

Checklist for evaluating a contract administrator

The title 'contract administrator' was introduced into the JCT suite in 1987. There are different labels given to this role across the standard form UK suites: contract administrator (JCT traditional), Project Manager or Supervisor (NEC), Engineer (IMechE).

However, a variety of different consultants may be involved in administering the contract: a project manager, clerk of works, lead designer, employer's agent, independent certifier and so on. It is really important to establish the scope of the role that the named individual or organisation acting as the contract administrator on any project.

This checklist is designed to help FMB members to check whether a specific contract administrator will be willing and able to act in that capacity on a project.

These Member guidance notes can be used in conjunction with the Contract Administrator (CA) Questionnaire and neither document is intended for sharing with the CA or client.

Preliminary Checklist

1. Qualifications and Experience
Do you have experience working on similar types and sizes of projects?
Are you familiar with the FMB contract suite or the agreed contract?
Can you provide examples of successfully administered projects?
Please confirm whether you have received any training on carrying out this role?
Please confirm that you have read the contract you are administering?
2. Understanding of Responsibilities
Do you understand your dual role: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting as the client's representative (e.g., passing on instructions)? • Making decisions that impact both the client and the builder (e.g., assessing completion, valuing payments)?
Can you explain how you balance fairness to both parties?
Do you have any conflicts of interests relating to the client, the builder or this project? <i>An example might be if you are also acting as designer and would be uncomfortable issuing a change instruction for re-design when that could result in a claim against you, or where you are an employee of the client.</i>
Is there any agreement which sets out limits on what you can/not do?
Do you understand your need to act reasonably (rather than to be 'right')?
3. Communication and Processes
Do you have a clear process for issuing instructions and approvals?
Are you committed to holding regular site meetings or providing updates?
Do you keep thorough written records of decisions and communications?
4. Handling Changes and Challenges
Do you have a system for agreeing on changes to the work or the project timeline?
Can you explain how you assess whether additional payments or time are justified?
5. Problem Resolution
Are you confident that you can resolve disputes fairly and promptly?
Can you explain how you will approach disagreements between the builder and the client?