

Updated UKAS Customer Guidance Communication for Volume Scene of Crime Accreditation - Law Enforcement – January 2021

Introduction

This update provides information on the latest situation with respect to UKAS Scene of Crime assessments in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the last communication in May 2020 UKAS confirmed its response to the advice and guidelines from the UK Government, relating to travel restrictions and social distancing, and UKAS implemented a revised policy with respect to undertaking assessments. This is detailed in UKAS Publication TPS 73 UKAS Policy on Accreditation and Conformity Assessment During the Covid-19 Outbreak.

The statement in May 2020, with respect to remote assessment, remains in place – i.e. in light of this revised policy it has been determined that due to the nature of Scene of Crime activity, and that this will be a new area of accreditation for police forces, UKAS will not undertake remote assessment for applications for Scene of Crime activity.

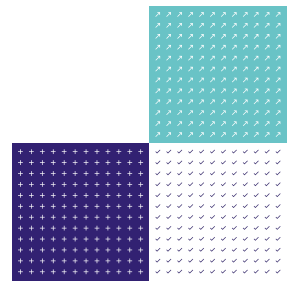
In recognition of the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the policy that the assessment of Scene of Crime activity cannot be conducted remotely, UKAS confirms the temporary suspension and postponement of related assessment work with immediate effect.

Application Stage

Organisations can continue to submit applications for Scene of Crime activity using the Inspection Body Accreditation Application Form (AC2), ensuring that this is accompanied by the supporting documentation listed in the previous UKAS Scene of Crime Communication dated January 2020.

Pre-Assessment Stage

UKAS are able to conduct Pre-assessments remotely, for example, via Skype, Microsoft Teams etc. should any organisation wish to proceed with this type of assessment prior to the resumption of site visits.



For a limited time (until 09th April 2021) UKAS is able to offer those organisations that have had a Pre-assessment Visit and have demonstrably addressed the resulting areas identified in the Pre-assessment report an extra desktop review relating to their Preparedness for Assessment. The cost of the desktop review will be determined by the effort required to review the documents submitted and to produce the associated report (which will be in a similar format to the Pre-assessment report). It should be noted that if issues identified during the Pre-assessment have not been addressed then no further review / comment will be made in relation to these issues. The desktop review, by its nature, does not evaluate the implementation of policies and procedures, and therefore does not preclude issues being noted (either with the documentation or the practice) when the system is seen in operation during the subsequent Initial Assessment.

It should also be noted that a review of submitted documents will need to be completed in preparation for the subsequent Initial Assessment and will be charged as part of the Office Time for that visit. Consequently, the review of documents as part of a desktop review will not lead to a reduction in effort for the Initial Assessment.

Any request for a desktop review should be sent to Alison.Brodie@ukas.com on or before 31st March 2021.

Initial Assessment Stage

As detailed above UKAS will not be undertaking any Initial Assessments of Scene of Crime applications until such time Government guidelines allow for the resumption of site assessment visits. We estimate a resumption of the Initial Assessments towards the end of April 2021.

As a consequence, all Scene of Crime Initial Assessments that had been previously booked have now been cancelled; and any dates that were being discussed / held for potential assessments have been released.

In preparation for the re-commencement of site assessments UKAS has identified some key principles that will help to ensure that these visits are progressed and booked in the most effective manner to allow as many police force customers to move toward accreditation as efficiently as possible. These principles are as follows: -

- Each organisation that had an Initial Assessment booked or dates planned will be given a number in a queue (allocated in the same order of the cancelled booked/planned assessments).
- New Initial Assessment slots (as detailed below) will be offered in queue order e.g. number 1 in the queue will be offered first refusal of slot 1.
- UKAS will continue the 'slots'- based system, similar to that operated for the Fingerprint Comparison project. UKAS will identify Assessment Teams for

these 'slots' that will be allocated for the assessment of the next suitable customer.

- Prior to the allocation of a 'slot' an organisation will need to confirm, in writing, they are ready to progress and commit to submitting the required documentation within the timescales agreed. Failure to submit documentation by the due date, may result in cancellation of your assessment slot.
- Due to this approach the next available slot may not always include the organisations Assessment Manger.
- During the allocation of 'slots', in order to maximise the potential for as many police forces to be assessed in the shortest timescale, UKAS will only assess one site per legal entity at Initial Assessment. Additional sites can be requested after successful closure of any findings from the first assessment.

If you have any queries in relation to the content of this document, please contact. Alison.Brodie@ukas.com