

Documentation

Objectives

The main objectives of this Learning Unit are to learn about different types of documents used in international trade, which documents are usually required by customs, the requirements for various documents and how to fill in these documents correctly.

In this unit you will:

Learn about the various types of documents used in international trade.

This will be achieved by:

- Analysing the various classifications and requirements of export documents.
- Learning what functions export documents perform.
- Learning the different types of documents of origin that evidence the origin of goods.
- Analysing the various commercial and administrative documents.
- Examining other documents that may be required in international trade transactions.

Learning Unit Summary

Most international trade transactions require certain transport documents, administrative documents, commercial documents and insurance documents.

There are a great variety of documents that may need to be produced to complete export/import transactions; some estimates indicate over 200 different documents are used in international trade. However, in most export transactions, only a few certain documents are used (invoice, packing list and transport document.)

Documents fulfil the following functions:

- **Proof of contract.** Documents such as transport documents (bill of lading), insurance documents, etc. Evidence the existence of contracts of sale and conditions stipulated there.
- **Title to the goods.** Certain transport documents represent title to the goods, that is, they give the right to collect the goods from the carrier (just as a bank draft gives you the right to collect funds against the drawer).
- **Information.** Certain documents provide information on the price for the goods (invoice), the contents of package units (packing list), etc.
- **Customs.** The customs of the country of destination require documents that evidence the origin of the goods, etc. in order to establish whether the goods

are importable to the country and in order to charge appropriate taxes and duties.

- **Proof of compliance.** Certain documents serve as proof that the conditions stipulated in the contract of sale are complied with, such as date of shipment (transport documents), the origin of the goods (certificate of origin), etc.

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