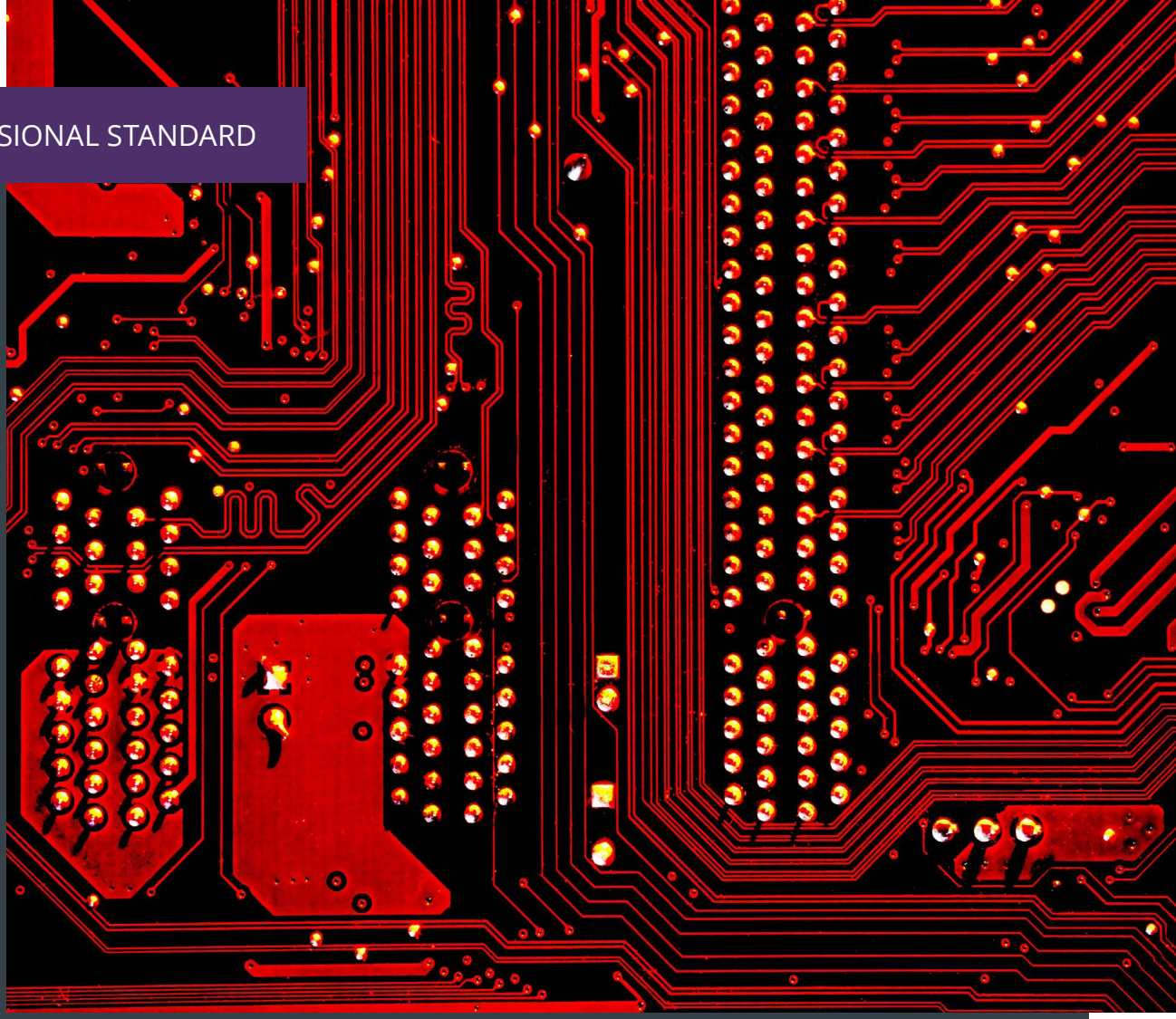
RICS PROFESSIONAL STANDARD



Responsible use of artificial intelligence in surveying practice

Global

1st edition, September 2025

Effective from 9 March 2026

RICS®

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Professional standard, global

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This document applies globally. If any of the requirements contained in this document conflict with regional legal requirements, those regional legal requirements take precedence and must be applied.

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RICS standards framework

RICS' standards setting is governed and overseen by the Standards and Regulation Board (SRB). The SRB's aims are to operate in the public interest, and to develop the technical and ethical competence of the profession and its ability to deliver ethical practice to high standards globally.

