

**ETHICAL CONDUCT,  
PROFESSIONALISM, MORAL VALUES  
AND GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF  
PROFESSIONAL QUANTITY  
SURVEYORS.**

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*AT THE*  
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SURVEYORS IN NIGERIA**

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# INTRODUCTION

The role of Quantity Surveyors in the Construction Industry is critical, particularly in a developing economy like Nigeria's. As professionals responsible for the financial and contractual management of construction projects, Quantity Surveyors (QS) significantly influence the cost, quality, and timely completion of projects. My presentation today looks at the ethical conduct, professionalism, moral values and general expectations of Quantity Surveyors.



Just like with any other profession, Quantity Surveyor has a set of guiding principles, codes of conducts and rules that you all must abide by and adhere to.

# QUANTITY SURVEYING



# DEFINITION OF KEYWORDS/TERMS

## WHO IS A PROFESSIONAL?

According to Wikipedia, a professional is a member of a profession, or any person who works in a specified activity.



## WHAT IS A PROFESSION?

The Australian Council of Professions defines a "Profession" as a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and who hold themselves out as and are accepted by the public as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning.



# FEATURES OF A PROFESSION

1) Specialized knowledge and skill



2) Remuneration



3) Professional Body



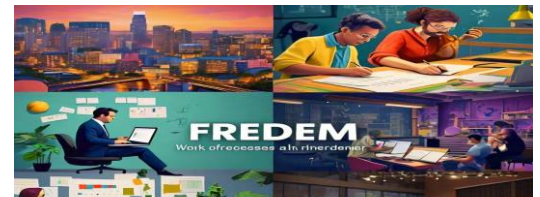
4) Technical knowledge



5) Service motive



6) Freedom of work



# DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF QUANTITY SURVEYORS

Quantity surveyors are essential in every phase of a construction project, from inception to completion. Their duties include:

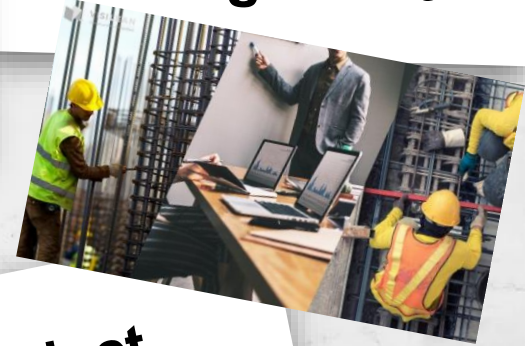
**Cost estimation**



**Procurement advice**



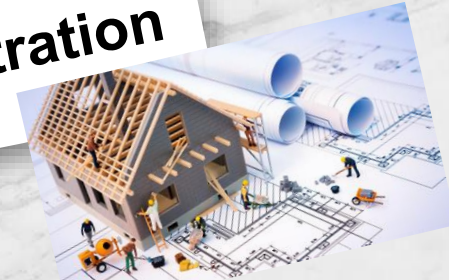
**Contract Management**



**Cost planning**



**Project Administration**



## WHAT IS PROFESSIONALISM?

**Professionalism is a set of standards that an individual is expected to adhere to in a workplace. It does not mean wearing beautiful suits, smelling nice or carrying briefcase, rather it means -**



**Professional  
Competence and  
continuous  
development.**



**Professionalism in  
work habits and  
attitudes**

**Respect for  
colleagues, clients  
and other  
stakeholders**



**Compliance with  
industry standards  
and best practices**



**Effective  
communication and  
teamwork**



**Accountability and  
responsibility**



# **General Expectations of Professional Quantity Surveyors**

**Technical competence and knowledge**

**Attention to details and accuracy**

**Time management and organization**

**Adaptability and flexibility**

**Cost management and financial reporting**

**Risk management and problem solving**

## WHAT IS ETHICS?

Ethics are a set of moral principles or rules that say what is and what is not acceptable. It refers to the code of conduct that people use to determine when an action is acceptable or not.

**RIGHT** →

← **WRONG**



# ETHICAL CONDUCT

Ethical conduct refers to the adherence to moral principles and professional standards. Key principles and values for the code of Conducts of the Quantity Surveyors include:

**Transparency/Accountability:** Ensuring open and clear transactions/project details. Taking responsibility for their actions and decisions.

