% increase in lumber-related costs.

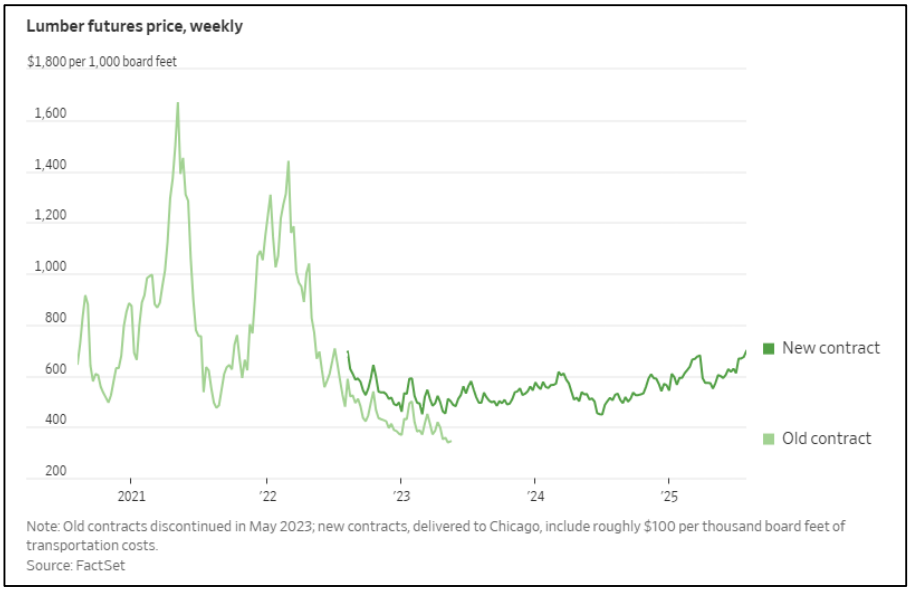

Figure 4. Lumber Future price, weekly
Source: The Wall Street Journal - Fact Sheet. (August 1, 2025).

In light of renewed tariff impositions and evolving global trade dynamics, Quantity Surveyors are strategically positioned to evaluate cost implications, forecast financial risks, and advise on procurement strategies that preserve project viability. As project conditions continue to shift, whether due to geopolitical developments or internal scope modifications, it is the Quantity Surveyor who ensures that financial impacts are accurately identified, rigorously analysed, and transparently justified.

Our role extends well beyond budget management; we serve as custodians of a project's commercial viability from inception to completion. Thanks to a comprehensive education and diverse, cross-disciplinary experience, Quantity Surveyors often serve as the central point of coordination among key stakeholders, accountants, cost engineers, project managers, and legal advisors, all essential to the successful delivery of complex, large-scale projects.

One of the recurring challenges I typically encounter in practice is the flawed approach to claim and change documentation. Far too often, submissions arrive as vast collections of documents, hundreds of pages or entire drives of data, yet fail to establish the critical causal links between events and associated costs. Without this traceability, even the most data-heavy claims are vulnerable to being discredited under scrutiny. This is precisely where certified professionals, such as Professional Quantity Surveyor (PQS) and Construction Estimator Certified (CEC) practitioners, add significant value. The volume of documentation does not define our effectiveness, but by its clarity, structure, and alignment with contractual frameworks. Whether preparing an application for payment, a variation claim, or conducting a forensic cost analysis, we ensure that each submission is coherent, traceable, and defensible.

In my previous writings (Concurrent delay in Canada – What now?) [15] and (Disentangling the Impacts of COVID-19[16]), I have emphasised what I call the "Three R's": *Records, Records, Records*[17] and *Read the Contract, Read the Contract, Read the Contract*. These aren't mere mantras—they are essential disciplines. Robust record-keeping and strong contractual fluency form the foundation of credible claims and effective dispute avoidance.

In its simplicity, an effective claim should rest on four key pillars:

1. **Cause** – Clear identification of the event or condition giving rise to the claim
2. **Entitlement** – A contractual or legal basis that substantiates the right to claim
3. **Effect** – The quantifiable impact on time and/or cost
4. **Substantiation** – Robust, time-stamped evidence supporting the claim

In many claims, the weakest link is substantiation. Too often, it is incomplete, missing, or overly redacted. Site diaries, while useful, are rarely sufficient on their own. What is needed is a systematic and disciplined approach to documentation, one that aligns with established industry protocols such as the Society of Construction Law's Delay and Disruption Protocol[18] and AACE[19] guidelines.

