Introduction

Since 1992, Clinical Pathology Accreditation (CPA) has been the leading, reputable and authoritative provider of medical laboratory accreditation, External Quality Assessment (EQA) Scheme accreditation and more recently, Point of Care Testing (POCT) accreditation in the UK and overseas.

CPA is now a wholly owned subsidiary of the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) and as part of a strategy by both companies to contribute to the modernisation of pathology services in the UK, a transition of accreditation for all CPA accredited customers is underway.

All customers currently accredited against the CPA POCT Standards will now undergo a transition to UKAS accreditation against ISO 22870:2006 Point-of-care testing (POCT) – Requirements for quality and competence. This transition is running alongside the ISO 15189:2012 transition.

“... accreditation schemes are so important. Independent assessment provides an objective view of what is being delivered and the standards and approach of the process itself do an enormous amount to embed a quality culture.”

Professor Sue Hill OBE, Chief Scientific Officer, NHS England
ISO 22870:2006 gives specific requirements applicable to Point of Care Testing when it is carried out in hospitals, clinics and by healthcare organisations providing ambulatory care. Patient self-testing in a home or community setting is excluded, but elements of ISO 22870:2006 can still be applicable.

ISO 22870:2006 is intended to be used in conjunction with ISO 15189:2012. It is not a standalone standard, but seen as a supportive standard, which means that the POCT provider must also be accredited to ISO 15189:2012. A provider accredited to ISO 22870:2006 in conjunction with ISO 15189:2012 will be issued with a certificate and schedule providing details of their accredited POCT activities and the locations where the POCT is performed.
The CPA POCT Standards were based upon the requirements of ISO 22870:2006 so assessment directly against ISO 22870:2006 removes the need for extensive gap analysis between the two standards. In addition, ISO 22870:2006 allows providers to demonstrate that they comply with an internationally agreed standard and therefore provides recognition of their accreditation around the globe.

Raising the quality of care for patients, whilst delivering efficiency and productivity, is a key principle for all Healthcare services. Accreditation is a tool that can be used by Commissioners, patients and providers to support informed and effective decision-making, good governance and public confidence by:

- Providing independent assurance of quality and safety that supports objectives to deliver better care and value for patients
- Providing a mechanism for measuring quality improvement and encouraging innovation through continuous service improvements
- Supporting consistency in the quality of care with reliable outcomes

For providers, accreditation demonstrates that they comply with defined standards and best practice. It provides authoritative assurance of the competence of the service, reduces risk and can act as a leverage for change or service improvement.
Applying for POCT Accreditation

For laboratories currently in the transition to ISO 15189: 2012, it may be possible to combine your application for POCT accreditation with your ISO 15189:2012 transition assessment. Combining the two assessments can deliver both time and cost savings.

If you would prefer to wait until your laboratory has transitioned to ISO 15189:2012, or you already have ISO 15189:2012 accreditation, POCT accreditation can later be added through the Extension to Scope process. Whenever you decide to proceed with POCT accreditation, please discuss this with your UKAS Assessment Manager.

As was the case with CPA POCT, it is advantageous for laboratories to consider a UKAS POCT pre-assessment visit. This reduces risk and paves the way for a smoother initial assessment. The pre-assessment visit highlights areas where there is conformance with ISO 22870:2006 and also, areas where further improvement and development is required prior to formal assessment.

If you have any questions about POCT accreditation, please contact the UKAS Medical Laboratories Team:

020 8917 8400
MedLabsCustomerService@ukas.com
www.ukas.com