



Enlightened Clients' Guide to Project Quality and Compliance Detailed Notes

Detailed notes on procurement – Appointing consultants

These are the professionals typically, appointed by you the client, to work alongside your Internal Team to perform expert tasks on your project. These might include:

- Providing advice on setting up and defining the Purpose, business case and objectives of your project
- Developing and co-ordinating the design
- Preparing production information and tender documentation
- Advising on the most appropriate approach to appointing a Main Contractor and the approach to contract administration
- Inspecting the work of contractors and ensuring its quality and compliance

Designing your building will involve many professionals all of whom will be a specialist in their part of the design. The members of the consultant team that are likely to be required on most projects comprise an architect, cost consultant (QS), services engineer (M&E consultant) and structural engineer.

Then someone needs to be charged with assembling the individual parts of the design making them fit together properly so that they function satisfactorily as a whole and are aesthetically pleasing. And someone needs to make sure there is a good end-to-end responsibility trail in the development of the design with no errors or gaps. This calls for a lead designer. In the case of a building this is usually the architect. If the building has a complicated structure or complex services it may be the structural engineer or services engineer.

As architects are trained to be synthesisers not specialists, they are well placed to be lead designers. They know enough about what all the other specialist designers are doing in order to coordinate and challenge their proposals and negotiate successful outcomes. The lead designer is the link between your desired outcomes and the design team and needs to be the visionary with the necessary tenacity and determination to see that the design being developed will meet your needs and objectives.

You need to appoint an architect that understands the vast array of possible technical solutions for your building such as the most appropriate cladding and curtain walling system to adopt or how to best incorporate precast, factory made and modular components into the design. They need an intuitive understanding of how far these systems and components – all engineered by specialists – can be best incorporated into the overall design. This is what is meant by integrating and coordinating and why negotiating a functional and aesthetically pleasing compromise is a core skill for the lead designer.

Alongside the lead designer, someone needs to make sure that your needs as the client are communicated to the design team and that in turn you respond to their requests for clarification on your needs, objectives and desired outcomes. This is one of the management roles of the lead consultant or project lead. On smaller projects, you might do away with the lead consultant and communicate directly with the designers. On larger projects, you might appoint a project manager or employer's agent to undertake the role.



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The tasks of the lead consultant, or project lead include establishing the project programme; helping to appoint the consultants; issuing instructions on behalf of you the client; establishing change control procedures; reporting to you; liaising with you in preparation for the handover of the completed building.

Even when there is a lead consultant, all the design consultants will have direct appointments, or contracts, with you as the client. It is possible for you to appoint a sole consultant: perhaps the architect, perhaps a multidisciplinary practice. While it may make life simpler for you, it does mean that you lose your ability to choose all the designers and this may have a detrimental effect on the final quality of the design and have an adverse effect on your desired outcomes.

On more complex projects it might also be appropriate to appoint a design co-ordinator for the coordination and integration of the elements of the design undertaken by specialist contractors and component suppliers, and with the increasing use of digitisation in construction, an information manager for Building Information Modelling (BIM).

For further guidance on appointing an architect, lead designer and lead consultant see the **CESW Guide to Appointing an Architect**.

As we mentioned earlier, to help you through the process of establishing the case for the new building and choosing consultants, you might wish to appoint a client adviser, independent of the team of consultants, to give you independent professional advice. CESW has produced **A definitive Client Advisor Guide**.

This may sound like a large number of people with their associated costs but bear in mind that at the end of the day, as we have seen earlier in this guide, a team of consultants is a very small percentage cost of the project when compared to its overall cost and the contractor and supply chain spend. And very small in relation to the costs of operating your building over its lifetime. And even smaller in relation to the value that the building will add to your organisation over its anticipated long lifespan. Getting the design right in the first place can save an awful lot of heartache and expense later in the construction stage, or even worse for you, during the operation of the building.