



# The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS)

Why we matter

What we do

Who we are

*Delivering  
Confidence*

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# About UKAS



The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) is the sole body recognised by Government for the assessment and verification against international standards of certification, inspection, testing and calibration activities in both the private and public sectors. Accreditation by UKAS demonstrates an organisation's competence, impartiality and capability, and helps to underpin the credibility of performance, goods and services in both the UK and international arenas. UKAS has an explicit duty to act in the public interest.

## **Background**

UKAS was formed in 1995 with the merger of the National Accreditation Council of Certification Bodies and the National Measurement Accreditation Service—which, together account for over 60 years of experience and expertise in accreditation. A year later the accreditation of engineering inspection was added from the Institute of Mechanical Engineers.

## **Scale of operation**

UKAS now has an annual turnover in excess of £20M. We employ 180 permanent staff which includes technical and specialist professionals and support staff and have a database of approximately 800 subcontractor assessors and technical experts. We are a commercial, non-profit-distributing company limited by guarantee. UKAS is independent of Government but is appointed as the national accreditation body by the Accreditation Regulations 2009 (SI No. 3155/2009) and operates under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

Every aspect of daily life involves, at some level, adherence by someone to voluntary or mandatory standards. It is easy, perhaps, to think what some of these may be—those related to food safety and labelling, for instance, or health and safety at work and in the home, weights and measures or trading standards. The implementation of many standards may seem less relevant to our immediate existence but will nonetheless impact on our everyday life, such as those related to the structural integrity of building materials, reliability of health care, management systems, financial advice and reporting, or the manufacture of clothing.

In simple terms, a standard is an agreed way of doing something. Standards can be recorded or published formally and may apply to a product, process or service.

Standards make life safer, healthier and easier for people, organisations, and enterprises all over the world. They enable communication and trade, while allowing resources to be used more efficiently.



# What is accreditation and why is it needed?

## **Independent evaluation of standards and requirements**

With an increase in specified standards has come a growth in the number of organisations whose business it is to check conformity and compliance with these standards by providing services such as:

- **testing**
- **inspection**
- **calibration**
- **certification**

These evaluating organisations may be laboratories, inspection bodies, certification bodies or other types of organisation.

## **Why accredit independent evaluators?**

**Accreditation is a means of assessing, in the public interest, the technical competence and integrity of the organisations offering these kinds of evaluation services.**

Accreditation, with its many potential benefits for the quality of goods and in the provision of services throughout the supply chain, is underpinning practical applications of an increasingly wide range of activities across all sectors of the economy, from fishing to forestry, construction to communications.

More and more businesses are voluntarily choosing the accreditation route as they recognise the internal efficiencies that it brings and the opportunities to demonstrate product performance.

Accreditation brings business benefits and other advantages to many groups of people.



# What are the benefits of accreditation?

## For central and local government

Accreditation (rather than regulation) is the preferred mechanism for ensuring public confidence in the reliability and integrity of activities that impact on health, welfare, security and the environment. This is because accreditation:

- reduces the need for central government and local authorities to employ their own specialist assessment personnel and the associated cost burden;
- offers a single, transparent and repeatable approach.

Accreditation stimulates competition in the marketplace and provides a framework to fuel innovation and creativity.

Accreditation fulfils the requirement to reduce trade barriers and ensures the competitiveness of our exports, as well as the integrity of imports to the UK.

## For business

Accreditation is an essential tool for decision-making and risk management. Organisations can save time and money by selecting an accredited and therefore competent supplier.

Accurate measurements and tests carried out in compliance with best practices limit product failure and down time and control manufacturing costs.

Accredited testing and calibration laboratories can be a good source of impartial advice and knowledge transfer leading to product development opportunities.

Accreditation to internationally-recognised standards can provide a competitive advantage and facilitate access to export markets within the EU and beyond.

Using an accredited body to carry out an independent evaluation helps demonstrate due diligence in the event of legal action.

