



VAT Online

How to Use the Test Services

1. Introduction

This document provides information for Software Developers who want to make test submissions to the VAT Online test services.

It should be used in conjunction with the Government Gateway Submission Protocol. This document describes the mechanics of sending a message through the Government Gateway and is available at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/schemas/GatewayDocumentSubmissionProtocol_V3.1.pdf.

2. Contact the Software Developers Support Team

Contact the SDS Team and provide the following details:

- Company Name & Address
- Contact Name(s), Telephone Number(s) & Email Address(es)

These will be registered and you will be given a unique 'Vendor ID' and the credentials necessary to access the test services. Including your Vendor ID in XML messages for both Live and Test submissions will allow us to provide you with support and feedback. Credentials for VAT returns are allocated in blocks of 13 and each VRN corresponds with a coded response for each successful submission.

3. Submitting Test Messages

When you are ready to test your product, you should arrange to upload your XML messages to one of the test sites listed below. A sample VB Injector tool is currently available. Please email us at sdsteam@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk to obtain a copy. This tool demonstrates how an application should interact with the Government Gateway to send and receive messages over the Internet.

4. Local Test Service (LTS)

This is a web application that replicates *most* of the functionality found in the TPVS environment. This includes schema validation, business rule validation and IR Mark checking. For VAT the IRmark algorithm will be checked when an IRmark is provided; prior to April 2010 the LTS will not enforce the inclusion of an IRmark. Support for the GovTalk protocol and attachment checking is not included. Note that this application is a framework, which is configured by the LTS Update Manager (LTS-UM) to support selected services; without configuration the LTS does not support any service "out-of-the-box".

As the Local Test Service is downloaded to your local computer it is unable to reference HMRC systems. This means it is unable to replicate referential data and has a number of idiosyncrasies which will be addressed by the introduction of the third party validation service. Please note that:

- You must include period start and period end elements in your submission to LTS. These elements are optional in submissions to other test services and in live, however as LTS cannot reference these from any other location, they must be included in the submission.
- The VAT Registration Number included in your submission to LTS will not be included in the message element of the response.

5. Third Party Validation Service (TPVS)

This performs validation of the <Body> of the submission against the VAT Schema and Business Rules.

Test submissions should be made to the following URL:

- <https://www.tpvs.hmrc.gov.uk/HMRC/VATDEC>

Responses will be returned based on the outcome of your submission indicating if it has passed or failed validation. Please note that submissions sent direct to the TPVS site **will not** have the GovTalkHeader fully validated.

6. Vendor Single Integrated Proving Service (VSIPS)

This allows Software Developers to make test submissions through the Government Gateway Test Site to TPVS, mirroring the 'Live' Internet service.

Test submissions should be made to the following URL:

- <https://secure.dev.gateway.gov.uk/submission>

You must use the unique credentials provided by the SDS Team when submitting test messages through VSIPS. These should be included within the submission as follows:

<SenderID>as advised by the SDS Team</SenderID>
<Value>as advised by the SDS Team</Value>
<Key Type="VATRegNo">as advised by the SDS Team</Key>
<URI>your 4 digit vendor ID</URI>

This service first validates the GovTalkHeader against the GovTalk Schema. The test submission is then automatically routed to the TPVS service where the <Body> of the submission is validated against the VAT Schema and the business rules. Response messages will be returned based on the outcome.

You **must** use this test service if you wish to apply for recognition for your product.

When you submit a return to the Government Gateway, whether to the 'live' service or to VSIPS, a 'conversation' should take place between your application and the Gateway. This is covered in detail in the UK Online Government Gateway Document Submission Protocol.

The steps in this process are as follows:

- You send the submission to the Gateway using the **submit_request** message
- The Gateway issues a **submit_acknowledgement** message containing a unique Correlation ID, this is confirmation that your submission was received and accepted by the Gateway. The Gateway then automatically forwards the submission to HMRC to be validated.
- You then use the Correlation ID to enquire to the Gateway about the status of the submission using a **submit_poll** message.
- You should continue to issue **submit_poll** messages to the Gateway until the Gateway is able to generate either a **submit_response** or a **submit_error** message. You may have to send this message a number of times before you receive a reply if the system is busy.
- If the return is successfully validated you will receive an XML **submit_response** message – it is important that you view and understand the information in this message.
- If the submission is rejected a **submit_error** message will be generated, advising of the reason of the rejection.
- If a **submit_response** or **submit_error** message is not received after a reasonable length of time, you should consider temporarily ending the conversation and starting at a later time using the same Correlation ID.
- Once a **submit_response** or **submit_error** message has been returned, a **delete_request** message should be issued to confirm that the Gateway 'conversation' can be closed. Issuing a **delete_request** does NOT prevent the original submission from being sent to the HMRC system.

7. Other useful information

- **Live Service URL**

The URL for live submission to VAT Online is:

<https://secure.gateway.gov.uk/submission>

- **Digital Certificates**

The VAT Online service does not support digital certificates

- **Technical Pack Updates**

All developers who have registered with the SDS Team will be advised by email of any updates to the Technical Pack. However, please check the website regularly to ensure that you are working to the most up to date versions available.

- **XML Tools**

To assist with your development, we strongly recommend that you use a commercially available XML Editing and Validation tool.