

Technical Bulletin: Transition arrangements for ISO/IEC 17020:2026 – Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies performing inspection

30 March 2026

Following the publication of ISO/IEC 17020:2026, this bulletin has been produced to update Inspection Bodies and stakeholders on the UKAS transition process and overall timelines for transition of accreditation to this new version of the standard.

Summary of changes

Below is a summary of the changes that have been made to the standard. This is not detailed, and Inspection Bodies will be expected to fully review the standard against their current processes and procedures.

- + ISO/IEC 17020:2026 introduces clearer structure, simplified wording, and improved alignment with CASCO standards
- + Definitions have been updated, consolidated, or removed, including new terms like *client* and *item*
- + Impartiality and independence requirements are strengthened, with clearer organisational expectations
- + Competence requirements now focus on having access to competent personnel and enhanced monitoring
- + Facilities and equipment controls expanded to include in-service checks, tech systems, AI, and remote tools
- + Externally provided products/services controls are significantly broadened, including mandatory provider registers
- + Inspection methods require planned development, stricter content expectations, and validation of non-standard methods
- + A new section formalises requirements for data and information control, including software validation and security
- + Appeals and complaints processes are simplified and must now be publicly available
- + Risk and opportunity management replaces preventive action, with strengthened corrective action and risk-based auditing

Timeline:

Date	Milestone/Activity
27 March 2026	ISO/IEC 17020:2026 published
April 2026 to August 2026	UKAS preparation
01 September 2026	UKAS ready to start assessing to ISO/IEC 17020:2026
01 September 2026 to 31 December 2027	Optional stage: Inspection Bodies can choose to be assessed to the 2026 version or remain with the 2012 version - <i>in any case reports may highlight any major deviations from the new standard</i>
01 September 2026 onwards	Only applications to ISO/IEC 17020:2026 accepted
01 January 2027 onwards	All <i>initial</i> assessments (<i>new applicants</i>) will be to ISO/IEC 17020:2026
01 January 2028 onwards	Mandatory stage: all assessments will be to ISO/IEC 17020:2026
27 March 2029	Accreditations to ISO/IEC 17020:2012 cease to be valid - Inspection Bodies that have <i>not</i> transitioned to the 2026 version by this date will no longer be able to claim accreditation for their inspection activities

UKAS transition process for accredited Inspection Bodies

UKAS will be ready to begin the transition of its accredited Inspection Bodies from 1st September 2026. However, assessments to the requirements of ISO/IEC 17020:2026 will not be mandatory until 1st January 2028. Therefore, during the period of 1st September 2026 to the end of December 2027, accredited Inspection Bodies will be given the option of either deferring their transition until the following year or being assessed against the new standard in 2026/7. It is proposed that the transition assessments be undertaken as part of scheduled annual UKAS assessments.

When arrangements are being made for 2026 assessments, organisations will need to inform UKAS if they wish the assessments to be conducted to the 2026 version of the standard. UKAS will contact customers directly; *there will be no need for a formal application requesting transition to be completed.*

From the beginning of 2028, all UKAS assessments of accredited Inspection Bodies will be conducted against the requirements of ISO/IEC 17020:2026. These will be combined with the Inspection Body's annual assessment visits.

In preparation for transition assessment, each accredited provider will be required to complete an 'assessment readiness gap analysis' proforma and return it to UKAS at least 1 month prior to its assessment. This proforma will be provided by UKAS at the time the transition assessment is arranged, although it will also be made available on the UKAS website.

The proforma will identify where changes have been made in ISO/IEC 17020:2026, and it will be the responsibility of the Inspection Body to consider the extent and impact of these changes, and to complete the form to state what changes (where necessary) it has made in order to meet the revised and new requirements in ISO/IEC 17020:2026.

Additional office time will be required by UKAS to review the changes made by the Inspection Body, as highlighted in the proforma. Subject to the extent of the changes made by the Inspection Body, it is not anticipated that additional site time will be required for most Inspection Bodies. The additional time required as part of the transition will be chargeable, with a fee to cover the desktop assessment, primarily of the assessment readiness questionnaire and submitted supported documentation. This will vary depending on the size/complexity of the Inspection Body and hence the expected time to complete the review.

The following detail gives an overview of the expected effort required dependent on IB size and complexity.

- + Assessment Manager - office administration time - minimum 0.5 day
- + **Small IB / low complexity** - a minimum of 0.5 days of desktop assessment time for the Lead Assessor with an extra 0.25 day for report; the effort required for the TA will be 0.5 + 0.25 day for report
- + **Medium IB / medium complexity** - a minimum of 0.75 - 1 day of desktop assessment time for the Lead Assessor with an extra 0.25 day for report; the effort required for the TA will be 0.75 - 1 day + 0.25 day for report
- + **Large IB / High complexity** - a minimum of 1 - 1.25 days of desktop assessment time for the Lead Assessor with an extra 0.25 day for report; the effort required for the TA will be 1 - 1.25 + 0.25 day for report

Any additional site visits arranged to specifically assess the transition to ISO/IEC 17020:2026 will need to cover changes to both the management system and technical requirements for Inspection Body accreditation and, as such, will require input from both UKAS Lead and Technical Assessors. Such visits will be chargeable at the rate in force at the time (see [UKAS Terms of Business](#)) and will require more effort (assessment days) than if combined with annual assessments.

The effectiveness of the changes shall be verified by the assessment team during the site visit. If areas are identified that do not adequately fulfil the requirements, then these will be raised as mandatory findings, with a one-month deadline for evidence submission. All mandatory findings must be addressed by the Inspection Body via the normal process before accreditation can be formally transitioned to ISO/IEC 17020:2026.

The deadline for transition to the new version has been internationally agreed as three years from the date of publication, meaning that from 27th March 2029 only accreditation to the 2026 version will be valid. It is therefore imperative that all accredited Inspection Bodies are fully transitioned before this date, and the UKAS transition timeline is based around this.

A new certificate and schedule of accreditation referencing ISO/IEC 17020:2026 shall be issued to each customer following the successful decision on its transition. Annual visit dates, current year in the accreditation cycle, initial accreditation dates and UKAS reference number will remain unchanged.

The accreditation of Inspection Bodies that fail to transition by the deadline of 27th March 2029 will cease to be valid from that date. Their accreditation will be listed as 'suspended' for up to six months until such time that they can demonstrate to UKAS that they meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17020:2026.

UKAS transition process for applicant Inspection Bodies

Inspection Bodies that have already applied to UKAS for accreditation to ISO/IEC 17020:2012 but have not yet had their accreditation granted may continue with the accreditation process to ISO/IEC 17020:2012 (following grant of accreditation these Inspection Bodies will need to transition to ISO/IEC 17020:2026 before 27th March 2029). However, if the assessment has not been conducted by 1st January 2027, then the applicant will need to change to, and be assessed against, the requirements of ISO/IEC 17020:2026, with any mandatory findings being satisfactorily addressed before accreditation can be granted.

Inspection Bodies that are considering applying to UKAS for accreditation under ISO/IEC 17020 should develop their systems and processes in accordance with ISO/IEC 17020:2026. Those that have already prepared an application against the 2012 version can still submit it, but should be aware of the dates specified above, and that they will then need to transition to the 2026 version before the deadline.

UKAS will not accept any new applications for accreditation to ISO/IEC 17020:2012 after 1st September 2026.

Further details and contact

Further details on the transition of ISO/IEC 17020:2026, including how to obtain a copy of the new version, can be found in the [Inspection Body Accreditation](#) customer area of the UKAS website.

Queries regarding the transition process should be directed to the Inspection Body's appointed Assessment Manager.