

# What to do if you have a complaint

## Our Commitment

We are committed to providing a world class, value adding accreditation service in accordance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011, the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA), International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), and International Accreditation Forum (IAF) for the purposes of the MRA/MLA's (mutual recognition and multi-lateral arrangements).

We aim to resolve any complaint we receive in a fair and impartial manner.

## Our role and remit when dealing with complaints

UKAS will investigate complaints in accordance with those requirements detailed in the international standard ISO/IEC 17011 "Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies".

UKAS' role is one of oversight in accordance with the above standard. We are not however, a regulator and as a consequence we do not have any regulatory powers. In addition, we are not an arbitration/mediation service. Therefore, we cannot arbitrate/mediate between an accredited body and/or a third party in relation to matters which fall outside of the accreditation requirements e.g. financial disputes or contractual disagreements.

Anonymous, or verbal complaints will not normally be logged and investigated, unless evidence is presented to UKAS which warrants further investigation.

## Confidentiality

We are required by the international standard ISO/IEC 17011 to have arrangements in place with all our customers to safeguard information obtained or created during the accreditation process accreditation. Therefore, UKAS is not permitted to disclose confidential information about its customers outside of the organisation without their written consent. The only exception is where the law requires such information to be disclosed without such consent.

## Complaints about a UKAS accredited body and/or certificated company

If your complaint relates to the activities of a certificated company (e.g. one which is ISO 9001 certificated) and/or a UKAS accredited body then you should in the first instance address your complaint to them and afford them the opportunity to investigate and respond in accordance with their respective complaint processes. UKAS would not normally log and investigate a complaint if the complaint has not in the first instance been raised with the accredited body and/or certificated company.

## How will we deal with your complaint?

Complaints to UKAS should be submitted in writing and include as a minimum the following:

- Summary of the complaint, specifically who and what it is about
- Timeline of events
- Copy of supporting correspondence

Once we receive your complaint in writing we will review all the evidence you have provided. This process may require the submission of additional information or further clarification of the issues prior to the complaint being formally logged.

If we determine during the review process that the complaint does not relate to accreditation activities which we are responsible for, we will advise you as to why your complaint will not be pursued. We will, in these circumstances, provide guidance on alternative routes available to pursue your concerns.

# What to do if you have a complaint *continued*

On completion of our review to confirm the complaint is within our remit to investigate, we will log it in our database and allocate a unique reference number. A formal acknowledgement confirming receipt of the complaint and detailing the UKAS remit for the investigation, will be sent on completion of the logging process. This normally takes place within 5 working days of receipt, unless further information or clarification is required. As part of the acknowledgment, UKAS will provide details of the likely timescales for the investigation to be completed. It should be noted that timescales may vary dependent on the severity and extent of the issues within the complaint.

A UKAS investigating officer will investigate the complaint in accordance with the applicable accreditation standard(s). On completion of the UKAS investigation we will inform you of our conclusions.

Please note for complaints received from third parties about UKAS accredited bodies, we are limited as to the level of information we may provide in relation to our investigation and the complaint outcome for reasons of confidentiality (*see confidentiality section*).

## What do I do if I am not satisfied with the outcome of the UKAS investigation?

If you are a UKAS customer whose complaint is not upheld, and it relates to your desired accreditation status, you may formally request that UKAS reconsider the decision in line with our Appeals process. Details of this process are available on our website.

In the case of third party complaints there is no option for Appeal. UKAS will provide notice of the end of the complaint process. Where appropriate, we can at the end of the UKAS process advise the complainant of the alternative routes available to pursue their complaint.

## Vexatious Complainants

We are committed to resolving complaints fairly, impartially and in a timely manner. However, in a small minority of cases, some parties pursue their complaints in a way which can either impede the investigation of their complaint or can cause significant resource issues for UKAS. This can happen while a complaint is being investigated, or once we have finished dealing with the complaint.

We have adopted the Local Government Ombudsman's (LGO) definition of **"unreasonable complainant behaviour"** and **"unreasonable persistent complaints"** ([www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)) and this will be used when determining if a complainant should be considered as a vexatious complainant.

The time and effort needed to service abusive, persistent or vexatious complaints and complainants may hinder UKAS' consideration of genuine complaints and impact the ability of our personnel to provide a quality service. As a consequence, we reserve the right to restrict contact with a complainant who we have deemed to be vexatious. Any decision to restrict contact will be proportionate to the nature of the complainant's contact with us at that time.

In cases where a complainant is deemed to be vexatious, the complainant will be informed in writing of the reasons why a decision has been made to restrict contact, including details of the restricted contact arrangements, and the length of time these restrictions will remain in place.

*Delivering  
Confidence*

## To submit a complaint

Please send your complaint and supporting documents together with your name, address and contact details to:

**Email: [customerfeedback@ukas.com](mailto:customerfeedback@ukas.com)**

or

FAO  
Process Improvement & Customer Feedback Manager  
UKAS  
2 Pine Trees  
Chertsey Lane  
Staines-upon-Thames  
TW18 3HR

If you would like to discuss your complaint, please call:

**01784 429000**