

What is a Blended Audit?

A blended audit is a hybrid approach to auditing, introduced by the UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service). It combines on-site visits with remote assessments, offering several advantages:

- Improved Audit Efficiency: Audits can be conducted more effectively.
- Minimized Business Disruption: Reduces interruptions to daily operations.
- Environmental Benefits: Lowers the environmental impact by reducing travel.
- Health and Safety: Decreases the risk of spreading illnesses like Covid-19.

The blended audit model emerged in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the shift, the quality of certification audits has remained intact, blending on-site and remote methods effectively.

Positive feedback around these has shown a preference for this less intrusive method, which also saves time and allows businesses to operate as usual during the audit process. UKAS has issued detailed guidelines on balancing on-site and remote elements, and Centre for Assessment adheres to these when conducting audits.

What does this change to our audits?

Whilst some audits will continue to take place 100% on site, we can also provide a blended approach, which allows for some elements of the audit to take place remotely. Clients will be consulted and must agree to a blended audit before the audit begins.

How Do Blended Audits Work?

A blended audit consists of two parts:

1. On-Site: At the client's premises, with the auditor and the client in attendance
2. Remote: Elements of the audit take place remotely using IT tools to remotely audit the client's system.

The audit process remains comprehensive, ensuring no compromise on service quality. The percentage of the audit that can take place remotely varies from client to client, and this will be considered as part of your audit plan, before the audit takes place. We will take into account the risk levels associated with the sector you operate in, the standard you are being audited against, and the availability of technology to facilitate the remote portion of your audit, in line with the UKAS guidance around the percentage allowed to be conducted remotely.

What if I have no Physical Locations?

More and more businesses are moving to a completely remote model with no physical locations, which can make on-site audits unfeasible. In this case, the feasibility of on-site assessments will be discussed with the Client Services Team and the auditor, who can seek guidance from our technical team to ensure all risk have been considered and an effective audit can take place.

Can my audit continue to be fully remote?

While fully remote assessments were crucial during the pandemic, there are elements of the audit that are best done at the client's premises to ensure compliance with the standard, which is why UKAS now mandates a mix of on-site and remote evaluations. For most clients, this will mean that at least a proportion of the audit will need to take place on site, except in exceptional cases where on-site visits are impossible, such as those with no physical locations, where all staff work remotely.