**Teamwork:** Collaboration and cooperation with other professionals to achieve common goals.

**Confidentiality:** Protecting the privacy of client information and sensitive project details.

**Objectivity:** Being impartial and avoidance of conflict of interest

**Integrity:** Being honest and having strong moral principles. Quantity Surveyors must provide accurate cost estimates and honest advice, avoiding conflicts of interest



**Key principles and values for the code of Conducts of the Quantity Surveyors cont'd.**

**Professional Competence:**

Maintaining up-to-date knowledge and skills for high quality services

**Respect:** Collaboration, courtesy, respect for colleagues, clients and other stakeholders

**Compliance:**

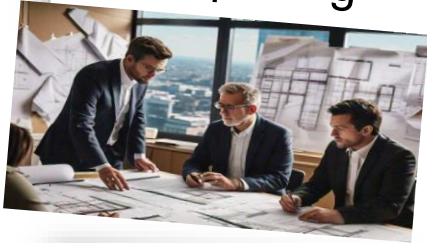
Adherence to laws, regulations and industry standards.

**Sustainability:** Consideration of environmental, social and economic impacts in professional practices..

**Continuous Improvement:** Commitment to learning, innovation and professional development.

# IMPORTANCE OF ETHICAL CONDUCTS IN QUANTITY SURVEYING

Accurate cost  
estimate and  
reporting



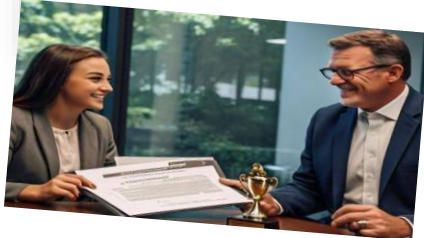
Maintenance of confidentiality



Fairness and  
transparency in  
procurement



Protection of client's  
interests



Compliance with rules and  
regulations



# TIPS TO MAINTAINING ETHICAL STANDARDS AND CODE OF CONDUCTS

**Report unethical behaviours** – report any observed unethical conduct immediately to your superior.

**Reward ethical behaviours** – ensure there is reward system for good conduct.

**Fairness** – biases and personal beliefs are to be avoided in decision making processes.

**Commitment** – be dedicated to your work with selflessness.

**Identify ethical problems** – learn about the general types of ethical issues, review thoroughly your workplace culture, policies and practices, ask questions to identify the issues, etc.



# TIPS TO MAINTAINING ETHICAL STANDARDS AND CODE OF CONDUCTS CONT'D.

**Accountability** – be accountable to yourself, know your why, discover over time what motivates you and take responsibilities for your actions and inactions.

**Care and respect** – maintain mutual respect between you and other professional colleagues.



# SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Keeping promises and helping others.



It encourages honesty.



Shaping our decisions towards positive impacts and steering us away from harmful actions.

It increases the productivity of a company or an individual



It helps in building trust and credibility, reputation and transparency. etc.





# MORAL VALUES

Moral values are standards or principles that guide an individual's behaviours and choices based on what is considered right or wrong. It entails:



Respect for  
the law and  
regulations

Fairness and  
justice

Respect for the  
community and  
society

Responsibility and  
accountability

Respect for the  
environment and  
sustainability

Respect for  
the rights and  
dignity of  
others



# Ethics vs. Morals

Guiding principles of conduct of an individual or group	Principles on which one's judgments of right and wrong are based
Influenced by profession, field, organization, etc.	Influenced by society, culture and religion
Related to professional work	Not related to professional work
Uniform compared to morals	Vary according to different cultures and religions

# ETHICAL DILEMMAS AND CASE STUDIES

Let us take two (2) real life scenarios and case studies to illustrate ethical dilemmas that the Quantity Surveyor may face.

## **Professional Competence:**

A QS is assigned to a project outside his area of expertise. The QS must decide whether to seek additional training or risks making mistakes.

## **Confidentiality:**

A QS is asked to prepare a cost estimate for a client's project, but the client insists that the estimate be kept confidential. However, the QS discovered the project may have environmental impact that should be disclosed.

## ETHICAL DILEMMAS AND CASE STUDIES CONT'D.

The two scenarios in the preceding slide illustrate the ethical dilemmas that the professional QS may face in their daily work. By considering these case studies, professional QS can develop their critical thinking and ethical decision-making skills.

*Can we think of any other real-life scenarios and case studies?*

# GROUP DISCUSSION





# UNETHICAL CONDUCTS AND TYPES

Unethical conducts refers to behaviour or actions that violate moral principles, ethical standards or professional code of conducts.