## For consumers

Accreditation gives consumers confidence in an increasingly complex, dynamic and global marketplace by ensuring consistently high standards in the quality of products or services purchased.

## For accredited organisations

In a number of areas it is a requirement to obtain accreditation before offering certain services; in others it is a *de facto* 'licence' to trade in that key purchasers expect it.

Accreditation provides market differentiation and objective proof that an organisation complies with best practice. It is the internationally-recognised system that is used to develop and sustain high standards of performance. It is a winning formula for eligibility to tender and for international trade.

An organisation accredited by UKAS can prove its competence, impartiality and sustainable performance and ensure that everyone from specifiers, purchasers and suppliers to consumers can have confidence in the quality of goods and in the provision of services throughout the supply chain.



# What does UKAS do?

The work UKAS carries out is very wide-ranging but can be broadly grouped into six areas of activity.

**1. Assessment and accreditation** of independent evaluating organisations, such as laboratories, certification bodies, inspection bodies and proficiency testing scheme providers.

**2. Healthcare accreditation.**

**3. Development** of new areas of accreditation.

**4. Assessment and recommendation** of organisations (on behalf of the relevant government department) to become Notified Bodies.

**5. Specialist training** and **advice.**

**6. Raising awareness.**

## 1. Accreditation of independent evaluators

First and foremost, UKAS is an accreditation service. Wherever we operate, we are recognised by Government as the sole national accreditation authority and the UK's voice on accreditation in the international arena.

### What does the accreditation process entail?

Accreditation is an **on-going business process** rather than a one-off achievement.

### Accrediting individual evaluating organisations

If an organisation wishes to be accredited by UKAS and is operating in an area in which we have existing expertise, we will carry out an assessment to establish that:

- the evaluator is impartial;
- the evaluator is technically competent to do the work in question;
- the resources and facilities are appropriate and sufficient for the work;
- the evaluator's actual performance is to the required standard;
- the evaluator is capable of sustaining the required level of performance.

Once an organisation is accredited, an assessment is carried out annually at the customer's premises by our teams of experienced assessment managers supported, where required, by independent assessors with specialist technical expertise. They work closely with the customer's management team and use structured, rigorous and proven assessment methodology. They test the customer's management systems and technical competence in the field for which they seek

accreditation. Our assessors act on behalf of the customer's industry sector but they are also conscious of the customer's business objectives. The assessors check that the customer is achieving what they claim to be achieving and they provide constructive criticism and will advise on best practice. A UKAS assessment is a comprehensive and transparent health check on a business by a respected and independent third party. Once accredited our customers are monitored annually and reassessed every four years. This continuous assessment cycle ensures that our customers adopt and develop practices that are consistent with the demands of the sectors in which they operate.

### Who is currently accredited?

UKAS currently accredits the following (its direct customers):

- Around 1500 Laboratories
- Over 150 Certification Bodies
- Over 250 Inspection Bodies
- Around 20 Proficiency Testing and Reference Material providers
- Medical Laboratories

A full list of organisations accredited by UKAS can be found on our website [www.ukas.com](http://www.ukas.com)



# What does UKAS do?

## 2. Healthcare accreditation

UKAS is also operating to international standards in the area of healthcare and conformity assessment can be carried out by the healthcare providers to standards that are developed and owned by professional clinical bodies. This area reflects the requirement to improve the quality of care for patients, whilst delivering efficiency and productivity.

UKAS is operating in many different areas of healthcare with the some of the most important being:

### CPA

UKAS announced its acquisition of Clinical Pathology Accreditation (CPA) Ltd in 2009 with the move being part of a strategy by both companies to contribute to the modernisation of pathology services in the UK. CPA was established in 1992 and was co-owned until 2009 by the professional bodies involved in the service delivery of diagnostic pathology within medical laboratories; the Royal College of Pathologists, the Institute of Biomedical Science, the Association of Clinical Pathologists, and the Association for Clinical Biochemistry.

