

British Hallmarking Council

Application for an Assay Office to operate a Sub-Office.

Guidance Notes

It is the policy of the Council to permit an Assay Office to operate sub-offices subject to an authorisation process and compliance with conditions. A policy document was published on 15th February 2002 and is available from the website at <http://www.bis.gov.uk/britishhallmarkingcouncil>.

A sub-office is defined as involving the extension of the premises of an Assay Office in relation to some or all of its operations to other premises probably within or adjacent to one manufacturer's or importer's premises, or an operation which serves more than one customer, or an operation which is carried out in a mobile facility. A sub-office is for all intents and purposes an extension of a main office.

Authorisation for an Assay Office to extend its premises is granted pursuant to Section 13(2)(e) of the Hallmarking Act 1973.

Whilst the decision to grant or refuse an application is taken by the Council the administration of the approval scheme is delegated to the Applications Committee.

An Assay Office applying to operate a sub-office must be accredited to ISO 17025 for the scope of its activities by an internationally recognised accreditation body, the equivalent of UKAS in the UK. In addition certification of its quality system should be extended to cover sub-offices and should be achieved through an accredited certification body. Prior to application, a system of working of the sub-office must have been decided on and a summary of the risks together with the steps to mitigate those risks prepared for review by the AC.

The application for a sub-office must include:

- an introduction to the application explaining the key points and the nature of the application;
- a completed application form;
- a plan of the proposed sub-office and immediate area;
- a summary of the risks described above

After approval by the Council of the application on the attached form an application should be made to the selected certification and accreditation bodies. Work on preparing procedure manuals for the sub-office and physical arrangements should commence, ensuring they adequately deal with the control of the proposed system. Initial reports from this stage should be submitted to the Applications Committee for permission to commence operations. The AC reserves the right to undertake further assessment or inspection beyond that conducted by the accreditation and certification bodies

if felt necessary. Interim arrangements to ensure output from the sub-office is compliant during the period before formal certification and accreditation is obtained must be demonstrated.

The following factors must be specifically addressed in the procedure manuals/documentation: -

- Physical separation from the manufacturer when co-located.
- Manufacturer's declaration of understanding of the role, purpose and independence of the sub-office.
- The name of the organisations providing accreditation and certification and a confirmation that they are internationally recognised as equivalent to UKAS in the UK
- Security arrangements for the punches.
- Cultural issues/remoteness

The Application Committee will carry out periodic reviews. These will involve an assessment of surveillance reports from the accreditation and certification bodies, together with internal audit reports. However arrangements must be in place such that authorised members of Council, the accreditation and certification bodies, and the Queen's Assay Master may conduct inspections and audits without notice.

Each year the Assay Office must report on the operation of the sub-office to the Council in a manner determined by the Council.

In considering an application the Council will decide whether the operation of a sub-office will have a material adverse effect upon the viability of operation of the main office and the adequacy of hallmarking facilities in the UK

British Hallmarking Council

Application Form for authorisation for an Assay Office to extend premises pursuant to Section 13(2)(e) of the Hallmarking Act 1973

A Assay Office	
1. Background information	
1.1 Name and address of applicant Assay Office.	
1.2. Name and Status of person making this application.	
1.3. What activities does the applicant propose carrying on in the sub-office the subject of this application, e.g. marking, assaying?	
1.4. If assaying is to be carried out in the sub-office, will this be for indicative purposes only e.g. homogeneity checks, or will formal pass/fail tests on fineness be performed?	
2. Sub-Office	
2.1. Address of proposed sub-office	
2.2. Will this serve a single or multiple customers?	
2.3. What is the nature of the premises in which the sub-office is situated?	
2.4. On what basis will you own/operate the site	
2.5. What arrangements will the host company make to ensure that its staff behave with propriety in their dealings with sub-office staff?	
2.6. What arrangements does the applicant intend to put in place to ensure that the area to be used as a sub-office is discrete, secure and physically separate from the remainder of the premises?	
2.7. Will there be a secure punch safe at the sub-office similar to that used in the main office? If not, what other arrangements are proposed?	

2.8. Describe in full any rights of access to the proposed sub-office held by a third party including a landlord or customer and any agent or employee of the same.	
2.9. If the sub-office will be involved in component marking what are the names of the customers to whom this service is provided?	
3. Staff to be employed at the sub-office	
3.1. What arrangements are proposed to ensuring the independence of staff employed at the sub-office from any customers and/or manufacturer's staff with whom they will come into contact?	
4. Quality Assurance	
4.1. Which organisation will certify the quality management system covering the proposed sub-office?	
4.2. Which organisation will accredit the processes for assaying and hallmarking at the proposed sub-office?	
4.3. What arrangements are proposed to ensure accurate output from the sub-office between approval to commence operations and receipt of formal accreditation and certification?	
5. Impact	
5.1. Do you confirm that the authorisation of the sub-office will not have a material adverse effect upon the viability of operation of the main Assay Office and its ability to service its other customers, taking into account the effect of other existing or proposed sub-office operations?	
6. Conditions	
6.1. Have you read and complied with the requirements set out in the notes to this application?	
6.2. Do you understand that it is your responsibility to inform the council if there is any material change to the information provided in this application?	

Declarations:

A Assay Office

The applicant confirms that all the information provided concerning its application is true and complete to the best of its knowledge and belief and acknowledges that any authorisation granted by the Council may be revoked in the event of any material inaccuracy in this information, if any conditions of any authorisation are breached or not met, or if there is a material change of circumstances in relation to such information.

The applicant confirms that it will pay any fees or charges determined by the Council in respect of this Application.

Signed.....

Date.....

Position.....

B Host Company (to be completed if sub-office co-located with another business)

.....(Name of company) confirms that it understands that the proposed sub-office carries out its activities independently from this company and that no attempt will be made to interfere with the proper and lawful operation of the sub-office, nor will any employee or sub contractor enter the office without prior permission except in an emergency to protect life or property.

Signed.....

Date.....

Position.....

A plan of the proposed sub-office must be attached to this application together with the proposed system of work and summary of risks.