

Online Service for Self-Assessment

How to use the test services

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Introduction

To get started you'll need to [register as a software developer](#). The Software Developers support team (SDST) will register your details, allocate a 4 digit vendor ID and issue the relevant credentials required to access the test services.

When you are ready to test your product, you should arrange to upload your XML messages to the Test Services detailed below.

Test Services

You must ensure that any XML documents you are submitting have been created in accordance with the most up to date schema and relate to the latest tax year supported by the test services. There are 3 services available for testing:

1. Local Test Service (LTS)

[LTS](#) is a locally installed application which performs validation on the Tax Return or 'Body' of the submission against the Self-Assessment (SA) Schema and Specification document.

Responses will be returned based on the outcome of your submission indicating if the file has passed or failed validation. The application **will not** perform a full validation on the GovTalkHeader.

2. Third Party Validation Service (TPVS)

This performs validation on the Tax Return or 'Body' of the submission against the SA schema and specification document.

Responses will be returned based on the outcome of your submission indicating if the submission has passed or failed validation. Remember that if you send submissions direct to the TPVS site, the service **will not** perform a full validation on the GovTalkHeader.

The submission must include the correct <Class> and <GatewayTest> elements as detailed in the non-form validation rules document. The test URLs are listed on page 6.

3. External Test Service (ETS)

This test service mirrors the actual 'Live' service, and allows you to submit test cases through the Transaction Engine test site to the HMRC TPVS.

ETS first validates the GovTalk Header against the GovTalk schema and checks that the credentials are valid for the service. The test submission is then automatically routed to the TPVS service where the Tax Return or 'Body' of the submission will be validated against the SA schema. Response are returned based on the outcome.

The URL for submissions to the ETS service is:

<https://test-transaction-engine.tax.service.gov.uk/submission>

The URL for the Poll messages to the ETS service is:

<https://test-transaction-engine.tax.service.gov.uk/poll>

When you submit a return to the Transaction engine, whether to the Live service or to ETS, a 'conversation' should take place between your application and the Transaction Engine. See [Transaction Engine: Document Submission Protocol](#) for further information.

Please ensure you use the correct Namespace, <Class> and <GatewayTest> in the XML you are submitting.

You must use the unique test credentials supplied by the SDS Team when submitting tests to ETS.

Test in Live

1. TIL submissions to Live Service

To send a 'Test in Live' (TIL) submission you should use the appropriate <Class> message as detailed in the tables below. This performs a validation check on the return including the user's Live Credentials but no data is sent to HMRC's back-end systems.

Post to URL https://transaction-engine.tax.gov.uk/submission		
The <GatewayTest> element should be set to '1' = <GatewayTest>0</GatewayTest>		
Submission Type		Class
Individual	No attachment	HMRC-SA-SA100-TIL
	With attachment	HMRC-SA-SA100-ATT-TIL
Partnership	No attachment	HMRC-SA-SA800-TIL
	With attachment	HMRC-SA-SA800-ATT-TIL
Trust	No attachment	HMRC-SA-SA900-TIL
	With attachment	HMRC-SA-SA900-ATT-TIL

2. TIL submissions to ETS

Post to URL https://test-transactionengine.tax.service.gov.uk/submission		
The <GatewayTest> element should be set to '1' = <GatewayTest>1</GatewayTest>		
Submission Type		Class
Individual	No attachment	HMRC-SA-SA100-TIL
	With attachment	HMRC-SA-SA100-ATT-TIL
Partnership	No attachment	HMRC-SA-SA800-TIL
	With attachment	HMRC-SA-SA800-ATT-TIL
Trust	No attachment	HMRC-SA-SA900-TIL
	With attachment	HMRC-SA-SA900-ATT-TIL

3. TIL submissions to TPVS

The <GatewayTest> element should be set to '1' = <GatewayTest>1</GatewayTest>		
Individual Post to URL https://test-transactionengine.tax.service.gov.uk/submission		
	No attachment	<class> HMRC-SA-SA100-TIL
	With attachment	<class> HMRC-SA-SA100-ATT-TIL
Partnership Post to URL https://www.tpvs.hmrc.gov.uk/HMRC/SA800		
	No attachment	<class> HMRC-SA-SA800-TIL
	With attachment	<class> HMRC-SA-SA800-ATT-TIL
Trust Post to URL https://www.tpvs.hmrc.gov.uk/HMRC/SA900		
	No attachment	<class> MRC-SA-SA900-TIL
	With attachment	<class> HMRC-SA-SA900-ATT-TIL

Other useful information

Acceptable Characters

The following is a list of characters accepted by the Self-Assessment online service:

- A to Z (upper case) and a to z (lower case)
- 0 to 9 (numeric)
- Space & ' () * , - . / @ £

The ampersand (&) and pound sign (£) characters must be transmitted in escaped format within your XML submission:

- & = &
- £ = £

If the “£” sign is properly encoded it can be sent in any of the fields where permitted. The characters “GBP” can be used as a substitute if preferred.

You must ensure that all characters contained within your XML submissions are in accordance with the patterns defined for each field within the Schema.

No other characters will be accepted. Submission which contain invalid characters will be rejected. This will usually return an error message identifying the offending character, however certain invalid characters may cause the submission to become stuck in a continuous ‘polling’ loop.

Important: If an escaped character appears within your XML at the end of a line, you must ensure that the complete entity is included in the same line of your XML, or on the next line if applicable. You must not truncate or split the escaped character otherwise this may invalidate your XML message.

Recognition

Upon completion of your testing you can apply for HMRC recognition of your product. If recognition is granted we will publish your product details on [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk). Please contact SDST for further information.

You must use VSIPS if you wish to apply for recognition.

XML validation

To assist in your development we strongly recommend that you use a commercially available XML editing and validation tool.

TPVS URLs

Individual - <https://www.tpvs.hmrc.gov.uk/HMRC/SA100>

<class>

HMRC-SA-SA100

HMRC-SA-SA100-TIL*

HMRC-SA-SA100-ATT**

HMRC-SA-SA100-ATT-TIL

Partnership - <https://www.tpvs.hmrc.gov.uk/HMRC/SA800>

<class>

HMRC-SA-SA800

HMRC-SA-SA800-TIL

HMRC-SA-SA800-ATT

HMRC-SA-SA800-ATT-TIL

Trust - <https://www.tpvs.hmrc.gov.uk/HMRC/SA900>

<class>

HMRC-SA-SA900

HMRC-SA-SA900-TIL

HMRC-SA-SA900-ATT

HMRC-SA-SA900-ATT-TIL

*TIL – Test in Live

**ATT – with Attachment