CPA assesses medical laboratories (both in the public and independent health care sectors) and External Quality Assessment schemes, of which there are currently more than 1400 laboratories registered with the scheme. This represents about 90 percent of the total medical laboratory services within the United Kingdom. CPA has also accredited laboratories in Mexico, Italy, USA, Kuwait and Dubai.



### ISAS

In 2009 UKAS launched the Imaging Services Accreditation Scheme (ISAS). ISAS is a patient focused and developmental scheme based on the principle of independent assessment against a recognised standard (ISAS Standard). This nationally recognised scheme is available to diagnostic imaging services both within the NHS and private sector. ISAS was jointly developed and is owned by The College of Radiographers and The Royal College of Radiologists. The Colleges licensed UKAS to assess and accredit providers of diagnostic imaging services on their behalf, and against their ISAS Standard. We are exploring similar working arrangements with a number of other healthcare bodies.



### Point of Care Testing

Public awareness of the availability of Point of Care Testing has been increasing with greater access than ever before to community based testing. UKAS accredits organisations which provide point of care testing against ISO 22870:2006 (Point of Care Testing – particular requirements for quality and competence), applied in conjunction with ISO 15189:2007 (Medical Laboratories – particular requirements for quality and competence). This accreditation is an important element in establishing and maintaining confidence in a point of care testing service.

### Medical Laboratories

UKAS accredits medical laboratories to the ISO 15189 standard. This standard is for use by medical laboratories in developing their quality management systems and assessing their own competence. The standard focuses on the continuum of care directly connected with improved patient safety, risk mitigation and operational efficiency, specifically in medical laboratories.

### 3. Development

UKAS operates a new product development programme, enabling us to develop innovative ways to reflect and serve the market sectors in which we operate. When exploring new or emerging areas or schemes and fields of accreditation, we start by assessing the validity of the proposal in order to establish whether:

- there is a genuine need for accreditation and appropriate ownership of the approach being offered (driven by the market and/or government regulation or legislation and not by the evaluators);
- the approach has been developed by relevant interested parties;
- the evaluation criteria meet appropriate technical standards;
- the approach is eligible for UKAS accreditation i.e. in the public interest and eligible for international recognition.

There are a great many potential subjects for accreditation which are currently being developed for implementation. These range from the production of reference materials to the certification of food safety management systems and from crime scene examination to the certification of e-learning products.

The constant changes and challenges that businesses are experiencing in their internal and external environments mean that we must not only investigate the validity of emerging areas for accreditation but must also keep our own assessment and accreditation processes under constant review in order to keep abreast of technological developments and to identify and develop newer or 'smarter' ways of operating. These in turn provide greater value to our customers helping to maintain and improve their competence and performance.

If you are responsible for determining policies that involve any form of independent evaluation, UKAS can help you define your needs or design an assessment service. Please contact the Development team via email at [development@ukas.com](mailto:development@ukas.com)



### The Royal Crown

There is one feature that is common to all activities accredited by us—the Royal Crown. This signifies Government recognition. The Department for Business Innovation and Skills has licensed UKAS to use accreditation **Symbols** featuring the Royal Crown (*see inside back cover*) and to sub-license the use of these these Symbols to UKAS accredited organisations.





#### 4. Assessment for recommendation as a Notified Body

UKAS provides assessment services for government departments and other authorities charged with implementation in the UK of European Directives and other regulations. We assess the competence of organisations that wish to authorise, for instance, the use of the CE mark on certain products and then send our recommendations to the relevant authority on the organisation's eligibility to become a Notified Body.

**UKAS currently assesses on a regular basis over 100 Notified Bodies.**



From late 2011 the process of recommendation will change. In future UKAS will accredit conformity assessment bodies seeking to be appointed and/or maintain their appointment as a Notified Body.

