

## PRACTICAL FIELD NOTES

# Closing the loop on vendor audit documents

Give each submission a clear review outcome, a named next action and a defined closure point so the team can see what remains unresolved.

## Define the unit of review

Before reviewing a folder, identify the vendor, entity, location, reporting period and agreed scope. These details determine which submission belongs to which piece of work. If a file covers several locations or periods, record that explicitly. A reviewer should be able to understand its intended coverage without reconstructing the sender's assumptions.

Keep receipt and review outcome as separate fields in the working record. A received file may still be unreadable, incomplete, outside the requested period or awaiting a decision. Use status labels that describe the work accurately: received, under review, clarification requested, accepted or closed. Agree what each label means before using it.

## Write queries someone can resolve

A useful query identifies the document, the point requiring clarification and the response needed. Replace a broad comment such as 'please correct' with a specific instruction: confirm the covered location, provide the missing page, explain the difference between two records or submit the version approved for this review.

Keep each query attached to its evidence. If a revised file arrives, retain the connection to the earlier submission and the original question. Record whether the revision answers that question. Otherwise, a growing folder can create the appearance of progress while leaving the same issue unresolved.

## Give the next action an owner

Separate the person supplying evidence from the person reviewing it and the person authorised to decide closure. These roles may sit with different teams. Record the next action and its owner together, particularly when the answer depends on someone outside the vendor's immediate contact.

Review unresolved items by the decision or input they need. Missing evidence, conflicting records and an unanswered scope question require different responses. This makes follow-up more useful than

repeatedly asking everyone to upload documents. Where an item cannot be resolved within the current review, record the decision about how it will be carried forward.

## Make closure a recorded decision

Close an item when the agreed review has been completed and the responsible reviewer has recorded the outcome. Include the evidence version considered, the reviewer's conclusion and any remaining action. If something is accepted with a qualification, preserve that qualification alongside the status.

At handover, another team member should be able to explain what was reviewed, what changed and why the item was closed. That is the practical test of a usable audit record. Document volume alone cannot answer those questions; a clear decision trail can.

## Put it into practice

- Track document receipt separately from the review outcome.
- Attach each open question to its evidence and next-action owner.
- Record the evidence and decision supporting closure.