

Technical Bulletin – UKAS Assessments incorporating the Forensic Science Regulators Codes of Practice

28 May 2020

On the 22nd April 2020, the Forensic Science Regulator published Issue 5 of the ‘Codes of Practice and Conduct for forensic science providers and practitioners in the Criminal Justice System’ FSR-C-100 (The Codes).

Organisations that provide forensic science services to the Criminal Justice System can include the compliance with The Codes as part of their scope of UKAS accreditation. Some organisations have already gained this accreditation and others have applications in progress.

Following consultation with the Forensic Science Regulator and internally within UKAS it has been agreed that UKAS will start assessing against the newly published version of The Codes from the 22nd August 2020.

Therefore, any assessments after this date, to organisations either who have already extended their scope or are seeking accreditation to The Codes for the first time, will include assessment against Issue 5.

As detailed in Footnote 26 of The Codes it is expected that organisations phase in any needed changes into their quality management systems within three months of the publication of the new version. Therefore, by the time of their assessment they will have identified the required changes and will have evidence of effective implementation demonstrating compliance.

It is expected that prior to any assessment that will take place after the 22nd August 2020 the organisation will provide UKAS with a Gap Analysis detailing the actions that they have taken to bring their systems into compliance with the new version of the Codes. This will be reviewed by the Assessment Team with follow up review during the assessment to ensure implementation.

Where an organisation has already undergone part of their annual assessment remotely and will have a follow up site visit later in the year, it would be expected that a Gap Analysis will be available for review prior to the follow up visit identifying how the organisation has amended their system to comply with the new requirements; a selection of these will then be reviewed at the assessment.

In the future, as has been the case with this revision, it is anticipated that when there are updates to The Codes UKAS will start to assess against the revised version four months after publication, or as requested by the Forensic Science Regulator.

If you have any queries regarding this Technical Bulletin, please contact your Assessment Manager.

