

Choosing a UKAS Accredited Supplier

Congratulations, you have chosen to use a UKAS accredited supplier for your conformity assessment needs. This means that you can have confidence in your supplier's ability to meet your needs and deliver their services with competence, impartiality and independence in accordance with recognised international standards and best practise.

Using a UKAS accredited organisation as a supplier is a key step in ensuring confidence in your supplier chain, however there are a few things you may want to consider to be sure you are making exactly the right choice for your business.

- Check the organisations UKAS Schedule of Accreditation:
 - Organisations are not always accredited for every service they provide. The UKAS Schedule of Accreditation provides the details of the technical activities that an organisation is accredited to perform so check that the service you need is listed as accredited before you make your final decision.
 - When requesting laboratory services, such as testing or calibration, check the organisations Schedule of Accreditation to ensure that they are accredited for the analytical range and uncertainty of measurement (calibration only) you require.
- Check your contractual documentation with the supplier:
 - Make sure you are getting a UKAS accredited service. Some organisations offer similar unaccredited services so specify upfront that you require UKAS accredited services.
- Know the difference between accreditation and certification:

In short, accreditation determines the technical competence of an organisation whereas, certifications such as ISO 9001, focus on requirements for a quality management system. Organisations that provide conformity assessment services can have accredited certification to ISO 9001 for their quality management systems, but this should not be interpreted to mean that the organisation has demonstrated the technical competence to produce valid and accurate evaluations. In this case, UKAS accreditation is the only way to be confident that your supplier is technically competent.

Once you've chosen your UKAS accredited supplier, we advise that you regularly check their accredited status via [verify.ukas.com](https://www.verify.ukas.com) to make sure they are maintaining that accreditation.



Some FAQs that might help...

● When does UKAS accreditation expire?

UKAS accreditation is granted for a 4-year period. During this time, accreditation is continually monitored by UKAS and renewed in the fourth year following a full reassessment. The vast majority of organisations renew their accreditation before the expiry date. Accreditation can be removed by UKAS at any point if compliance with the standards is not maintained so it should not be assumed that an organisation's accreditation will remain valid until the expiry date. Therefore, expiry dates should not be taken into consideration when selecting an accredited supplier.

● When are UKAS accreditation certificates reissued?

UKAS accreditation certificates are only reissued in the following situations:

- Name of the accredited organisation changes;
- Standard to which the organisation is accredited changes;
- Other information present on the certificate needs to be updated;
- UKAS updates the format or branding of the certificate.

You should not expect your supplier to send you a new certificate upon renewal of accreditation.

● What does the term flexible scope on a Schedule of Accreditation mean?

In some sectors, or for some services, organisations need their accreditation to be flexible to handle issues such as the rate of change in technical standards or the

pace of introduction of new products to the market. In these cases, UKAS assesses the competence of an organisation to manage the technical challenges that their sector presents to them. Where they are found to be competent, they are granted a flexible scope of accreditation. A flexible scope does not have defined boundaries and therefore, does not provide the organisation with the ability to provide any service accredited. However, if the service you require falls within the boundaries of the flexible scope you can be confident you will be getting a UKAS accredited service.

● My supplier is accredited but not by UKAS, is their accreditation valid?

Possibly. Whilst UKAS is the only recognised accreditation body in the UK, there are many national accreditation bodies around the world that are recognised and deemed equivalent to UKAS. This is managed through international Multi-Lateral Agreements (MLA) or Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA). UKAS is a signatory to all international MLAs and MRAs related to accreditation, if your organisation is accredited by an organisation listed on the **IAF MLA** (for Certification) or **ILAC MRA** (for all other types of conformity assessment), then you can be assured that the accreditation is recognised. If the accreditation body is not listed then it is not internationally recognised, and you cannot have the same level of confidence in the competence, impartiality and independence of the supplier as you can if it was UKAS accredited.

