

Testing

Why leave
your testing to
chance?



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By choosing a UKAS accredited testing laboratory, not only can you be assured that you are receiving the most appropriate service for your needs but you will also discover that the UKAS 'symbol' on your documentation brings with it national and international recognition to your business.

Do you commission a laboratory to fulfil your testing needs with a requirement for accurate and reliable results?

If you do, you will want to make sure that the organisation undertaking your testing has the people, facilities, technical expertise, management systems and historical performance to undertake the work professionally and competently.

In some areas there are few rules, regulations or minimum standards. Fortunately, there is an assured way to check the technical competence of a laboratory. The internationally recognised standards for the competence of laboratories are ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189.

What are ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189?

The international standards ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189 define what is required of a laboratory in order for it to demonstrate both technical competence of the personnel and the availability of all the technical resources needed to produce consistently accurate reliable test results.

In addition to the technical requirements, there is a second major component of this standard which requires that the management systems of the facility meet the principles of ISO 9001.



Competence and impartiality

The competence of a laboratory you appoint may be crucial to maintaining your reputation as a responsible organisation. It is therefore surprising that organisations are still tempted to use the service of laboratories whose competence has not been confirmed by an independent, authoritative third party.

UKAS is the sole UK accreditation body recognised by government to assess, against internationally recognised standards, organisations that provide testing services. UKAS combines a depth of technical knowledge and expertise built up over many years with scientific and technical specialists operating across a range of testing activities.

What are your testing needs?

There are over 1,500 UKAS accredited laboratories in the UK in a wide range of sectors such as: healthcare, chemicals, air quality, fuels, environmental, consumer products, electromagnetic compatibility, food, forensics, explosives, toys and water.

UKAS laboratory accreditation uses criteria and procedures specifically to determine technical and organisational competence. Laboratory accreditation uses the internationally recognised standards ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189 to assess factors relevant to a laboratory's ability to produce precise, accurate tests and data including:

- + Technical competence of staff
- + Validity and appropriateness of test methods
- + Suitability and maintenance of test equipment
- + Testing environment
- + Sampling, handling and transportation of test items
- + Quality assurance of test data



What our customers say



CCL-Forensics

“ UKAS accreditation to ISO/IEC standards provides CCL-Forensics’ customers with the confidence that they have used a supplier that can provide accurate test results. As an organisation specialising in digital investigation, UKAS accreditation is crucial to us as our customers rely on technical competence and credibility of results to demonstrate to the public they have chosen an appropriate supplier. ”

Dave Lattimore, Total Quality Manager



DTG Testing

“ UKAS accreditation is an instantly recognisable and internationally understood mechanism for demonstrating that our customers can have confidence in the quality of our test and conformance regimes. DTG Testing is an ISO/IEC 17025 accredited laboratory for Freeview and Freeview HD conformance, this demonstrates our ongoing commitment to providing test and conformance regimes for the digital television industry. ”

