



UKAS-accredited services – a guide for small to medium businesses

Do you use **certification, testing, calibration** or **inspection** services?

If so...

save time *and* money

by using **UKAS-accredited** services

*Delivering
Confidence*

If you are busy running a business, sourcing the right people and organisations to carry out your certification, inspection, testing or calibration work can be time-consuming and fraught with ‘unknowns’.

...There is a solution

Using **UKAS-accredited** evaluation services will ensure that finding the right supplier is made easier for your business and will save time and money in many ways...



Using UKAS-accredited evaluation services saves money

If your business requires the services of **certification** bodies, **testing** or **calibration** laboratories, or **inspection** bodies then using a UKAS-accredited supplier for these evaluation services (also known as conformity assessment services) can save both time and money.

Here's how

An evaluation body accredited by UKAS has proved that it complies with best practice and is competent to deliver a consistently reliable, impartial and accurate service which meets the appropriate, internationally-recognised standard.

By choosing a UKAS-accredited supplier, not only can you be assured that you are receiving the **most appropriate service for your needs** but you will also discover that the UKAS 'symbol' on your documentation brings with it **national and international recognition** to your business.

Together, these attributes will:

- **reduce paperwork and increase efficiency** by reducing the necessity to re-audit your business or re-test your products for new markets;
- **de-risk your procurement** by taking the guesswork out of choosing an evaluation body and by giving you confidence that you will get the service that best fulfils your requirements;
- **win new business** particularly since the use of accredited services is increasingly a stipulation of specifiers, most notably in the public sector;

- **facilitate access to international markets** since UKAS-accredited certificates are recognised throughout the world;
- **help you to identify best practice** since your evaluating body is required to have appropriate knowledge of your business sector;
- **control costs** because accurate testing, calibration and other evaluation services can limit product failure and down time;
- **help with knowledge transfer and product development** since accredited evaluation bodies can be a good source of impartial advice;
- **offer market differentiation and leadership** by showing to others credible evidence of good practice;
- **demonstrate due diligence** in the event of legal action.

Whatever your business priorities and whatever sector your business is in, using accredited services offers value for money and will have a positive effect on your bottom-line.



"The benefit of accredited-certification to the bottom line of our business is that we can now bid for contracts that we weren't previously able to. For example, Office of Government Commerce Buying Solutions refreshed their framework contracts for the public sector. Affiniti won the framework contracts for a number of areas – we would not have won this business without accredited-certification.

It also opens up the opportunity to extend our range of services to the market – for example network security is extremely important for financial institutions, as well as public sector bodies, and we would not be able to provide the range of services that we do without accredited certification to BS 7799."

Howard Inns,
Marketing Manager, Public Sector

Which accredited third party evaluation will be most relevant to your business?



"Accredited-certification to the BRC Global standard demonstrates to our customers that we operate to a required standard. This gives us a point of difference over our rivals."

Food safety is essential. We see product recalls and food scares in the press all the time. Accredited-certification to the BRC standard builds in food safety processes to our business, and is a pre-requisite to trade with most of the major retailers. Without accredited certification, we would not be able to service many of the customers we supply, and that would have a significant impact on the size and success of our business."

The supermarkets and retailers benefit by not having to visit our business as often to carry out activities such as routine hygiene audits enabling them to achieve resource savings. This also frees up the time of our own staff as they do not have to accommodate as many customer visits, allowing them to focus on activities such as business and product development."

Barry Denton,
Operations Director

CERTIFICATION

You may spend considerable time, effort and resource in the certification process because you have been persuaded of its importance as a business tool and because of the business benefits it can bring.

But unless you have used a UKAS-accredited certification body, the benefits of certification could fall short of your expectations.

Prospective customers may be unsure of the credibility of your certification and you may find yourself suffering from internal inefficiencies because your management systems have not been identified as inappropriate to your needs.

In the UK, UKAS accredits around 150 certification bodies, ranging from small specialists to large, internationally-recognised organisations employing many hundreds of people. You can be sure that **one of these UKAS-accredited certification bodies will have the right people, technical expertise, management systems and track record to competently audit and certify your business.**

Types of certification that are accredited

While **Quality Management System** certification (to ISO 9001) accounts for a large proportion of work undertaken by certification bodies, there are other equally important areas of work, namely:

- **Product** Certification
- **Personnel** Certification
- Certification of **Information Security Management Systems**
- Certification of **Environmental Management Systems**
- Certification of **IT Service Management Systems**
- Certification of **Food Safety Management Systems**
- Certification of **Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems**
- Certification of **Business Continuity Management Systems**

Many UKAS-accredited certification bodies work in several or all of these areas, others may specialise in just one.





INSPECTION

Typically, inspections will cover product design, products, materials and equipment, installations, plant, processes and services.

Some of these areas will be covered by legislation that demands that regular inspection is undertaken.

The competence of any inspection body you appoint may be crucial in maintaining your reputation as a responsible organisation. You will want to make sure that the organisation you pay to undertake inspections on your behalf has the people, facilities, technical expertise, management systems and track record to undertake the inspection professionally and competently.

Rather than leave your reputation to chance, **ensure** that your inspection body is competent by using one that has been accredited by UKAS. By doing so, you can be sure that you have invested your money wisely and have taken the necessary steps to manage and minimise your risks.

What to look for

The internationally-recognised standard for the competence of inspection bodies is **ISO/IEC 17020:1998**. It is **the** standard against which UKAS accredits inspection bodies.

ISO/IEC 17020 should not be confused with the quality management standard ISO 9001:2008 which is specific to quality management systems. ISO 9001:2008 does not require evaluation of the technical competence of an inspection body and should not be regarded as an 'acceptable' alternative to ISO/IEC 17020.

There are well over 250 UKAS-accredited inspection bodies in the UK. Whatever your inspection needs there is more than likely an inspection body qualified to do the job.



"Our clients see many benefits from their accredited-certification status. A number of clients have secured business overseas as their accredited certificates are recognised within EU states and beyond. This has given them a real competitive advantage."

Many tenders for supplying into Government departments or blue-chip companies require that a business has had its management system certified by an organisation accredited by UKAS.

There are alternatives to accredited certification, however there are dangers associated with choosing these routes that businesses need to consider. The integrity of a business' management system, and ultimately the products and services that it provides, can be seen through its certificate. An accredited certificate provides that confidence of integrity. A non-accredited certificate cannot give that confidence as it does not have the advantage of being underpinned by a third party accreditation body such as UKAS. Consequently it does not have the credibility or acceptability within the marketplace."

Lee Poulton,
Group Accreditation Manager





“Our supplier selection policy stipulates that a business must demonstrate financial viability, Health & Safety competence, and UKAS accreditation. As a purchaser, it is essential that we get what we ask for.

UKAS accreditation is a pre-requisite whenever we are choosing an organisation to work with to help us manage asbestos. We do not however look for UKAS accreditation in one area of asbestos management. We would look for it in all areas – for example for testing, surveying and air testing.

The reasons for using a UKAS-accredited company are manifold. Firstly, it is a way of ensuring the quality of the work. However it is not just about the quality, as we are dealing with the management of asbestos in schools and offices, and so there are clearly reputational issues at stake as well.

Using a UKAS-accredited organisation is not going to necessarily increase the price of procuring a particular service. A UKAS-accredited organisation will offer value for money. The cost of getting it wrong and re-working is phenomenally expensive. This would not be the best use of rate payers’ money. It is much cheaper to get it right first time.”

Glenn Turner,
Head of the Scientific Service,
Hampshire County Council

TESTING and CALIBRATION

Testing is used to demonstrate the meeting of a specification. This may be a customer requirement or legal obligation or part of your own product development regime.

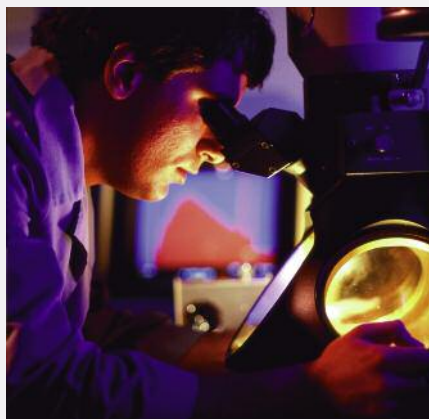
You need to be absolutely **sure** that the laboratory carrying out your testing for you has the people, facilities and track record to produce valid and accurate data and results each and every time. The same applies to any laboratory carrying out calibrations on your behalf.

What to look for

The internationally-recognised standard for the competence of laboratories is **ISO/IEC 17025: 2005**. A laboratory accredited by UKAS to this standard has the competence, impartiality and performance capability that ensures you will receive the service that meets your needs.

Accreditation to this standard also means a laboratory’s management systems meet the principles of ISO 9001:2008—a fact endorsed by three international organisations: the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF). A laboratory certified to ISO 9001:2008 but *without* ISO/IEC 17025 should *not* be considered a suitable alternative.

UKAS accredits around 1500 facilities to carry out testing and calibration. There will be one that can do the right job for you.



Make an informed choice and have confidence in your suppliers – look for the UKAS symbol

A UKAS-accredited body is permitted to display one of the National Accreditation symbols illustrated here as proof of accreditation. They are the symbols you should look for as positive proof of competence. They allow you to make an informed choice.

They enable you to make a better choice.



The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has licensed UKAS to use accreditation symbols featuring the Royal Crown and to sub-license the use of these symbols to UKAS-accredited organisations.

BIS
Department for
Business Innovation
and Skills

www.ukas.com

How to find the best and the most appropriate evaluation service for your needs.

If you need to locate a UKAS-accredited evaluation body in your area or one that provides a particular specialist service, help is at hand.

Visit **www.ukas.com** for full details of all UKAS-accredited organisations.

Alternatively, further information about UKAS and its accreditation role can be obtained by contacting UKAS **Corporate Communications**:

Telephone: **+44 (0)20 8917 8400**

Fax: **+44 (0)20 8917 8500**

Email: **info@ukas.com**



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