#### 5. Specialist Training and advice

##### Training

UKAS has nearly 20 years' experience in providing tailored and specialist training for laboratory staff and 10 years' experience in certification and inspection body staff training in the UK and overseas, including mainland Europe, North and South American and the Pacific Rim countries. We also have experience of assisting overseas countries wishing to set up and to develop a national accreditation service. We are frequently consulted by overseas and international bodies wanting to learn more about accreditation procedures, international standards and assessment skills.

Our tutors are drawn from our in-house experts including assessment managers as well as external technical assessors, all of whom have up-to-date involvement in assessment techniques and the application of international standards.

Details of our training courses can be found on our website [www.ukas.com/training](http://www.ukas.com/training) Alternatively, a training brochure is available on request.

#### 6. Raising Awareness

The position that UKAS occupies as the sole national accreditation body recognised by government, carries with it a responsibility to ensure not only that the UK's views on accreditation are represented in the international arena (*outlined on page 13*), but also that, as far as possible, those responsible for the development and implementation of standards on the domestic scene are aware of what accreditation is and what it can offer them and their customers. We undertake a wide range of activities aimed particularly at raising awareness of accreditation and the value of using accredited services within central and local government, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and among key specifiers.

# UKAS expertise

Since standards exist in all market sectors and anything can be evaluated—products, equipment, people, organisations, systems, services or anything else—our expertise in accreditation and training is extremely wide-ranging and includes:

- Acoustics
- Asbestos
- Ballistics, explosives and fireworks
- Chemicals and chemical products
- Construction
- Electrical
- Electromagnetic compatibility, IT, radio and telecommunications
- Engineering materials, machinery, structures and products
- Environmental engineering and management (climatic/dynamic)
- Environmental sampling
- Food and food production
- Forensics
- Fossil fuel burning appliances
- Fuels, oils, lubricants
- Medical
- Optical
- Personal protective equipment
- Radiation and radiochemistry
- Textiles, plastics, rubber, paper and packaging
- Tobacco and products
- Toys and childcare products
- Sports and leisure equipment
- Writing instruments





Trade is global. We can order, purchase and receive goods faster from a wider range of sources than ever before. It is important for goods and services tested in the UK to be accepted in Europe and worldwide and, equally, we must be sure that imports to the UK meet our own specified technical requirements.

## International connections

In most developed economies there is a body similar to the United Kingdom Accreditation Service. Were these to operate only national accreditation systems, barriers to trade would be accentuated. Instead, however, they have set up international accreditation infrastructures to facilitate the acceptance of goods for import and export across international borders. In order that these can work, the national accreditation bodies agree the elements of mutually acceptable international accreditation systems, develop the necessary technical detail for these to have integrity, and operate peer evaluation so as to confirm the basis for acceptance of accredited results worldwide.

UKAS is a member of three international accreditation organisations:

- International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC)
- International Accreditation Forum (IAF)
- European cooperation for Accreditation (EA)

**UKAS represents the UK Government in these international organisations and, generally through these, negotiates mutual recognition arrangements with other overseas accreditation bodies.**

The international functions that we undertake on behalf of Government, and which are in the national interest, are supported by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The international recognition of UKAS as a signatory to multilateral agreements enables Government to use accredited bodies to meet its obligations under world trading agreements such as those deriving from EU Directives and the World Trade Organisation's Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade.

Through our work with the British Standards Institution (BSI), we also participate in international standardisation as organised by the following bodies:

- International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO)
- International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)
- Comité Européen de Normalisation (CEN)
- Comité Européen de Normalisation Electrotechnique (CENELEC)



# UKAS organisation

## Members

As a company limited by guarantee, UKAS has Members instead of shareholders. Our Members represent those who have an interest in different aspects of accreditation –national and local government, business and industry, purchasers, users and quality managers. Changes to the membership must have the consensus of the Members themselves. Currently, the Members are:

- Academy of Medical Royal Colleges
- Association of British Certification Bodies
- British Measurement and Testing Association
- British Retail Consortium
- Chartered Quality Institute
- Confederation of British Industry
- Consumer Focus
- Defence Equipment and Support
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Food Standards Agency
- Health and Safety Executive
- Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills
- Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- The Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply
- The Safety Assessment Federation
- The Science Council

In addition, the following two bodies nominate individuals to represent their interests:

- Local Government Regulation
- Health Protection Agency

## Governance

UKAS has a **Board**, consisting of executive and non-executive directors. The current Chairman is:

### Lord (Jamie) Lindsay *Non-Executive Chairman*

Jamie Lindsay joined UKAS as its Chairman in 2002. He is also Chairman of SAC Ltd and Elmwood College (Further & Higher Education), and a Non-Executive Director of BPI plc and Scottish Resources Group Ltd. Former posts include chairmanships and non-executive positions of a number of companies in the assurance, food, primary resource and NGO sectors, in addition to ministerial experience as Under Secretary of State for Scotland. He has had a long interest in quality assurance. Jamie Lindsay has also been the Deputy Chairman of the Better Regulation Commission (BRC) and was a member of the Risk and Regulation Advisory Council (RRAC).

The **Executive** is drawn from senior UKAS staff:

### Paul Stennett *Chief Executive*

Paul Stennett worked in Research and Development for a number of food companies such as Spillers, Mars Inc. and Quaker, where he became European R&D Director based in Germany. Paul later became a Marketing Director for Quaker Europe and then joined Redland plc (later acquired by Lafarge S.A.) as Chief Executive of their technology businesses based in the UK and Germany. Paul returned to the UK and the food industry as an Executive Director of a venture capital backed business start-up and then joined UKAS as Chief Executive in July 2003. In January 2009 Paul Stennett was awarded the MBE in recognition of the work that he has done with UKAS to support UK business whilst working in the public interest.

### Alan Hill *Company Secretary and Finance Director*

### Graham M S Talbot *Technical & External Affairs Director*

### Jane Beaumont *Accreditation Director*

The company takes advice on policy matters from a **Policy Advisory Forum** of major stakeholders and on technical matters from a series of **Technical Committees**.



Lord Lindsay



Paul Stennett MBE



Alan Hill



Graham M S Talbot



Jane Beaumont MBE

We hope this has helped to answer any questions you may have about UKAS but if you would like further information it can be found on our website at: [www.ukas.com](http://www.ukas.com)

# How to contact UKAS

Alternatively, anyone is welcome to contact UKAS in the following ways:

**By phone: +44 (0)20 8917 8400**

This is a general number and enquiries may be routed to particular individuals as appropriate.

**In writing to:**

**United Kingdom Accreditation Service**  
 21-47 High Street  
 Feltham  
 Middlesex  
 TW13 4UN

**By email: [info@ukas.com](mailto:info@ukas.com)**

**By fax: +44 (0)20 8917 8500**

**Registered Office:**

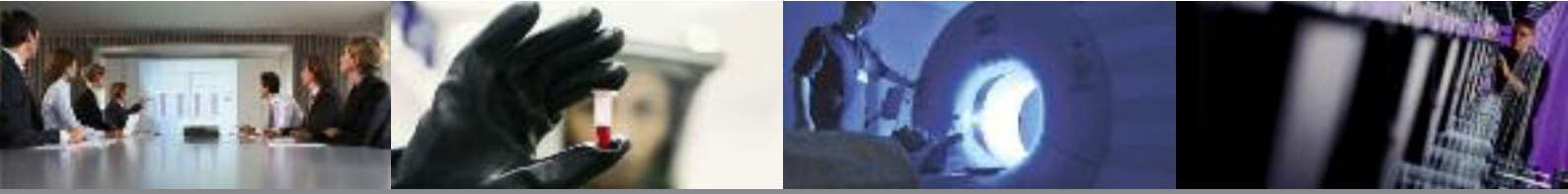
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**Registered Number:** 3076190 (England and Wales)

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