

# United Kingdom Accreditation Service: A Delivery Partner for Government

The **efficient delivery of policy** and the **reduction of the burden of regulation** have been central ambitions for successive governments. The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) has worked closely with government over a number of years to help deliver policies in a cost-effective but reliable way by ensuring that standards required by government, business or communities are met. Greater use of accreditation could assist with the targets set for **deregulation** and **public sector efficiency**.

The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) supports Government across a range of policy areas and believes that even greater use of accreditation could be made in the future to the benefit of Government, businesses and consumers alike. UKAS accreditation can be applied to any policy area in which there is a requirement for compliance to be assessed.

UKAS has worked closely with the Better Regulation Executive and the Regulatory Policy Committee to promote proper consideration of accreditation in the policy-making process, with some success. However, knowledge of alternatives to regulation is still generally poor<sup>1</sup>. The National Audit Office, among others, has called for more to be done both to encourage greater awareness of accreditation as a policy option and for impact assessments to capture the benefits of alternatives to regulation when government departments enter consultation.

UKAS is prepared to work with any department or agency to consider whether accreditation might help in the delivery of any specific policy objective.

## Background

UKAS is the National Accreditation Body appointed by government to assess, against internationally agreed standards, organisations that provide certification, testing, inspection and calibration services. UKAS is appointed and monitored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and is peer assessed by its international counterparts. Government can therefore have confidence in UKAS accredited organisations to carry out those evaluation or measurement tasks required to support government policy.

Accredited conformity assessment:

- offers a user friendly alternative to regulation;
- reduces costs for government by moving delivery of policy to the private sector;
- supports risk based regulation by providing information to help target government intervention where it is most needed;
- reduces the regulatory burden on society and reduces the inspection costs incurred by regulators, whilst at the same time ensuring robust outcomes in terms of compliance and behaviours.

**UKAS underpins better regulation and public sector reform across a wide spectrum of policy areas, including:**

- Quality Management – Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- National Measurement System – National Measurement Office
- Drinking water quality, Environmental Management, Emissions Trading Scheme – DEFRA and Environment Agency
- Food safety & quality – DEFRA & Food Standards Agency
- Forensic Laboratories, National DNA database – Home Office
- Asbestos testing and surveying, Gas safe register – Health & Safety Executive
- Building Regulations Competent Persons Schemes – DCLG
- High Speed Rail Interoperability – Department for Transport
- Medical laboratories, Imaging services – Department of Health

*Delivering  
Confidence*

# United Kingdom Accreditation Service: A Delivery Partner for Government *continued*

## Case study: Environmental Management Systems

ISO 14001 is an internationally recognised standard for environmental management developed by industry for industry. To provide an independent verification of compliance, businesses can choose to be certified by a UKAS accredited certification body. The Environment Agency recognises the value of accredited certification to ISO 14001 in providing an indication of a business' commitment to meeting its environmental obligations. Businesses with accredited certification receive credit under the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control legislation resulting in reduced environmental levies for businesses and reduced inspection requirements for the regulator.



## Case study: Building Regulations Competent Persons Schemes

The Department for Communities and Local Government and the Welsh Government have, for several years, approved a number of competent persons schemes (CPS) under the Building Regulations. Those businesses certified under an approved CPS are able to self-certify their work without recourse to a local authority building control officer. Building works covered by CPS include: electrical installations; heating and hot water systems; combustion appliances; and replacement windows and doors. From June 2015, DCLG and WG have required all CPS to be accredited by UKAS thus DCLG and WG are no longer required to carry out separate assessments which reduces the regulatory burden on the CPS whilst ensuring that the standards required continue to be met.

## Case study: Imaging Services Accreditation Scheme

UKAS has been appointed by the College of Radiographers and the Royal College of Radiologists to manage and deliver the UK-wide Imaging Services Accreditation Scheme (ISAS). Under the scheme, jointly developed by the Colleges in collaboration with other health professionals and patients' representatives, imaging services are assessed against an agreed standard for quality, patient focused care and continuous improvement. The process of accreditation involves peer review against agreed standards and criteria supported by expert specialist advice and input from patient representatives. UKAS accreditation provides confidence in the quality and consistency of imaging services delivered across the health sector.



## Where UKAS could do more

Despite the growing use of UKAS accreditation by government, there are still many areas in which greater use could be made. UKAS accreditation can be applied to any policy area in which there is a requirement for compliance to be assessed.

**If you think UKAS accreditation could help the delivery of policy in your department, we would be very pleased to talk to you to determine how best use can be made of this valuable national resource.**



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