

VAT ONLINE

New requirements

By 1st April 2012, all VAT-registered businesses who currently file paper VAT returns must register online with HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). From that date:

- all VAT returns must be submitted online; and
- payments of VAT must also be made electronically.

Features of VAT online

Using VAT online does offer several advantages over the traditional paper-based returns:

1. Security – all transactions are 100% secure;
2. Speed – the registration and enrolment for VAT Online only takes a few minutes and you can then submit your return instantly without waiting for passcodes etc;
3. Convenience – the service is available 24/7 365 days per year – even we can't claim to be that flexible!
4. Accuracy – automatic online checks help to reduce the chance of errors; and
5. Reliability – once it is sent, it is sent. No delays with the post, and you will receive a printed submission acknowledgement to complete your records.

Register for VAT online

The registration for VAT online is done on HM Revenue and Customs website at <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/online/new.htm>.

To register, you will require the following information:

1. your VAT registration number
2. the postcode of your principal place of business (if you're an overseas business, use postcode AB10 1ZP)
3. your effective date of registration (EDR) for VAT
4. the final month of the last VAT return you submitted
5. the 'Box 5' figure from the last VAT return you submitted

You will be able to find the first three pieces of information on your VAT4 (Certificate of registration). The fourth and fifth are on the last VAT return you submitted. If you cannot find your effective date of registration, use this link to email HMRC:

<https://online.hmrc.gov.uk/shortforms/form/OSHVAT>

Alternatively, **we are happy to handle the whole registration process for you**. This will often be the most convenient method, particularly if we already handle the submission of your VAT returns.

Paying your VAT electronically

When you submit your returns online, you must also make your VAT payments “electronically”. This will give you up to seven extra days in which to submit your return and make payment. You must ensure that HMRC have cleared funds by the extended date.

There are various ways to pay including Direct Debit, online and telephone banking. Alternatively, you can pay at a bank or building society using a bank giro credit, which you can obtain from HMRC.

Contact us for further information on the requirements for online filing. Alternatively, there is a lot of information available online at www.hmrc.gov.uk.

If you have any questions about the issues covered in this update or if you would like to discuss anything in more detail, we are here to help. Contact us on 01856 872983 or by e:mail at enquiries@ajbscholes.co.uk.