

CertCheck - Database of Accredited Certification

Frequently Asked Questions for Certification Bodies

Data Security

What data security/assurance measures are being taken to protect the data in the system?

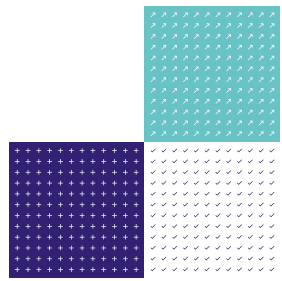
- A range of measures are being taken to protect the data and provide assurance to all users of the system. These include:
 - All vendors being certified to ISO 27001 by a certification body accredited by an IAF member accreditation body.
 - All data stored and backed up on servers hosted in the UK
 - UK-GDPR compliance
 - 2millisecond Bot Protection
 - CertCheck activity is monitored by Amazon Web Services AI Systems
 - 2 Factor Authentication for sign in
 - Minimum password complexity requirements
 - Regular PEN Testing

How is CB client data protected from being mined?

- In addition to the security measures listed above:
 - The CertCheck database is verification only – not search and find – searcher needs company name + location or Cert No. + CB name to verify
 - No lists of clients can be downloaded from the system
 - No contact email or phone details for clients stored on system
 - Limit of 3 searches per 24 hours on public search
 - User accounts have 10 searches per 24 hours limit
 - Expiry date of certificates not listed on site
 - 'Auto Suggest' on company name search requires full word before populating – only 10 suggestions made and only show company name and location.

How are any potential GDPR issues of sole traders who are clients of CBs managed?

- No email addresses or phone numbers of clients are stored on the system and the full address of certified organisation is not presented on searching.



How long is client data kept in the CertCheck database?

- Full client data is kept as long as the certificate remain valid. Historic information is anonymised by removing the client company name, but other details are kept for history trends for up to 10 years.

Some of my clients need some/all of their information to be maintained as confidential, how is this dealt with in the system?

- Where there is a clear need for details of the client to be kept confidential (i.e. customer involved in matters of national security) then the client can be marked as confidential. Any searches for this client will direct the searcher to contact the CB.

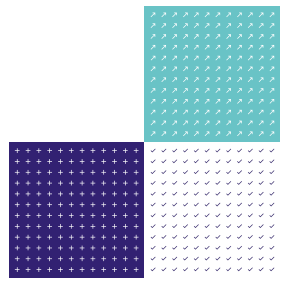
What kind of metrics will CBs get about markets and how is our data protected when sharing?

- CBs will get self-service access to market metrics which show the number of certified companies for a given standard/geo-graphic region and also where applicable that CBs market share. It will not detail other CBs market share nor will any details of the CBs clients be shared through the market metrics.

Operation of the Database

What are the expectations on time taken to upload data and what will happen if a deadline is missed?

- There are two contractual timeframes for uploading of information.
 - Initially 90 days from being given access to complete the initial upload. For all existing CBs this will be the period from Sept/Oct 2021 until public launch. This period may be extended as the system is new and issues may occur during this period. If you encounter issues you should inform UKAS as soon as possible. For a new CB gaining accreditation they will have 90 days to upload their data following access being given, which will be at grant of accreditation.
 - Once the CB has a route to upload the data, it will be expected to maintain that up to date at least once every 4 weeks.
 - UKAS wants all CBs to upload data promptly and to maintain it up to date. However, we appreciate that there may be circumstances that cause data to be uploaded late on occasion. This should not present a problem. However, prolonged, or repeat instances of data not being uploaded/maintained will be dealt with through contractual obligations.



What are the options for uploading data and who does the upload?

- The CBs data is uploaded by themselves to CertCheck either via the portal or through an automated interface. Once uploaded, the data will be immediately available for searching.
- There are currently 4 routes to upload data to the database:
 - Manual update into data fields provided on the portal
 - Upload of a spreadsheet or XML/CSV file through the portal (will require a one-off data mapping exercise to be completed)
 - File Transfer Protocol (FTP) – Automation of the spreadsheet/XML/CSV upload – requires one-off data mapping and for the file to be placed on a server that the database can access to automatically take the information for upload.
 - Application Programming Interface (API) – Automated interface between the CBs system and CertCheck. Will require IT resources for coding.

