



# PERTUBUHAN JURUUKUR DIRAJA MALAYSIA

## ROYAL INSTITUTION OF SURVEYORS MALAYSIA

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### MEDIA STATEMENT – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## “PROPERTY SURVEYING” – WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Petaling Jaya, 17 August 2026

***“What’s in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet.”***

Property surveying in Malaysia traces its roots to the colonial era, when the need for structured land administration and valuation practices first emerged. Initially, property surveyors were known as general practice surveyors, responsible for a wide range of property-related tasks. Over time, the name evolved reflecting the growing emphasis and extent of the profession.

### Early development

Members of the profession initially focused on property valuation and transactions taking cue from its “big brother”, the Valuation and Property Services Department under the Ministry of Finance (also known as Jabatan Penilaian dan Perkhidmatan Harta or JPPH) which began as the Valuation Division on 1 June 1957.

The Department is headed by the Director General of Valuation and Property Services whose functions and duties are as stipulated in the Valuers, Appraisers, Estate Agents and Property Managers Act, 1981 (Act 242). The Act also provides that the Director General of Valuation and Property Services is concurrently, the President of the Board of Valuers, Appraisers, Estate Agents and Property Managers, Malaysia (or BOVAEP). These are respectively, the legislation and statutory body that regulate the profession in Malaysia to this present day.

### Institutionalisation

The establishment of the Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (ISM) in 1961 – involving a merger with the former RICS Federation of Malaya Branch – provided a formal platform to unite, educate and elevate the profession nationwide, together with three other distinct but closely-related professions i.e. Geomatics & Land Surveying, Quantity Surveying and Building Surveying. In 2011, it was conferred the royal status by HRH Sultan of Selangor and became the Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM).

RICS stands for the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, a globally recognized professional organization headquartered in London, United Kingdom, with offices and members across nearly 150 countries. Originally founded in 1868 as the Institution of Surveyors, its mission is to promote and enforce the highest professional and ethical standards in the valuation, management and development of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure. Just like many other facets of Malaysia’s governance system, RISM was and still is modelled after the British-based RICS, albeit, adapted to the local context.

*The prefix ‘Sr’ has been registered to Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia under Class 42 of the Trade Marks Act 1976 and the Trade Marks Regulations 1997 (Trade Mark No. 2017059786) with effect from 30<sup>th</sup> May 2017.*

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## Evolution and confusion

From being known as “general practice surveyor”, it was subsequently renamed to “property consultancy and valuation surveyor,” to “property management and valuation surveyor,” and eventually to the streamlined title of “property surveyor”. The branding had both helped to promote the profession to the public, as well as at the same time, added to the perplexity on the part of the public as to its true identity, due to the inconsistency in its branding. This invariably contributed to confusions even amongst the business community and industry at large.

What makes it even more confusing is, the name of the courses at tertiary education level that leads to this profession is called estate management, land management, land administration, land economy, property management, property surveying, real estate as well as other variations and permutations.

Furthermore, the profession is also known by different names in other countries. Depending on which parts of the world you are in, it could be called appraiser, realtor, evaluator, chartered surveyor etc. Below are some regional variations:

- UK & Commonwealth countries (Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand) share strong RICS influence, with “chartered surveyor” as the gold standard.
- Continental Europe uses distinct technical titles (e.g. “geometra”, “aparejador”, “immobilier”) combining surveying with construction oversight and valuation expertise.
- North America separates roles into “appraiser” (valuation), “realtor” (agency) and “property manager” (management), rather than one unified profession.
- Asia (Japan, China) emphasises state licensing and economic valuation (“licensed real estate appraiser/valuer”), reflecting the importance of property markets in national development.

Unfortunately, the confusion had inevitably compounded into the common misconception that valuer, estate agent and property manager are three stand-alone and unrelated professions, when in fact, the three are and have always been the core competencies of a single profession – now branded as property surveyor.

