

## Beginner's guide to completing your VAT Return online

This guide provides you with some help when submitting your VAT Return online for the first time.

You'll also find some images of the online screens to help you familiarise yourself with the way it looks.

But remember, if you've chosen to use commercial software to submit your return, you'll need to speak to your software supplier about how to:

- complete your return using their software and
- what to do if you need any further help.

Before you can submit your VAT Returns online, you must have registered and enrolled for the VAT Online service. If you haven't done this yet, please go to the **'Beginners guide to signing up to use the VAT Online service'** at <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat/sign-up-for-online.pdf> for detailed instructions on how to sign-up.

The term 'registered' used here means signing up to use HMRC Online Services - it does not mean registering your business for VAT.

### Submitting your VAT Return online

Before you start, make sure you have your figures to hand - you will need these to complete your VAT Return online.

- 1 Go to <http://www.online.hmrc.gov.uk> and you'll be taken to the screen below.

## Welcome to HMRC Online services

### Existing users

Please enter your User ID and password, then click the 'Login' button below.

**Please note:** Fields are not case sensitive.

User ID:  ?

Password:  ?

Login

▶ [Digital Certificate user](#)

▶ [Lost User ID?](#)

▶ [Lost password?](#)

▶ [Lost or expired Activation PIN?](#)

▶ If you have lost both your User ID and password please contact the HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) [Online Services Helpdesk](#).

### New user

To register for online services please click the 'Register' button below.

Register

▶ [Digital Certificate user](#)

▶ [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)

▶ [Computer requirements](#)

▶ [View a demo of HMRC's services](#)

▶ [Registration and Enrolment process](#)

Go to the **'Existing users'** section on the left-hand side of the page and enter your User ID and password. Then click the **'Login'** button.

2 You'll be taken to the 'Your HMRC services' page. In the 'VAT' section - next to 'Submit a VAT return/set up VAT Direct Debit Instruction' - follow the 'Access service' link.

3 This takes you to the 'At a glance' page.

The screenshot shows the 'At a glance' page for VAT services. On the left is a green sidebar menu with the following items: 'At a glance', 'Submit a return', 'View submitted returns', 'Direct Debit', 'Customer feedback', and 'FAQs'. The main content area is titled 'At a glance' and contains several service cards, each with a question mark icon in the top right corner:

- Submit a return:** To submit a VAT return, please follow the link below. [Submit a return](#)
- View submitted returns:** To view details of your previously submitted returns, please follow the link below. **Please note:** If there has been a Transfer of Going Concern then you will not be able to view returns submitted prior to the date of transfer. [View submitted returns](#)
- Direct Debit:** To set up a Direct Debit Instruction to pay VAT due on your return, please follow the link below. If you wish to pay by this method please ensure that your bank will accept a Direct Debit Instruction for your nominated Bank account. [Set up Direct Debit Instruction](#)
- Change registration details:** To request a change to your registration details, please follow the link below. [Change registration details](#)
- Maintain email address:** You have not provided an email address to receive reminders to submit your VAT return. You can add an email address by following the link below. [Add email address](#)
- News:** The information displayed is relevant to the VAT Registration Number shown below. Please ensure your details are kept up to date. VAT Registration Number: XXX XXXX XX

To submit a return online, follow the 'Submit a return' link either from within the left-hand side on the main page, or from the left-hand menu.

**Tip:**

The first time you login to use the VAT Online service you will be asked to set up something known as 'Shared Secrets'. You only need to do this once. This acts as an additional security measure and protects against misuse. HMRC may use these details to help identify you, if for instance you telephone our Helpdesk for advice, or if you need to change your address or bank details online. HMRC will never ask you to disclose a complete Shared Secret, either over the phone or on the website. They will only ask for certain characters from one of your Shared Secrets.

Shared Secrets include:

- your first school
- your last school
- a memorable place
- a memorable date
- a memorable name

It is important that you remember the details you enter so make a note of them if you need to and keep them **secure**.

