

CUSTOMS COURSES

The different trade organisations and their role in helping British businesses export.

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AS a member of the European single market, the UK has had a relatively simple time exporting to Europe over the past few decades. Even in the context of the last three year's debate about Brexit, the EU will likely remain the UK's largest export market, though of course geography has a large role to play in this. However, with growth in markets beyond the EU long outpacing that on the continent, the need for UK businesses to spread their wings and adopt a more global outlook is significant.

Whatever the consequences of the Brexit debate, one of its potential long-term and significant impacts could well be the renewed focus that it has brought to international trade in the UK. The government's 'Global Britain' strategy hasn't been in the news as much as it was in the earlier stages of the Brexit saga, yet it remains a sound one, especially if the UK ever does get into a situation whereby it could negotiate independent trade deals.

A consequence of this increased attention for non-EU markets has been a greater appreciation of the way world customs operates, though this has also been bought into sharper focus through the debate about the UK's future relationship with the EU. The thing that businesses already exporting beyond the EU already appreciate is that sending goods to these markets requires the completion of a fair amount of paperwork.

As with any administrative requirement, customs procedures and documentation

can initially appear daunting. Yet, as I've often written in this magazine, exporting is easy when you know how it's done.

ROLE OF THE WCO

In a previous edition of *Credit Management*, I mentioned the important role the World Trade Organization (WTO) plays in global trade. Another organisation our exporters will come into greater contact with over the next few years is the World Customs Organization (WCO).

Established in 1952, the WCO represents 183 customs administrations across the globe that collectively process approximately 98 percent of world trade. As the global centre of customs expertise, the WCO is the only international organisation with competence in customs matters that can rightly call itself the voice of the international customs community.

With more UK businesses needing to learn about the processes and paperwork associated with customs, it is likely that they will encounter the WCO at some point, whether that's through interacting with their authorities or by participating in one of their education schemes (including the WCO Academy) to gain great competency in these key export procedures.

WCO ACADEMY

We are delighted that we are partnering with the WCO Academy to help more British businesses learn about how international customs works through its online training courses. This is the first 'Strategic Partnership' of its kind in the UK and it will enable British trade professionals to gain recognised skills and expertise from the world's premier customs organisation.

Through the IOE&IT's website, trade professionals can now take customs-focused e-learning courses developed by the WCO, covering over 500 hours of training on the major topics, concepts and processes of international trade. After completing the training courses, individuals will be rewarded with a

certificate from the WCO Academy, a significant achievement within the global industry.

The courses are a fantastic opportunity for British traders to gain prestigious and international recognition from the world's leading customs institution. They also contribute towards the IOE&IT's CPD programme, enabling enrolled trade professionals to maintain and develop their skills and competence in international trade.

OUR MISSION

I've also previously written about the need for more 'customs practitioners' in the UK as we approach a new era in our trading relations around the world. These WCO Academy courses, alongside our own customs-related courses, will help to give people access to the skills and knowledge they need in order to become the customs experts we need.

The IOE&IT has also developed a 'Customs Pathway' through its suite of training courses. The pathway takes prospective customs professionals through six of the IOE&IT's courses, culminating in the attainment of a 'Customs Practitioner Award'.

For individuals or businesses looking to make the most of opportunities around the world, whatever happens with Brexit, this pathway is well worth embarking upon.

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