D. Looking Ahead: The Canadian Context

One pressing and often overlooked area is the limited investment in research and development (R&D) within the Construction Industry. While other sectors rapidly innovate through digital integration, data science, and advanced modelling, the Construction Industry has historically lagged in formalised R&D. This gap presents both a challenge and an opportunity.

Crucially, Quantity Surveyors are exceptionally well-positioned to lead and support research and development initiatives. Their deep understanding of project data, cost systems, contractual mechanisms, and stakeholder engagement provides a robust foundation for driving innovation. Whether contributing to the development of predictive cost models, helping implement digital quantity take-off tools, or integrating artificial intelligence into commercial strategy, Quantity Surveyors offer unique value to R&D teams. Associations, academic institutions, and industry leaders must collaborate more closely with PQS professionals to translate practical field experience into research outputs that elevate industry standards, improve accuracy, and enhance resilience across infrastructure delivery. Establishing a more structured R&D culture within the profession would elevate standards, improve predictive accuracy, and contribute to risk reduction across complex infrastructure portfolios.

Canada's infrastructure delivery landscape is undergoing a significant transformation. We are observing a gradual shift from traditional Public-Private Partnerships (P3's) to Alliancing or Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) Contracts that incorporate shared pain/gain mechanisms. Alongside this transition, there is an increasing emphasis on prospective, rather than retrospective, claims. These developments highlight the

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[15] LinkedIn article - Concurrent delay in Canada – What now? Author Seán Hollywood, Hollywood Associates Inc. (November 2021)
[16] The Generals (OGAB) – Spring/Summer 2021 – Disentangling the Impacts of COVID-19
[17] Abrahamson (Engineering Law and the ICE Contracts, 4th Edition, 1979), wrote:
"A party to a dispute, particularly if there is an arbitration will learn three lessons (often too late): the importance of records, the importance of records and the importance of records."
18 SCL Delay and Disruption Protocol 2nd Edition: February 2017
19 AACE® International Recommended Practice No. 29R-03

growing need for enhanced commercial foresight and real-time decision-making skills that are at the core of the Quantity Surveyor's role.

Valuing work on a prospective basis is both an art and a science. It requires not only technical expertise but also the trust of the industry in the estimating team's capabilities. Too often, contractors fail to present defensible estimates, a critical misstep that weakens their negotiating position and thus, increases project risk. The legal principle *"onus probandi incumbit ei qui dicit, non ei qui negat"* the burden of proof lies with the claimant, remains as relevant today as it has ever been.

Although P3 and Target Cost models have their place, the rigour behind their selection is often lacking. Decisions are sometimes made without SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis or input from seasoned commercial professionals. Furthermore, public infrastructure is increasingly jeopardised by underqualified appointments, sometimes based more on affiliation than competence. Critically, this undermines both outcomes and public trust.

Over the past five to ten years, it has become increasingly apparent that some public sector infrastructure initiatives are being undermined by the appointment of underqualified or inexperienced individuals to key roles. In many instances, these appointments appear to be driven more by personal affiliations with senior leadership than by demonstrable professional competence. This practice not only threatens project outcomes but also erodes public trust in the effective and ethical management of taxpayer-funded initiatives. Worryingly, the issue is further exacerbated by senior leaders with their persistent reliance on outdated mindsets, most notably the classic refrain that "claims aren't typically addressed this early in a contract." This is, of course, particularly convenient when early-stage obligations on the part of the owner remain conspicuously unmet.

While Canada has not formally integrated Quantity Surveying (QS) into its higher education and regulatory frameworks, the MENA region countries have strongly endorsed the profession as a core pillar of commercial governance in construction. This distinction is grounded in several key factors:

1. *Legacy of British/Commonwealth Contractual Systems*

The legal and contractual foundations of construction in many Middle Eastern countries, such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, and Oman, draw heavily from British and Commonwealth systems. The widespread adoption of FIDIC-based contracts has entrenched the use of QS professionals in areas such as cost planning, variation valuation, and claims administration.

2. International Workforce and Professional Influence

The regional construction workforce includes a significant proportion of expatriate professionals trained in the United Kingdom, South Africa, Australia, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and India, where Quantity Surveying is a regulated profession with well-established academic pathways. These professionals brought with them the institutional norms of RICS, AIQS, and other certifying bodies, resulting in the widespread recognition of QS roles in public and private sector projects.