What data would CBs need to upload to the database?

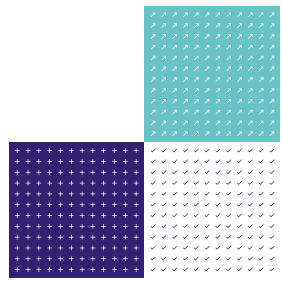
- There are two types of data that need for be uploaded for each certification; Mandatory and Voluntary:
 - Mandatory
 - Cert Number
 - Unique Identifier
 - Client Name
 - Client Addresses (HO and Sites)
 - Standard
 - Scope
 - Sector Scheme (where applicable)
 - Status of Certification
 - Certification Dates
 - Initial
 - Recertification
 - Expiry
 - Voluntary
 - IAF Code/Industry Sector
 - Trading Name
 - Additional Language Names
 - Client Website
 - Confidential Client Marker

Do copies of certificates need to be uploaded to CertCheck?

- No. PDF or image copies of certificates are not required to be uploaded to the CertCheck database.

Will separate offices for CBs be able to upload their own data set?

- Yes. Although the mechanism for uploads will need to be consistent between all offices.



What are the different language options for the database?

- There is the option for 2 languages to be used for some of the certificate data (company name, trading name), and this can be in a non-Latin alphabet. UKAS would expect one of the languages used to be English.

Is their gatekeeping on the data uploads?

- Yes, data is checked for validity at upload including whether the scope is covered by the accreditation held. Failed uploads will be notified.

What support is available for CBs when building their interface?

- Support for CBs in building their initial interface with the system and any subsequent issues with uploading data will be provided by our agent Quality Trade. This is done under contract to UKAS so there is not charge from Quality Trade to the CB for this support.

What support is available for CBs for any issues identified during the routine operation of CertCheck?

- Support for CBs will be provided by our agent Quality Trade. This is done under contract to UKAS so there is not charge from Quality Trade to the CB for this support. Support will be requested by email and if discussion is required a time agreed to meet (virtually).

Are there any expectations on timeframe from an organisation being certified to the data being updated in CertCheck?

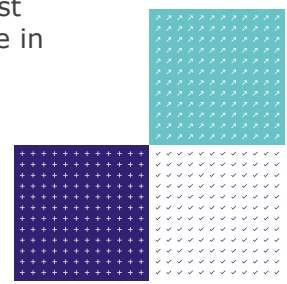
- UKAS would encourage that new certifications are updated as soon as possible. However, as long as any new certifications are included in the next scheduled update by the CB, this would be covered by contractual obligations.

Are there any expectations on timeframe from a client having its certification removed to the data being updated in CertCheck?

- To avoid the potential for an invalid certificate to be considered valid, UKAS would encourage that any removal of certifications is updated as soon as possible. However as long as any removed certifications updated within 7 days by the CB then this would cover the contractual obligations.

Why is all data being refreshed at regular intervals rather than just updating the changes?

- We have had feedback that users wishing to verify a certification can be concerned as to whether a certificate issued some time ago is still valid. This is the case even when it can be view on an online system. By presenting a 'last confirmed' date with the certification information this gives extra confidence in the certificate's validity to the user.



Will there be any link to other systems such as IAF CertSearch?

- Yes. Where there are arrangements in place the CB will be able to choose whether it wants its data to be onwards uploaded to other databases such as IAF CertSearch. A link between the UKAS database and IAF CertSearch will be present at the launch of the UKAS database.

Trusted Parties

What types of organisations could be a 'trusted party' referred to in UKAS Agreement Schedule C?

- There are several different types of trusted parties who it is envisaged will want to make use of the UKAS database. Generally, they will be organisations with a legitimate need to verify many certificates.