The RICS Rules of Conduct set high-level professional requirements for the global chartered surveying profession. These are supported by more detailed standards and information relating to professional conduct and technical competency.

The SRB focuses on the conduct and competence of RICS members, to set standards that are proportionate, in the public interest and based on risk. Its approach is to foster a supportive atmosphere that encourages a strong, diverse, inclusive, effective and sustainable surveying profession.

As well as developing its own standards, RICS works collaboratively with other bodies at a national and international level to develop documents relevant to professional practice, such as cross-sector guidance, codes and standards. The application of these collaborative documents by RICS members will be defined either within the document itself or in associated RICS-published documents.

Document definitions

Document type	Definition
RICS professional standards	**Set requirements or expectations for RICS members and regulated firms about how they provide services or the outcomes of their actions.** RICS professional standards are principles-based and focused on outcomes and good practice. Any requirements included set a baseline expectation for competent delivery or ethical behaviour. They include practices and behaviours intended to protect clients and other stakeholders, as well as ensuring their reasonable expectations of ethics, integrity, technical competence and diligence are met. Members must comply with an RICS professional standard. They may include: • mandatory requirements, which use the word 'must' and must be complied with, and/or • recommended best practice, which uses the word 'should'. It is recognised that there may be acceptable alternatives to best practice that achieve the same or a better outcome. In regulatory or disciplinary proceedings, RICS will take into account relevant professional standards when deciding whether an RICS member or regulated firm acted appropriately and with reasonable competence. It is also likely that during any legal proceedings a judge, adjudicator or equivalent will take RICS professional standards into account.
RICS practice information	**Information to support the practice, knowledge and performance of RICS members and regulated firms, and the demand for professional services.** Practice information includes definitions, processes, toolkits, checklists, insights, research and technical information or advice. It also includes documents that aim to provide common benchmarks or approaches across a sector to help build efficient and consistent practice. This information is not mandatory and does not set requirements for RICS members or make explicit recommendations.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Artificial intelligence (AI) system	'A machine-based system that, for explicit or implicit objectives, infers, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments. Different AI systems vary in their levels of autonomy and adaptiveness after deployment.' (OECD Explanatory Memorandum on the Updated OECD Definition of an AI System, March 2024, OECD Committee on Digital Economy Policy) There are many types (such as narrow and general AI) and subsets (such as machine learning and natural language processing) of AI systems. AI systems may be embedded within a broader technological solution.
Failure mode	A particular way in which an AI system might fail to perform its function.
Private and confidential information	Information that must not be unlawfully obtained, used or disclosed. Such information includes personal data (any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person – see the UK General Data Protection Regulation) and may include commercially sensitive data.
Professional scepticism	'An attitude that includes a questioning mind, critically assessing evidence relied on [...] and being alert to conditions that may cause information provided to be misleading.' (RICS Valuation – Global Standards, PS 2, section 1, paragraph 1.5.)
Risk appetite	The level of risk that an organisation or individual is willing to accept in pursuit of its objectives. Generally, there are five categories of risk: averse, minimalist, cautious, open and ambitious.
Risk register	A register that documents all the identified risks facing an organisation. It will typically record: • a description of each risk • its likelihood of materialising and its likely impact • plans to mitigate and manage the risk • risk appetite of the firm and • regular updates to the status and progress of risk management.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

Many forms of AI are now being adopted across the built and natural environments. Some AI systems are specific to different areas of surveying practice, such as valuation or construction, while others are designed for more generic business purposes.

This standard is supportive of the use of such AI systems, which are likely to drive the profession forward. At the same time, however, it is generally accepted that use of these systems also carries high levels of risk, both professional and commercial, to individuals and firms if not managed appropriately. The great potential of AI therefore needs to be balanced with responsible use, since not using AI responsibly risks undermining and corroding the reputation of the profession.

RICS has therefore taken a balanced approach to this standard that aims to secure the public advantage of surveying and ensure the future security of the profession – by placing, at the core of its requirements, the importance of the skill and experience of the professional surveyor, alongside a need to guard against complacency regarding the involvement of this technology when providing surveying services.

It is also imperative that RICS members and regulated firms using AI systems in their work are aware of the risks and are able to manage them effectively. Therefore, this professional standard sets requirements that:

- provide a basis for upskilling the profession
- represent a baseline of practice management at regulated firms, aimed at minimising the risk of harm caused by AI systems in the delivery of services
- enable informed and clear decisions to be made on AI procurement and reliance on AI outputs
- represent good communication and information sharing with clients and other relevant stakeholders, and
- provide a framework for the responsible development of AI systems by members and regulated firms.