3. *Commercial Governance of Megaprojects*

The scale and complexity of infrastructure and real estate developments in the Middle East, such as NEOM (Saudi Arabia), Lusail City (Qatar), and Expo 2020 (UAE) necessitated robust commercial governance. These

multibillion-dollar projects require cost certainty, rigorous procurement controls, and structured change management processes, all of which fall within the core remit of professional QSs.

4. Institutional and Regulatory Recognition

Across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), government agencies and large project sponsors increasingly mandate or favour professionals with RICS, MRICS, or FRICS credentials, underscoring the embedded value of international Quantity Surveying standards. RICS MENA actively supports the profession through continuing professional development, ethics, and employer recognition programmes.

"The demand for chartered quantity surveyors in the Middle East remains strong, particularly for MRICS and FRICS-certified professionals with experience in cost management and dispute resolution." [20]

5. Labour and Procurement Structures

The procurement frameworks in the Middle East are typically subcontractor-heavy, with multi-package and remeasurement contracting strategies prevalent. These models necessitate the application of professional cost management and payment valuation systems, reinforcing the need for trained QS personnel.

6. Overview

The institutionalisation of Quantity Surveying in the Middle East is the result of both contractual legacy and project delivery needs. Unlike Canada, where QS roles are fragmented across engineering, architecture, and construction management practices, MENA has welcomed and adopted a defined and internationally recognised model that integrates the Quantity Surveyor as a central figure in project governance. This divergence reflects the broader construction culture and regulatory context of each region. In comparison, the UK, Australia, and MENA regions demonstrate high standards of commercial delivery when Quantity Surveyors are embedded from the outset and that ethos contributes significantly to successful project outcomes.

E. Conclusion: Recalibrating Our Understanding of the Quantity Surveyor's Value

Despite lingering outdated stereotypes, the role of the Quantity Surveyor remains indispensable. In today's construction landscape, where timelines are tight, costs are rising, and external risks abound, the Quantity Surveyor provides essential clarity, structure, and commercial discipline. The cost of excluding or undervaluing this expertise can be immense, manifesting in costly delays, claims disputes, and public disillusionment with large-scale infrastructure projects.

Encouragingly, the involvement of the Canadian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (CIQS) in the National Infrastructure Assessment, in partnership with the Canadian Infrastructure Council, marks a positive step forward. This signals a growing recognition of the strategic value Quantity Surveyors bring to shaping Canada's built environment at a time when Prime Minister Carney issued his Mandate letter on May 21, 2025[21] and the Building Canada Act C-5[22].

[20] RICS MENA Annual Report, 2024
[21] https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters/2025/05/21/mandate-letters
[22] https://www.parl.ca/documentviewer/en/45-1/bill/C-5/first-reading

In his Mandate letter, he stated that there is a generational challenge and that the government would focus on several priorities. Quantity Surveyors are best placed to address those priorities by not only managing costs, risks, and procurement, but also by improving project delivery efficiency through international recruitment of Quantity Surveyors and other high-calibre talented professionals to keep infrastructure costs and ultimately public spending manageable while supporting a high-performing, globally competitive workforce within the construction sector.

Carney's Mandate heartens a Professional Quantity Surveyor in particular, as it highlights the fiscal considerations mentioned and points to the potential of Canadians looking at their in-country talent that could be trained through a Quantity Surveying degree, learning from the other Quantity Surveying professionals already in the country.

As the construction landscape evolves, especially under the current tariff climate, industry leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders must recalibrate their understanding of the Quantity Surveyor's role. Our contribution is not peripheral; it is foundational to the successful delivery of sustainable, commercially sound infrastructure in Canada and globally.

In line with the vision set out in Carney's Mandate, and as Canada prepares for a significant surge in infrastructure activity,[23] delivering meaningful and enduring change in the built environment economy will require moving beyond the prevailing culture of personal networks taking precedence over professional capability. This is not the time to lean on the adage, "it's not what you know, or who you know, but who knows you." Instead, Canada must look outward to global markets for proven talent, innovative methodologies, and results-oriented solutions that can drive progress at scale. In short, one question remains: why would the Canadian construction industry compromise its return on investment by sidelining professionals with the education, training, and expertise that Quantity Surveyors bring to the table?

[23] Are we ready for the Construction Tsunami? Author Gary Williams for the CIQS, Construction Economist Journal Fall 2024