

Chief Executive's Report

Overview of 2009/2010

The start of UKAS' business year was marked with the completion of the acquisition of Clinical Pathology Accreditation (CPA (UK) Ltd) on 8th April 2009. This acquisition adds a further 1,100 laboratories to our customer base and marks a significant development of accreditation in the healthcare sector more generally. In addition to the acquisition of CPA, UKAS formally launched ISAS, the Imaging Services Accreditation Scheme at the UK Radiological Congress in June 2009, and currently a number of major hospital-based diagnostic imaging services have enrolled in the pilot scheme.

UKAS also awarded the first accreditation for Point of Care Testing, which will help ensure patient safety where clinical tests are carried out outside of a pathology laboratory, for example in a high street pharmacy.

Away from the healthcare sector, UKAS' core business continued to grow despite the tough business climate caused by the global recession. Overall, excluding CPA activities, UKAS' core business grew by 6.5% last year and applications from new customers remained strong, demonstrating the value of accreditation in helping businesses differentiate their product and service offerings. This aspect of accreditation is even more valued in times of a recession.

Elsewhere in the business UKAS has worked hard to keep costs under control and Alan Hill, the UKAS Finance Director has, during the past year, made every effort to challenge and minimise any cost increases that UKAS has faced. Some notable successes in this area have led to a reduction in our insurance fees whilst increasing the level of cover, and negotiating reductions in maintenance charges on the UKAS office premises.

One other major theme of the past year was for UKAS to focus on improving its internal resources and systems. In order to streamline business processes and offer more efficient services to our customers, UKAS has embarked on a major project to replace its entire IT infrastructure; much time and resource was spent in 2009/2010 developing the specification for the new system. The project is currently on schedule and UKAS hopes that customers will start to see improved service delivery deriving from this system during 2011.

During 2009/2010 UKAS took the opportunity to strengthen its executive team with the appointment of Lorraine Turner and Jeff Ruddle as Divisional Directors, respectively focussing on Technical and Operational areas. However, in April 2009 Richard Crookes, UKAS' Finance Director decided to retire. Richard has been with UKAS since its earliest days in 1995 and has been very influential in the life of the business. He was a key member of the Board and the Executive. Richard leaves UKAS with the best wishes of all UKAS employees for a long and happy retirement.

With the acquisition of CPA, the total UKAS business has in effect doubled over the past six years and the recent strengthening of the UKAS senior team will ensure that UKAS is well placed to cope with future growth opportunities and improve the technical rigour of our assessments.

As evidenced by the growth in the business, 2009/2010 was an exceptionally busy year for UKAS and it is impossible to do justice to all the achievements. However, a few highlights are listed below.

- Continued participation of Dr Jane Beaumont in the Forensic Science Advisory Council persuading influential stakeholders such as the Crown Prosecution Service of the benefits of accreditation.
- Delivering seventeen new accreditation development projects and responding to over seventy enquiries for new accreditation schemes.
- The appointment of UKAS as the UK's National Accreditation Body under new EU regulation.
- Election of Graham Talbot as Chair of EA (The European cooperation for Accreditation)
- Launch of a new, easier to use customer website.

- Continued progress in the raising of awareness to small businesses, Government and local Government bodies, with an independent external survey confirming that awareness and understanding of UKAS accreditation has increased across all sectors.

Finally, a review was undertaken of the way the UKAS Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) functions. I am extremely grateful to those members of the PAC who gave up their time to participate in this group along with representatives of the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). A new structure for PAC will be launched in early 2011 which should ensure that UKAS' ability to work closely with key stakeholder groups is enhanced.

Looking ahead to the coming business year 2010/2011, UKAS is working on three major projects.

- Firstly, UKAS is working to make significant improvements to the service provided by our certification section and also to implement even greater rigour in our application of cross-frontier accreditation principles.
- Secondly, UKAS will continue to invest time and resource in the development of our new Enterprise Resource Planning system which will replace our existing IT structure and will in turn drive further customer service improvements.
- Thirdly, UKAS will focus on identifying synergies between UKAS and CPA in order to deliver improved services to CPA customers and take advantage of any cost saving opportunities.

The work involved in delivering these three major projects means that in 2010/11 UKAS faces one of its most challenging years in terms of workload and demands on resources. The UKAS senior management team will remain clearly focused on achieving these goals in the coming year.

Finally, in closing this review of 2009/2010, I would like to thank all of UKAS' employees who have worked hard to keep up with the growth in the business and serve the ever increasing expectations of our customers as the complexity of our business increases.

Paul Stennett, Chief Executive