

Doing business in the UK: registering your international business in the UK

You are expanding your business to the UK and have already established the right structure for your UK operations. Here, we provide a straightforward and practical checklist to guide you through the compliance reporting steps of doing business in the UK.

1. Forming the Entity

Choose your trading name and decide on the type of entity. Sole traders and partnerships don't need to register with Companies House. Limited liability partnerships and limited companies do.

Considerations: Align your accounting year-end with international tax regimes, and decide on registered office, directors, and share capital.

2. Registering to Pay UK Tax

Sole traders and partnerships register with HMRC online for a unique tax reference (UTR). Limited liability partnerships and companies receive a UTR automatically.

Considerations: Apply for a UTR early for tax treaty and withholding tax purposes. Non-UK entities managed from the UK also need a UTR.

3. Registering for Payroll

Set up a payroll scheme with HMRC if you have UK-based employees. Offer a pension scheme and staff benefits. Provide a written contract and employer liability insurance.

Considerations: Follow UK employment laws. For seconded employees, consider visas, accommodation, and national insurance contributions.

4. Registering for Value Added Tax (VAT)

Register for VAT with HMRC when you start trading. VAT returns are usually submitted quarterly.

Considerations: You need a UK-based place of trade. Consider international VAT reporting requirements.

5. Bookkeeping

Implement an efficient bookkeeping system, preferably HMRC-approved cloud software, to meet reporting requirements and allow for growth.

Considerations: Ensure the nominal ledger set-up is correct for UK standards.

6. Statutory Accounts

Prepare basic accounts for sole traders and partnerships for tax returns. Limited liability partnerships and companies must file statutory financial statements with Companies House.

Considerations: Understand Companies House requirements and the transparency involved.

7. Audit Requirements

Large businesses or those subject to UK regulation may need a mandatory audit. Voluntary audits can also be beneficial.

Considerations: Consider UK tax governance and international reporting requirements in your budget.

8. Tax Return

File an annual UK tax return with HMRC. The requirements depend on your entity type.

Considerations: Align UK tax payments with international tax credit claims.

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9. Bank Account

Open a UK bank account to maintain financial clarity, especially for limited liability partnerships and companies.

Considerations: Ensure you have a UK-based signatory to facilitate the process.

Summary

This checklist is a general guide. For specific advice on international tax reporting, business investment, transfer pricing, R&D, data security, personal taxation, and legal issues, contact us.

How can Moore Kingston Smith help?

We understand that the mandatory registrations when setting up your UK business can be stressful and may not be your focus at the crucial point of international business expansion. For a no-obligation introductory conversation, please contact the [Entrepreneurial businesses team](#).

Contact us



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