1.2 Scope

It is anticipated that most RICS members and regulated firms will use AI systems developed and provided by third parties, although some will be directly involved in the development of new AI systems. This standard predominantly focuses on the former but also covers the latter to a limited extent in section 5.

This is a conduct standard. It therefore does not cover the detailed and technical use of specific forms of AI in specific areas of surveying practice. It is recognised that AI can be deployed for a wide range of uses, and some AI system outputs may be incidental or unrelated to the delivery of surveying services.

This standard applies to the outputs of AI systems that have a material impact on the delivery of the surveying service.

Whether an output has a material impact on the delivery of a service depends on whether the output is capable of influencing the delivery of the service and, if it is, the nature of the influence it exerts over the delivery of that service, based on the facts and circumstances of output use.

Typically, outputs that have a material impact on the delivery of a service will be outputs that affect how the work of the surveyor is rendered meaningful. For example, outputs summarising documents that are then relied on when writing a report, outputs composing all or the significant parts of an opinion, or outputs recommending which part of a building to investigate for a fault can be considered to have a material impact on the delivery of the service. Supporting information from RICS is available to help members understand this requirement.

If an RICS member or regulated firm determines that their use of AI systems will have a material impact on the delivery of surveying services, then they **must** make a record of that determination and the reasoning behind it.

This professional standard sets requirements for members and RICS-regulated firms in all jurisdictions globally. Members and RICS-regulated firms **must** comply with RICS professional standards and with any relevant legislation that applies in the relevant jurisdiction (such as EU Regulation 2024/1689). If this standard conflicts with legislation in any jurisdiction, the legislation takes precedence, but members and RICS-regulated firms **must** make a record of the conflict and report it to RICS.

1.3 Effective date

This professional standard is effective from 9 March 2026.

2 Baseline knowledge for using AI in surveying

It is acknowledged that the present standard of knowledge in this field among members is uneven. Members who use AI systems to deliver surveying services **must** develop and maintain sufficient and appropriate knowledge to support their responsible use of those systems.

As a minimum, members who use AI systems to deliver surveying services **must** ensure that they have a basic understanding of:

- the different types and subsets of AI system and their basic ways of working, limitations and failure modes
- the risk of AI systems producing erroneous output
- the inherent risk of bias in AI systems and
- data usage and data risks relevant to the use of AI systems.

3 Practice management

RICS-regulated firms that use AI in the delivery of surveying services are likely to use AI systems for a type of service on a repeat basis. Therefore, many risks can be dealt with up front by RICS-regulated firms through their approach to practice management. Embedding appropriate policies and procedures increases the likelihood of risk identification at an early stage.

This section sets out minimum expectations of the policies and procedures RICS-regulated firms need to have in place regarding the use of AI in the delivery of surveying services, so that the risk of harm is minimised. RICS-regulated firms may choose to go beyond these minimum requirements, embedding more detailed policies and procedures as may be appropriate to their use of AI systems.

3.1 Data governance

The use of AI systems gives rise to additional data risks, over and above those generally encountered in surveying practice, due to the use of extensive and potentially unreliable datasets to train the systems, as well as the need to upload data directly into a system to enable functionality.

RICS-regulated firms that use AI systems **must** safeguard any private and confidential data they hold, including by:

- storing private and confidential data securely, for example by using encryption and/or backing up the data stored
- restricting access to private and confidential data held by the firm to staff that strictly need access
- regularly (at least annually) training staff with such access so that they are aware of and are equipped to manage the risks to privacy and confidentiality posed by the use of AI
- preparing data for use in a way that protects privacy, such as by anonymising it, and
- refraining from uploading private and confidential data to AI systems, except where:
  - there is express written consent in advance from affected stakeholders to do so and
  - the firm has taken reasonable steps to satisfy itself that uploading data to the AI system in question does not pose an unacceptable risk.

3.2 System governance

An AI system is one of a variety of tools available for use in the delivery of surveying services. Before using an AI system that will have a material impact on service delivery, RICS-regulated

firms **must** have carried out – and recorded in writing – an assessment of whether AI is the most appropriate tool to use, having considered at least:

- the surveying services provided by the firm
- the nature of the task or process for which AI could be used
- available alternative tools for executing the task or process
- environmental impact information available for all tools being considered
- stakeholder impact information available for all tools being considered
- data risks and
- from the information available, the risk of erroneous output from, and the risk of bias inherent in, the AI system(s) being considered, and the consequences should these risks materialise.