Tip:

If you want to pay any VAT due by Direct Debit, you can by setting up an online **Direct Debit Instruction** (DDI). If you want to set an online Direct Debit to pay the amount due on your next return, you will need to set it up online **before you submit your return** and **at least two bank working days before the return is due** when the due date falls on a weekday. (This gives time for your bank to process your DD instruction.) More information about how you set up an online Direct Debit and how it works, is at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/payingvat](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/payingvat)

To submit a return online straightaway click 'Next'.

4 On the next page follow the link for the VAT period that you want to submit a return for.

5 On the next page scroll down to be able to see boxes 1 to 9 of the online VAT Return. Simply fill in the return on-screen, as you would on paper. **You do not enter the box 3 and 5 figures into the online form.** The online form automatically adds up the figures you put in box 1 and 2 and produces the box 3 figure for you. And similarly, it subtracts your box 4 figure from the box 3 figure, to produce the box 5 figure.

You can - if you need to - save a partly completed VAT Return and come back to it later. Just remember to complete and submit it before the due date.

Tip:

If you need to insert a **negative amount**, put a minus (-) sign before the number.

Once you've entered your figures on the online return, click 'Next'.

6 You are now at the point where you need to check your figures and confirm that the details you've entered are correct. **(You can't amend the return online after you have submitted, so it's important to make sure it's right before you submit.)**

At this point, if you want to correct any errors, click 'Back'. You will be able to replace the figures that you've previously entered – but not yet submitted – with the correct ones.

#### VAT return figures

VAT due in this period on <b>sales</b> and other outputs (Box 1):	<b>£0.00</b>
VAT due in this period on <b>acquisitions</b> from other <b>EC Member States</b> (Box 2):	<b>£0.00</b>
Total VAT due ( <b>the sum of boxes 1 and 2</b> ) (Box 3):	<b>£0.00</b>
VAT reclaimed in this period on <b>purchases</b> and other inputs, (including acquisitions from the EC) (Box 4):	<b>£0.00</b>
Net VAT to be paid to HM Revenue & Customs or reclaimed by you ( <b>Difference between boxes 3 and 4</b> ) (Box 5):	<b>£0.00</b>
Total value of <b>sales</b> and all other outputs excluding any VAT. <b>Include your box 8 figure</b> (Box 6):	<b>£0.00</b>
Total value of <b>purchases</b> and all other inputs excluding any VAT. <b>Include your box 9 figure</b> (Box 7):	<b>£0.00</b>
Total value of all <b>supplies</b> of goods and related costs, excluding any VAT, to other <b>EC Member States</b> (Box 8):	<b>£0.00</b>
Total value of all <b>acquisitions</b> of goods and related costs, excluding any VAT, from other <b>EC Member States</b> (Box 9):	<b>£0.00</b>

#### Declaration

When you submit the above information, you are making a legal declaration that the information is correct and complete to the best of your knowledge and belief. A false declaration can result in prosecution.

[Back](#)

[Submit](#)

If you are confident that the figures you have entered and are now displayed on-screen are correct, then you can go ahead and submit your return online. To do this, click on '[Submit](#)'.

7 You will then see the '[Security Check](#)' page, where you need to re-enter your User ID and password, then click '[Submit](#)'.

You will then see a '[Submission receipt](#)' page (at very busy times there may be a short delay in this page being displayed). This tells you that HMRC has received your return safely and gives you a submission receipt number. It's a good idea to save or print a copy of the submission receipt page.

You can also print a copy of the submitted return once it's been confirmed as accepted by HMRC.

Select '[Close](#)' once you have printed or stored a copy.

Remember, if you submit online, then you must **pay your VAT electronically**. You can find out more information about this at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/payingvat](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/payingvat)

Tip:

HMRC **strongly recommends** you sign up to receive an email reminder so that they can let you know when your next VAT return is due; you won't receive any prompt otherwise.

You can do this on the '[At a Glance](#)' page. Follow the '[Add email address](#)' link from this page and then again on the following page from the '[VAT messages](#)' section. You can then enter an email address and click on '[Submit](#)'.

HMRC will then send you an email to that email address with a confirmation code. You should then follow the '[Confirm email address](#)' link from the same '[Maintain email address](#)' section above and input the confirmation code as directed.