

Trade in Services

Key facts

- 1 The UK will be outside the European Single Market, including services
- 2 Local (host-country) rules and World Trade Organization (WTO) rules will apply and in some cases, service providers will need an EU presence
- 3 The EU-UK Free Trade Agreement is being negotiated and contains a chapter on trade in services

After the transition period ends, businesses will trade with the EU on the same conditions as businesses from other outside countries. This means that they cannot freely provide their services, and barriers can be expected. WTO rules (in particular the [General Agreement on Trade in Services – GATS](#)) will become the baseline trading terms for accessing the EU services market. Also, local rules will apply when doing business in EU countries (“host-country” rules). The forthcoming EU-UK trade deal could slightly improve these market access conditions.

To do

Anticipate the new commercial environment for trade in services and consider the following:

Laws

- Check what you need to do via the [Government checker tool](#)
- Read the Government’s [general factsheet on the services sector](#)
- Find out about changes to rules for your [specific sector](#): e.g. audiovisual, finance, transport, e-commerce etc., and whether you will need an EU presence
- Find out about the local rules in your customer’s country through the following links: [Government’s country-by-country guides](#), [EUGO Points of Single Contact](#), the [e-justice database](#)
- Professional qualifications, licences and authorisations
- Examples include health care professionals, pharmacists, architects, auditors, lawyers, engineers
- Find out if your qualifications and licences will be recognised in the country you are active in via the [Centre for Professional Qualifications](#) (0871 226 2850, 11p per minute) or the [national contact points in the EU member states](#) (scroll down the page)

Employment and mobility requirements

- Find out about [local immigration policies and work permits in EU member states](#)

Tax

- Consider the [VAT implications](#) of selling your services to the EU

What's next?

Until the end of the transition period, business visitors, contractual services suppliers and independent professionals can continue to do business, provide their services and send staff to work in the EU. The EU and the UK will have to agree a list of allowed business activities, access to markets for defined sectors, recognition of professions and skills levels, as well as conditions for investment. See chapters 9-10 in the [Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement](#) between the EU and Canada for examples of how the freedom to provide services and to set up a business could be replaced, and what the UK's access to the EU market could look like.

For more information visit [London Growth Hub](#), check out [other fact sheets](#) or email growthhub@london.gov.uk

Disclaimer

At the time of writing, the transition period ends on 31 December 2020, and the changes outlined in this fact sheet will occur from 1 January 2021. If that date slips, the changes will still happen, but at a later date. For latest updates go to www.gov.uk/transition

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