It is acceptable for such an assessment to take the form of a periodically reviewed written policy, or a standing written statement, setting out the different surveying services carried out by the firm, the purpose(s) for which AI systems are to be used in each of those surveying services and the reasons why AI is the most appropriate tool for that purpose, with explicit reference to the above considerations.

To support this assessment of the appropriate use of AI, and to help ensure that the use of AI and any inherent and consequent risks are managed appropriately, RICS-regulated firms **must** also maintain a written register that includes details of:

- any AI system used that has a material impact on the delivery of surveying services
- the purpose for which that AI system is used
- the date on which that AI system was first used and
- the date on which the use and appropriateness of that AI system for the particular task or process will next be reviewed.

To minimise the risk of AI being used unintentionally in surveying practice, and therefore without due and proper consideration, RICS-regulated firms that use or intend to use AI systems in the delivery of surveying services **must** develop and implement policies regarding the responsible use of AI systems, informed by a risk register (section 3.3). These policies **must** cover the use of any internally developed AI systems, where relevant, as well as those provided by third parties.

These procurement and responsible use policies may be developed either as an additional, standalone document, or may be added to existing firm policies around IT usage, data protection and client engagement, but **must** as a minimum:

- detail and clarify the roles, responsibilities and liabilities of all individuals involved in the procurement and/or use of AI

- detail the regular (at least annual), relevant training expectations for all individuals involved in the procurement and/or use of AI
- state how human control and judgement is to interact with the use of AI systems, such as through regular monitoring or dip-samples of outputs for quality assurance purposes, and
- provide guidance to staff on how to identify and mitigate risks involved in the use of AI systems.

3.3 Risk management

In order to develop and periodically review policies and procedures in light of existing or emerging risks, it is important to document risks that have been identified and how those risks are being managed. Actively documenting risks in this way can help ensure legal and regulatory compliance, prevent financial loss, avoid reputational damage and support good decision-making.

RICS-regulated firms using AI systems that have a material impact on the delivery of surveying services must create and operate a risk register:

- that documents overarching risks associated with the use of AI, including:
  - inherent bias in the AI system and its outputs
  - erroneous outputs from the AI system
  - limitations to the quantity and quality of information available regarding the AI system and its underlying training data, and
  - retention and/or use of data inputted by the firm into the AI system.
- that for each risk includes:
  - a description of the risk
  - the likelihood of the risk materialising and its likely impact
  - the plan to mitigate and manage the risk
  - the risk appetite of the firm
  - regular updates to the status and progress of risk management, and
  - a categorisation of the risk according to a red, amber, green (RAG) rating, or similar method.

The risk register **must** be reviewed and updated at least quarterly by staff at RICS-regulated firms who are responsible for making decisions about the firm's use of AI.

RICS-regulated firms may choose to use other risk management tools in addition to a risk register, for example a SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, or a PESTEL framework to analyse political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors.

4 Using AI

4.1 Procurement and due diligence

Responsible use of AI is reliant upon the availability of accurate and relevant information about the AI system and making clearly justified decisions based on the available information. RICS-regulated firms **must** therefore carry out detailed due diligence before procuring from a third-party supplier an AI system (whether embedded in a broader technological solution or not) that will have a material impact on the delivery of surveying services.

This detailed due diligence **must** involve:

- requesting information in writing from the third-party supplier
- following up such requests in writing as necessary
- recording the information provided, and assessing it to inform decisions about procurement, use and associated risks (including risks to be documented in the risk register) regarding the AI system, and
- keeping a record of the extent to which practical testing of an AI system for fitness for purpose has been carried out.

If a supplier provides no or only limited information, RICS-regulated firms **must** identify the risks associated with any missing information and record them in the risk register.

The detailed due diligence **must** involve written requests for the following information, as a minimum:

- the environmental impact of the AI system
- stakeholders involved in the development of the AI system
- compliance with applicable data and confidentiality laws
- permissions obtained where data and content relating to individuals have been used
- the accuracy, relevance and diversity of the datasets used to train the AI, including any known gaps in the data, noting any particular known risks of bias, and
- the type and extent of the liability of the third-party provider.

4.2 Outputs, reliance and assurance

AI system outputs may not always be fully predictable or fully explainable, and, in any event, there is an inherent risk of error and/or bias in AI systems due to error and/or bias in the algorithms used. This could be due to variable training data quality, biased programming,

lack of data diversity and/or the limitations of the AI system itself, as well as due to the AI system responding to or interacting with any biases of the firm in the context of its use.