Unethical conducts may include:



# TYPES OF UNETHICAL CONDUCT

Misuse of company's time; be it covering up for a colleague who arrives late at work or modifying the attendance log.



Giving or receiving bribes.



Abusive behaviour or sexual molestation.



Lying to  
the  
workforce

Dishonesty –  
falsifying products or  
services to fulfil  
targets.

Insertion on non-  
existent personnel in  
the payroll (Ghost  
Workers Syndrome)

Others are diversion, delaying movement of files, delivering substandard projects, retaliation against whistleblowers, etc.



# Unethical Behaviour of the Quantity Surveyor

Inflating quantities and rates in the Bills of Quantity (BOQ).



Disrespect to seniors and elders.



Non-disclosure of professional errors.

Supplanting.

Collecting bribes and colluding with contractors.



## Unethical Behaviour of the Quantity Surveyor Cont'd.

Insincerity to  
clients and other  
professionals.

Revealing official  
confidential  
information.

Supplanting

Others are conflict of interests, overstating qualifications to secure a job, Inflating the contract sum. etc.



## Consequences of Unethical Conduct:

Unethical behaviour by members of any profession can have serious consequences that undermine the integrity of that particular professional body and erode the public trust in the profession. Some consequences include:

Loss of public trust

Reduction in quality  
of goods and  
services.

Damage to the  
reputation of the  
profession

Drive away  
international  
investors and  
technical partners.

Collusive tendering

# Misconduct, types and examples of Misconducts

Misconduct is an unethical behaviour. It is a specific act of wrongdoing or improper behaviour which is inimical to the image of the service and susceptible to investigation and proof. Some of the types of misconducts include:

Academic misconduct

fraud

Insubordination

Falsification

Conflict of interest

Dishonesty

Fraud

Gross negligence

Confidentiality breaches

Harassment

Insult and violence,  
etc.

Damage to company's  
property

# PERSONAL ETHICS STATEMENT

A statement developed by an individual reflecting the most important personal values and morals used to be their roadmap for living.

## What is the statement meant to do?

Represent what we  
strive to be.

Influence our actions  
and interactions.

Demonstrate how we put  
our guiding ideals into  
practice.

Serves as a support system for  
decision making.

Be our “Go-To” during  
difficult situations.

## **You can build your statement by:**

- Deciding on the values and morals that are most important to you.
- Deciding on a format.
- Working on your statement over time... adjust along the way.
- Sharing it with others for feedback.
- Making it accessible.

## ***How do you create personal codes of ethics?***

1. Determine a personal mission statement.
2. Establish your core values.
3. Evaluate your priorities.
4. Decide how your ethics affects your daily life.

## ***Some examples of personal code of ethics statements:***

1. I will treat others as I want to be treated.
2. I will be honest and transparent in my personal and professional life.
3. I will always put forth my best effort and maintain a healthy work life balance.
4. I am dedicated to continually improving myself.
5. I will keep my promises and honour my commitment.

## ***Justification for unethical conducts (Rationalization Filter)***

- ❖ “Everybody does it”.
- ❖ “Nobody will notice”.
- ❖ “I don’t get paid enough to deal with that”.
- ❖ “Just this one time”.
- ❖ “It’s not like I’m hurting anyone”.
- ❖ “I’m not a whistle-blower”.
- ❖ “I’m too close to retirement”.
- ❖ “I’m minding my own business”.



# Video Clips on Ethical Dilemmas and Unethical Behaviour in the workplace

## TASK 2

[Watch this video clip on Ethical dilemmas in the workplace](#)

## TASK 3

[Watch this video clip on Unethical Behaviours](#)





# CONCLUSION

The ethical conduct, professionalism, and general expectations of quantity surveyors are integral to the growth and development of Nigeria's construction sector. By adhering to high standards of ethics and professionalism, Quantity Surveyors can significantly enhance the sector's contribution to the economy. As Nigeria seeks to address its economic challenges, the role of Quantity Surveyors in promoting efficient, sustainable, and economically viable construction projects cannot be overemphasized.

**Most importantly,** Quantity Surveyors are to protect the clients and public interests, to conduct himself ethically and professionally, be confidential in dealing with information passed to him by his client, shall not supplant another Quantity Surveyor's work, shall not cheat when dealing with figures and rates, he must at all times be sincere.

**The professional Quantity Surveyor should separate work from his personal life and follow his professional code of conduct.**



**QSRBN**

*THE END*

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*Thank you for Listening!*