

United Kingdom Accreditation Service: Supporting international trade

Confidence in the quality of goods and services bought and sold is an essential element of international trade. The mutual acceptance of test results and certificates plays an important part in building and maintaining this confidence. The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) has a key role in ensuring that the organisations that carry out testing, inspection and certification can be relied upon.

Background

- UKAS is the Government appointed National Accreditation Body tasked with assessing and accrediting the competence of organisations that carry out all types of measurement and evaluation activities.
- UKAS is a BEIS partner organisation and a key part of the UK Quality Infrastructure.
- Organisations accredited by UKAS range from very small test laboratories to multinational certification bodies.
- The ultimate purpose of accreditation is to provide confidence for consumers, purchasers and regulators in the goods and services they use.
- UKAS accredits over 3000 organisations and a recent study showed that accreditation contributes at least £1bn pa to the UK economy.
- UKAS is recognised as one of the leading accreditation bodies worldwide and, via mutual recognition agreements, makes a major contribution to UK trade.



Accredited testing ensures that British food and drink can be exported worldwide

Supporting European and international trade

- Certificates issued by UKAS and UKAS accredited organisations are recognised across Europe and internationally through UKAS' membership of:
 - European co-operation of Accreditation (EA)
 - International Laboratory Accreditation Co-operation (ILAC)
 - International Accreditation Forum (IAF)
- The international recognition of accreditation means that goods and services do not need to be retested, inspected or certified for each new export market
- Accreditation is referenced in the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement and the mutual recognition of accreditation is an important part of agreements between trading partners.



Accredited certification ensures that the quality of British products is recognised internationally