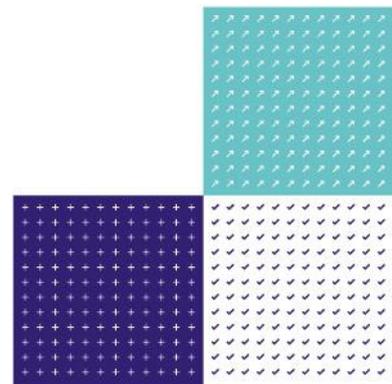


TPS 68

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UKAS Policy on Accreditation of Infrequently Performed Conformity Assessment Activities



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Changes since last edition

Reference to UKAS publication LAB 39 updated to GEN 4.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The international standard ISO/IEC 17011 requires accreditation bodies to make publicly available detailed information about its assessment and accreditation processes. This publication has been produced to provide such information with respect to the UKAS policy on requirements for assessing infrequently performed conformity assessment activities and maintaining them within scopes of accreditation.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all conformity assessment bodies (CABs) that undertake infrequently performed conformity assessment activities including testing, calibration, inspection and certification. In addition, it relates to supporting activities and processes where demonstration of competence is necessary to maintain accreditation, e.g. operating under a flexible scope of accreditation (see GEN 4), expressing opinions and interpretations related to ISO/IEC 17025 (see LAB 13), etc.

3. Terminology

- 3.1 *Infrequently performed conformity assessment activity* – An accredited activity (e.g. test, calibration, inspection, certification, etc) which is not routinely performed by a CAB and hence poses a challenge in maintaining competence and capability for that activity, and in demonstrating that on-going competence and capability to UKAS.

4. Policy

- 4.1 In order for UKAS to maintain conformity assessment activities on a CAB's scope of accreditation, each activity must be assessed at least once within the 4-year accreditation cycle (the actual frequency will depend upon a number of risk factors).
- 4.2 It is recognised that the CAB may not routinely conduct all of the conformity assessment activities for which it holds accreditation and therefore may have limited examples available to enable assessment in any particular year; this could include the availability of specific activities to be witnessed at assessment. Where this occurs it may be possible to postpone the assessment to the following year to ensure 'live' work can be witnessed. If no 'live' work is planned for the infrequently used activity during assessments then at some point during the cycle the CAB must demonstrate performance of 'mock' work sufficient for the assessment team to determine on-going competence in the activity.
- 4.3 When assessing the on-going competence of a CAB in performing infrequently used activities, particular attention will be paid to how the CAB demonstrates that it has:
- a) maintained up-to-date staff competence;
 - b) appropriate equipment/facilities available for conducting the activity;
 - c) suitable Quality Assurance activities in place as appropriate (e.g. participation in PT schemes)
- 4.4 Where it transpires that an infrequently used activity has not been employed at all during an accreditation cycle then the UKAS Assessment Manager or Lead Assessor will discuss with the CAB's management whether there remains a benefit in maintaining that activity on their accredited scope (consideration should be given to the on-going cost of maintaining the activity within the accredited scope). However, where an infrequently used activity has not been employed at all during two successive cycles then the expectation shall be that accreditation for that activity is withdrawn.

5. References

- 5.1 ISO/IEC 17011 Conformity assessment - General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies