

## Completing a Self-Assessment Tax Return

It is mainly the self-employed, higher paid employees, company directors and those that receive untaxed income that will need to fill in a tax return ("return"). This article will look at ways to make the experience as stress free as possible, outline some of the general considerations, and point out the common pitfalls.

We need to consider whether a paper return will be completed or if we are going to submit the return online through the Inland Revenue (IR) website. For those who prefer the internet route you need to log onto the [HMRC](#) site and register for the service. If the paper route is chosen make sure all the relevant pages are included and that a photocopy is made.

A check list is a good start point, identify what sources of income and gains you have for the year, for example employed, self-employed, bank interest etc and then consider what documents you have and need. The figures that are entered onto the return should ideally be verifiable and based on good records. A return should be prepared on the assumption that it will be investigated. Make sure all records are kept together for example P60's, P11d's, and bank and building society statements. The majority of tax investigations begin by looking at the standard of the taxpayer's record keeping.

There are a number of key dates in the tax filing calendar, if a paper return is being filed then it must be sent in by 30 September, following the tax year of assessment; if you want HMRC to collect any tax via your PAYE code (assuming you pay tax under PAYE) then you must submit your paper tax return by 31 October or your online tax return online by 30 December and owe no more than £3,000.

The deadline for filing your tax return, to avoid penalties and penalties is the 31<sup>st</sup> January following the tax year of assessment.

Common mistakes that are made include failure to complete a separate Supplementary Page for each individual employment; incorrect claim for Personal Pension Premiums, entering in pay but not the tax deducted, claiming Capital Expenditure instead of Capital Allowances and failure to complete all of the self-employed pages correctly. Other mistakes include a failure to sign and date the return, entering notes on the return such as "information to follow" instead of entering actual figures, attaching schedules and not including figures within the return, a yes' tick has been entered in one of the questions 1 to 9 on page 2 of the Tax Return but the supplementary page has not been forwarded with the Tax Return.

Starting the return earlier is advisable, this will highlight and rectify any information deficiencies, giving you time to access any advice and support, and ideally keep stress levels to a minimum