



TPS 51

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Accreditation of Multi-Site Laboratories

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CHANGES SINCE LAST EDITION

Reference to superseded UKAS publication LAB 7 and 'Group accreditation' removed.
Reference to on-site assessment of all locations at reassessment removed. General updates made in relation to the URN document on use of the national accreditation logo and symbols.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This publication provides guidance on the application of the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025 *General Requirements for the competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories* to multi-site laboratories and describes how UKAS assesses and makes reference to multi-site laboratory accreditations.

2 GENERAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 In order for more than one location to be covered under one accreditation, all parts of the entity seeking accreditation must operate under a single management system that meets the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025.

- 2.2 In particular, organisations based at multiple locations must:

- a) Document fully the relationships between the locations and the extent of the interaction (*e.g. allocation of testing/calibration work, transfer of samples between locations, movement of technical staff and/or equipment and centralised or otherwise rationalised reporting arrangements*).

Note: The extent of interaction possible will depend, among other factors, on the degree of commonality of procedures and their performance characteristics.

- b) Have mechanisms in place to ensure that enquiries about work in progress are handled efficiently, regardless of any transfer between locations.
- c) Ensure that reviews of requests, tenders and contracts include appropriate consideration of clients' awareness of the way the organisation operates across the various locations.

3 DEFINING SCOPES OF ACCREDITATION

- 3.1 For all accreditations the scope has to be defined clearly and unambiguously. This is necessary for the clients of organisations performing testing and/or calibration and for UKAS assessment purposes. The locations as well as the activities covered by the scope need to be identified.

- 3.2 Schedules issued for multi-site testing/calibration organisations detail the activities and locations covered under the accreditation scope (*including mobile and on-site testing activities*).

- 3.3 For organisations that hold accreditation for both calibration and testing activities, separate certificates of accreditation bearing distinct accreditation numbers are issued by UKAS. Each certificate will have an associated schedule. It is not currently

the intention to issue only one schedule for an organisation that is accredited for both testing and calibration activities.

4 ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION PROCESSES

- 4.1 The normal assessment and accreditation processes for laboratory accreditation apply irrespective of whether an organisation operates from one or many sites.
- 4.2 In general, each location included in the scope of application/ accreditation will be visited at the initial assessment.
- 4.3 Subsequent surveillance visits will cover a sample of the activities across the different locations to the extent necessary to form a reliable judgement about compliance with ISO/IEC 17025. It can be expected that each location will be visited at least once in each four-year assessment cycle.

5 SUSPENSION OR REDUCTION OF ACCREDITATION

- 5.1 Suspensions or reductions in scope at one location, whether voluntary or imposed, will automatically involve a full consideration of the implications for the organisation as a whole. This may result in other locations being affected by this suspension/reduction.

6 REFERENCE TO ACCREDITATION

- 6.1 The relevant accreditation symbol can be used by any location listed on the schedule of accreditation, subject to the requirements in BIS publication URN BIS/14/902 "The National Accreditation Logo & Symbols: Conditions for use by UKAS and UKAS accredited organisations" or any revised version of this document.
- 6.2 Where a laboratory makes reference to accreditation without the use of the symbol, BIS/14/902 (*or revised version*) specifies the wording to be used. It is acceptable, although not a requirement, to indicate that the accreditation covers multiple locations alongside the use of this statement.