## Education and training

It was mentioned above that the tertiary education leading to the property surveying profession too has many different names. However, they are all of the same and cover basically, the same syllabus that prepares the undergraduate for the wide range of skills and expertise required in the practice of “managing real estate”. Thus, an “estate management” degree or diploma typically includes the following key subjects, amongst others:

Land Law – Land Economy – Urban & Regional Planning – Building Technology – Valuation – Investment & Development Appraisal – Real Estate Financing – Real Estate Marketing – Estate Agency – Property Management – Project Management

Like in any other professional fields, upon graduation, one shall then be required to go through at least two years of practical training or apprenticeship before being able to take the Test of Professional Competence (TPC). In property surveying, the professional qualifications that can be attained are Registered Valuer, Registered Estate Agent and/or Registered Property Manager – all under the jurisdiction of BOVAEP, the regulatory body mentioned previously. Whilst under RICS, which many of the property surveyors in Malaysia are member of, one carries the professional title of Chartered Surveyor.

Needless to say, the entire process is very stringent and rigorous where only those who can competently apply theories into practices, and knowledge into sound judgement, will be able to go through. Many a candidate succeeded only after several attempts.

As a qualified and recognised professional, one is expected to already possess the prerequisite skills and expertise that are parallel to any other fellow professionals as well as on par with standards set by other professions, such as accountant, lawyer, doctor, engineer etc. At the same time, one is also required to maintain or even enhance one's level of competencies by attending a minimum benchmark of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses, every year in order to renew one's licence to practice.

### **Upholding standards of professionalism**

Apart from overseeing admission into the profession, BOVAEP is also tasked with maintaining and upholding the standards and integrity of the profession. It produces practice standards for each of the three key disciplines ie. valuation, estate agency and property management. It also issues circulars from time to time as well as conducts investigation and takes disciplinary action on complaints against any of the registrants.

It is pertinent to note that what distinguishes a professional from a non-professional is, a profession requires specialised knowledge and formal training, as has been extensively elaborated above, as well as the adherence to codes of conducts and ethics that every professional property surveyor lives by. A business focuses on profit generation, while a profession emphasises service delivery at a fee, based on expertise and ethical standards.

A business and a profession operate under different principles, objectives and regulations. However, sometimes it is easy to deem some other fields of work as a "profession" when in essence, they are more a "business", which is primarily profit-driven and can be carried out without any formal qualification.

Another key distinction is, a profession cannot be called a monopoly for the very reason stated before, whereby it requires specialised knowledge and formal training. The medical profession cannot be said to be monopolistic just because only qualified doctors are legally allowed to prescribe medicine. Similarly, the property management discipline cannot be condemned as being monopolised by property surveyors just because other non-professionals are legally, and rightfully, barred from practicing the same.

This is not an act of exclusivity but in fact, is a doctrine entrenched in the Act 242 mentioned at the beginning of this article. Laws exist to protect the interests of the public at large, in this case, from non-professionals and business entities with their own motivation and agenda. Creating another set of laws to circumvent this will only make a mockery out of the whole thing.

### **Is property surveying a "jack of all trades" then?**

It should be crystal clear by now that property surveying is a single profession that encompasses three main disciplines, each vital and integral to the property ecosystem:

- Property valuation surveying: Assessing the market value of properties for transactions, financing, taxation, investment and other purposes.
- Property agency surveying: Facilitating property sales, purchases and leasing, ensuring fair representation and transparency for all parties.
- Property management surveying: Overseeing the operation, maintenance, financial management and resident/tenant relations of residential, commercial and industrial properties, with the long-term strategic asset management or portfolio management approach of enhancing and optimising the asset value.

Together, the sum of its parts ensures that property assets are managed, transacted and valued with integrity and efficiency, throughout the asset life cycle. Therefore, the perfect idiom to describe the profession is in fact, the lesser-known and more positive version which is, *"A jack of all trades is a master of none, but oftentimes better than a master of one."*

Other professions too have their own specialisations such as:

- Doctors – GP and the whole gambit of specialists.
- Lawyers – conveyancing, corporate, criminal, litigation etc.
- Engineers – civil, electrical, mechanical, structural, etc.
- Accountants – public, management, tax, audit, etc.