Richard Lindsay-Davies, Director General



Amstel Testing Limited

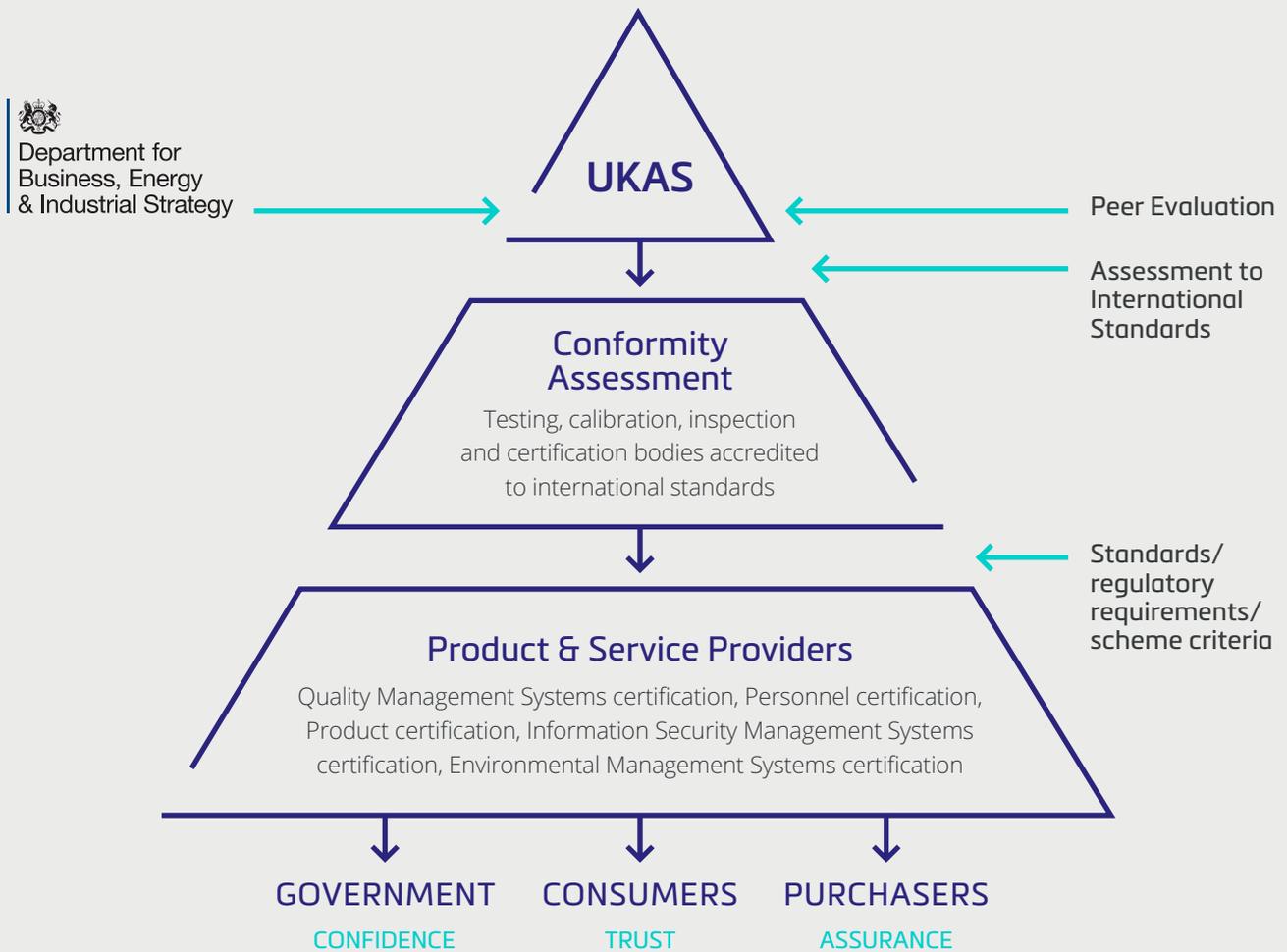
“ Testing of cookware and ovenware is an essential element of product development for cookware manufacturers and distributors. Achieving UKAS accreditation reinforces the valuable assurance that our services are technically competent and our organisation has been assessed to an internationally recognised standard. This ensures that distributors, retailers and ultimately consumers can be certain that the products they purchase have been tested to the highest standard. ”

Melinda Martin, Managing Director



UKAS market position

A laboratory accredited by UKAS has proved that it complies with best practice and is competent to deliver a consistently reliable and impartial service which meets the appropriate, internationally-recognised standard.



Mutual recognition: Global

- + Accreditation provides a global network of technical assurance, demonstrating equivalence to help eliminate technical barriers to international trade.
- + This assurance is underpinned by a robust process of peer evaluation, ensuring accreditation bodies comply with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011. This enables an Accreditation Body to become a signatory to a mutual or multilateral recognition arrangement.
- + Being a signatory to a recognized international mutual or multilateral recognition arrangement (such as EA MLA - Multilateral Agreement and ILAC MRA - Mutual Recognition Arrangement) means that the reports and certificates produced by bodies accredited by that signatory should be accepted as technically equivalent to reports and certificates issued in the countries of all other signatories.



ISO 9001 certification does not ensure technical competence and validity

ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189 should not be confused with the quality management standard ISO 9001. The latter is the generic standard for quality management systems applicable to all organisations irrespective of type, size, product or service provided.

It does not require evaluation of the technical competence of a testing laboratory. ISO 9001 should not be regarded as an 'acceptable' alternative to ISO/IEC 17025. This is because with certification to ISO 9001 the emphasis is on establishing an organisations compliance with requirements for a quality management system, it does not contain technical requirements for personnel and operations.

Identifying a UKAS accredited ISO/IEC 17025 laboratory is simple, each UKAS accredited testing laboratory is permitted to display the National Accreditation testing symbol.

Benefits of accredited testing

There are a host of reasons why you should use the services of a UKAS accredited testing laboratory. Here are some of the most important:

- + **Minimise risk** – While risk can never be removed altogether, employing the services of a UKAS accredited laboratory means choosing a technically competent laboratory minimising the risk of producing or supplying a faulty product.
- + **Maintain your reputation** – Confidence in your product is enhanced if clients know it has been thoroughly evaluated by an independent, competent testing facility. Increasingly customers are relying on independent evidence, rather than simply accepting a supplier's word that the product is fit for purpose.

- + **Demonstrate credibility** – A UKAS accredited laboratory is able to demonstrate a full audit trail for the test, can call upon best practice within its sector and will only use the services of trained and experienced personnel.
- + **Reduce costs** – Accredited gives independent confirmation on the validity and consistency of test results, leading to improved productivity and reduced downtime.
- + **Access to international markets** – Accreditation provides confidence that tests are conducted in line with relevant national/international standards. Recognition of this equivalence facilitates access to local and international markets.
- + **Supply chain confidence** – Accredited testing can create confidence in industry supply chains and is often specified by public and private sector organisations as a prerequisite for acceptance.

What are the risks of using a laboratory that is not UKAS accredited?

Confidence in your choice of testing laboratory is essential. Using a supplier that has not been independently assessed to the relevant national/international standard runs the following risks:

- + **Inexperienced staff** – Competence is built on qualifications, experience, appropriate professional development and consistent adherence to best practice
- + **Insufficient resource** – Risking inadequate or incomplete work and unreliable results
- + A lack of impartiality
- + Insufficient feedback mechanisms with no formal complaints process, accountability or redress to UKAS
- + Lack of due diligence and exposure to claims
- + Unreliable test results, causing quality concerns within your business.

Confused about the difference between accreditation and certification?

Here's what you need to know: In this leaflet we refer to both certification and accreditation. For testing services, you need to ask for an accredited testing laboratory.

Certification

is written assurance by a third party that a product, process or service conforms to or complies with specified requirements.

Accreditation

is the procedure by which an authoritative body gives formal recognition that a body or person is competent to carry out specific tasks.

How to find a UKAS accredited testing laboratory

All organisations accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189 for testing are listed on the UKAS website. An organisation is only accredited for the activities that are listed on their schedule.

To find a testing laboratory that meets your needs, please visit our website.

International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) Accreditation Body members, such as UKAS, are accepted globally <https://ilac.org/>.

UKAS has formally been appointed as the National Accreditation Body for the United Kingdom by The Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). BEIS works with UKAS to ensure that it operates in the public interest and meets the obligation imposed by the Regulation.

Look for the UKAS symbol

Make an informed choice and have confidence in your suppliers by looking for the UKAS symbol.

Only organisations accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 or ISO 15189 for testing are permitted to display the testing symbol, one of the national accreditation symbols.



Further information:

A full list of UKAS accredited testing laboratories can be found at: <https://www.ukas.com/find-an-organisation/>

Further information can be obtained from <https://www.ukas.com/accreditation/standards/laboratory-accreditation/>

Get in touch

sales@ukas.com
+44 (0) 1784 429000
[ukas.com](https://www.ukas.com)