



Department of Civil Engineering
The University of Hong Kong



Centre for Infrastructure and
Construction Industry Development

SEMINAR

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FLEXIBILITY IN CONSTRUCTION PROCUREMENT

By

Will Hughes

**Professor of Construction Management and Economics and
Head of the School of Construction Management and Engineering, University of Reading**

Date: **May 13, 2009 (Wednesday)**

Time: **11:00 – 12 noon**

Venue: **JG04, James Lee Science Building,
The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong**

ABSTRACT

The procurement of construction is complex and difficult, and the clients' requirements vary enormously. However, a lot of effort is directed towards standardizing procurement processes and contract forms, as if the same procedures could be used for all projects. The need for flexibility in procurement processes is developed from the context in which the construction industry operates. A range of questions related to the future of professional roles form the context for a discussion on what contracts are for, challenging the assumptions on which they are prepared, and introducing the concept of performance-based contracting as a vehicle for demonstrating how the newest forms of procurement are strongly rooted in very well-established practices. The differences between procurement methods reveal that there is a staggering number of permutations available to the client of construction, and the nature of advice and support offered to clients needs to be more robust than it has been in the past, taking account of the nature of the project, the nature of the risk, the kind of documents, the availability of standard-form contracts and the client's policy towards drafting legal documents. Together these form the basis for the decision about the best way to procure a particular project. The procurement strategy should be based on an informed decision, not just on professional habits.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Will Hughes, MCIQB, BSc, PhD is Professor of Construction Management and Economics and Head of the School of Construction Management and Engineering, University of Reading. He has an international reputation in the field of construction procurement and project organization, focusing on commercial processes in construction procurement. His work at Reading has included major textbooks in construction contract law, as well as numerous publications on the organization and management of construction. His research interests include the control and management of building contracts, the management of design in construction, the analysis of organizational structure, and the analysis of procurement systems. The focus of his work is the commercial processes of structuring, negotiating, recording and enforcing business deals in construction.

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