Additionally, like the other professions, property surveyors are also represented by several organisations established to advocate and champion their own specific common goals, such as the following:

- Association of Valuers, Property Managers, Estate Agents and Property Consultants in the Private Sector, Malaysia (PEPS)
- Malaysian Institute of Property and Facility Managers (MIPFM)
- Institute of Malaysian Property Agents and Consultants (IMPAC)
- Persatuan Perunding Hartanah Muslim Malaysia (PEHAM)
- Persatuan Penilai Sektor Awam Malaysia (PENILAI SAMA)
- Persatuan Pegawai-Pegawai Penilaian PBT Malaysia (PEPAM)

### **Defending the profession, is defending the public**

There are currently over 3,000 members within the Property Surveying division of RISM. Whether or not they are members of RISM, members of the fraternity are being employed in JPPH (at its headquarters and in each state in the country), local authorities (in every municipality around the country), government agencies, GLCs, PLCs, MNCs and various other employment sectors. Local and international universities in Malaysia collectively produce over 1,000 undergraduates each year. This is the next generation whom aspires to one day be called a property surveyor, be it in the private, public, corporate or academic sectors.

Being an integral part of and playing a key and highly-specialised role in the economic, social and physical growths of the nation, ensuring that the profession remains relevant and future-ready is at the forefront of RISM's *raison d'être*, as the main organisation representing property surveyors in Malaysia.

Accordingly, RISM reiterates its stand on the following issues currently faced by the profession:

- RISM strongly urges policymakers, stakeholders and the public to support the continued strengthening of BOVAEP as the sole statutory authority overseeing property management-related professions in Malaysia. The creation of a separate board for building managers is unnecessary, legally redundant, and professionally counterproductive. Both property and building management need to be governed within a single, coherent and proven professional regulatory framework.
- On the same note, RISM is deeply concerned by the actions of some quarters to indirectly, yet, unintentionally replicate the register of professionals already registered with BOVAEP. Instead of treating all professionally qualified persons and firms as equally competent, the move will create different tiers and classes of property surveyors, effectively compromising the ability of newer and younger property surveyors, as well as smaller firms, to operate in a level playing field.
- RISM is also working closely with BOVAEP to stamp out illegal brokers and scammers from the estate agency practice. Surprisingly, this includes other professionals from outside the profession whom are exploiting loopholes to legally encroach into the practice, disguised as an extension of their traditional services.

Highlighting the above issues may seem to stem from the need to be in defence of the property surveyors and their livelihood, which in itself is a fair point, given the importance of the roles of the profession in contributing towards nation building. However, the more far-reaching implications are the diminishing protection of the public's interest at large, including:

- the conceivable wastage of public funds;
- the plausible inconsistencies and duplications of policies, rules and regulations across the government's machinery;
- the inherent undermining of government's policies designed to support SMEs growth and development, ensuring they are competitive in the global market; and
- the blatant conflict of professional interests at the cost of misrepresenting and misleading the public and the consumers.

Finally, to end this article on an enlightening high note – with all the education, training and qualifications possessed by property surveyors in general, it is actually an irony and perhaps poetic justice, that in the United Kingdom and other western countries, they are the ones recognised to have the all-round skills, knowledge and expertise to become property developers. In fact, many property development companies in these countries are steered and captained by chartered surveyors of the property kind.

It is obvious that the lack of knowledge about the profession in Malaysia is behind the fact that property development started way back in the days, and continued to be until now, the domain of business communities and entrepreneurs as well as other professionals whose background is specialised in either finance, legal, design, construction, engineering, project management or others, but without the all-encompassing skills of the “jack of all trades” – that is the property surveyor.

– END –

**Issued by:**

Property Surveying Division, **Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM)**.

*RISM is the nation's leading professional body representing surveyors across diverse disciplines, comprising four distinct but closely related divisions i.e. Geomatics and Land Surveying Division, Quantity Surveying Division, Property Surveying Division and Building Surveying Division. Established in 1961 with the primary objective to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, ethics, and technical expertise, RISM plays a vital role in shaping Malaysia's built environment and real estate industry.*

*Through its **Property Surveying Division**, RISM plays a pivotal role in advancing professional standards and practices in the Malaysian property sector. The division is dedicated to promoting excellence in valuation, real estate agency and property management, which are the main components of the property surveying profession, ensuring that members uphold integrity, professionalism, and sustainability in their work. By fostering collaboration among industry professionals and engaging with stakeholders, the Property Surveying Division contributes significantly to the sustainable growth of Malaysia's real estate market and supports the nation's economic development.*

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