What is the reason for 'trusted parties' having access to CertCheck?

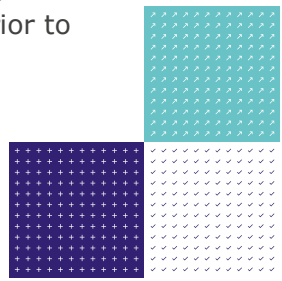
- This is expected to provide benefits to organisations holding accredited certification or the wider conformity assessment sector. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Organisations providing supplier verification services who want to check self-declared certification against an authoritative source.
 - Regulators who want to verify the credentials of organisations they are involved in regulating/inspecting. Often to support a risk-based approach.
 - Sector scheme owners running their own databases who may want to verify self-declared claims of accredited certification or who may want to 'feed' their database from the UKAS database when accredited certification is specific to their sector scheme (e.g. National Highways Sector scheme NHSS).

What access does a trusted party get to CertCheck and the data within?

- A Trusted Party gets no greater access to data than a public user would do, the information and functionality that is available to them is the same. However, their need to verify a larger number of certificates or to verify them in an automated manner means they may need to have a different interface and access will always be subject to stringent contractual terms.

How will arrangements with trusted parties be scrutinised to ensure there is no conflict of interest?

- Where UKAS wishes to enter into an agreement with a trusted party. They will first negotiate a contract between UKAS and that trusted party. This contract will be risk assessed and any identified conflicts of interest will be scrutinised by the UKAS Policy Advisory Council (PAC), or other specific committee set up for this purpose. The PAC or other committee will be externally chaired and contain representatives from several stakeholder groups including UKAS customer bodies (e.g. CB trade associations). All Customers using the UKAS database will be informed of any arrangement that UKAS enters into with a trusted party, prior to that arrangement being in place.



General Questions

Can CBs use this system to meet the 17021 requirements about making information on who they certify publicly available?

- Yes. The CB would still have to respond to any queries that come to them as well, but CertCheck can be used to help meet those requirements.

Will this system replace the need for the annual metrics questionnaire from UKAS?

- Yes. Although UKAS will still ask for other information, e.g. changes to key staff in a pre-assessment questionnaire/annual declaration but the need to provide data on the number of certifications issued by standard and geography will no longer be required.

Is there any cost involved in interfacing with CertCheck?

- There will be no charges from UKAS and the costs of our agent Quality Trade will be covered by UKAS. However, any costs CBs incur with their own IT support companies will need to be covered by them.

What, if any, marketing will UKAS be doing to CB clients in CertCheck?

- UKAS will not be using the client information in CertCheck for marketing purposes. Also, as the system does not have contact names, emails or phone numbers it is of limited use for this purpose. We will be marketing and advertising CertCheck and your clients may be contacted where UKAS has their contacts through other means.

Why is UKAS limiting CertCheck to Management System Certification in first instance?

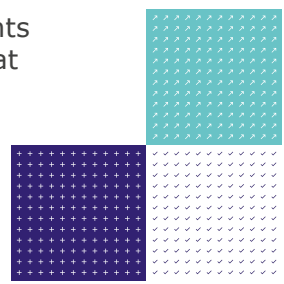
- This is being done as Management System Certification is felt to be easier initially to implement as the number of variables on scopes is much smaller than product certification.

What are the timelines for CB interaction with CertCheck?

- CertCheck should be ready for CB interaction from around October 2021. We will need some CB support for testing in September 2021. Between October 2021 and January 2022 CBs will need to build their initial interface and upload their initial data. These dates are subject to change if there are delays in the project delivery or unforeseen issues with CB data uploads.

How will CertCheck be used to support UKAS assessments?

- UKAS Assessment Managers will have access to the information on the clients that are certified by a CB. This information will be used in the same way that



existing information declared each year by CBs is used. This information will be used to identify areas of focus for the assessment, as well as to plan appropriate sampling over the accreditation cycle.