RICS members and regulated firms using AI systems **must** therefore apply their professional judgement to make a decision about the reliability of the output of any AI system used that will have a material impact on the delivery of surveying services. Professional judgement consists of:

- knowledge
- skills
- experience and
- professional scepticism.

RICS members and regulated firms **must** document their decision about the reliability of the output in writing.

A written decision about the reliability of any given output by a member or RICS-regulated firm **must** detail:

- any relevant assumptions made
- key areas of concern regarding reliability, including the reliability of any underlying datasets
- the reason for each concern
- whether anything could be done to lessen each concern and
- the impact of the concern(s) on the overall reliability of the output, including a statement concluding whether the member or RICS-regulated firm considers that the output can reasonably be used for its intended purpose.

A written decision about the reliability of any given output by a member or RICS-regulated firm **must** be prepared by, or under the supervision of, an appropriately qualified and named surveyor who accepts responsibility for its use.

Where members or RICS-regulated firms determine that an output cannot reasonably be used for its intended purpose, they **must** communicate such a conclusion in writing to clients, together with their written reasoning or a summary of it.

Where members or RICS-regulated firms use AI to automate a particular output or series of outputs, or to produce a high volume of outputs, it is generally neither necessary nor proportionate to scrutinise each output and make a written decision about its reliability. However, the reliability of outputs is still a risk in such automated and/or high-volume use of AI systems, and firms remain accountable for each output. RICS members and regulated firms **must** therefore undertake randomised dip samples of the outputs at regular intervals, so that they can scrutinise and assure the quality of outputs.

4.3 Terms of engagement and client communication

Transparency in the use of AI is crucial for maintaining the trust and confidence of clients. The disclosure of key information about the use of AI helps clients to understand where, how and why it is being used.

Members and RICS-regulated firms that use AI systems with a material impact on the delivery of surveying services **must** therefore make clear to clients, in writing and in advance of using those AI systems, when and for what purpose AI is to be used.

The terms of engagement, contractual documents, service agreements and other relevant documentation used by members and RICS-regulated firms to govern their client relationships **must** detail in writing:

- when AI will be involved in the delivery of a surveying service
- the parts of the process for delivery of a surveying service in which AI will be involved
- if available, the extent of professional indemnity cover for use of AI systems by the firm
- the internal processes to contest the use of an AI system
- the processes to seek redress if a client feels they have been negatively affected by the use of an AI system, and
- how a client can opt out of the use of AI systems in the delivery of a surveying service, if at all.

4.4 Explainability

Clients may seek to obtain further information about the use of AI by RICS members and regulated firms to better understand its use in relation to their instruction and potentially challenge outcomes, if necessary and appropriate.

RICS-regulated firms **must** be able to provide, on request, written information regarding:

- the type of AI system used
- the basic ways of working and limitations of the AI system used
- the due diligence processes carried out before using the AI system
- the way in which relevant risks associated with the use of the AI system are identified and managed, and
- the decisions made about the reliability of the output from the AI system.

5 Development of AI

While most members and RICS-regulated firms are likely to use AI systems developed by third-party suppliers, some are also directly involved in the development of AI systems. This extends the scope of responsibility and accountability, as the member or RICS-regulated firm is involved from an earlier stage in developing and training the AI system, including establishing the project team, selecting the data to be used to train the system and setting the algorithms and methodologies to be applied.

When developing AI systems, members and RICS-regulated firms **must** apply the provisions of this standard, as required, to the development process to minimise the risk of harm.

After developing, and before general deployment of an AI system, members and RICS-regulated firms **must** record in writing:

- the identifiable application of the AI system
- the potential risks and benefits of the system in relation to a specific task or process, and
- other possible approaches to the same specific task or process.

Members and RICS-regulated firms developing AI systems **must** also:

- carry out and record in writing a sustainability impact assessment of the proposed AI system
- select a diverse range of stakeholders to be involved in the development
- make a record of all stakeholders directly involved in the development
- document the compliance of the development with all applicable data and confidentiality laws
- obtain written permissions from individuals where their personal data is to be used during development, in advance of the use of that data for development, and
- have policies and processes in place to assess the quality and reliability of the data used to develop the AI system.

Delivering confidence

We are RICS. As a member-led chartered professional body working in the public interest, we uphold the highest technical and ethical standards.

We inspire professionalism, advance knowledge and support our members across global markets to make an effective contribution for the benefit of society. We independently regulate our members in the management of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure. Our work with others supports their professional practice and pioneers a natural and built environment that is sustainable, resilient and inclusive for all.

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