

FREE AUDIT TOOL

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SAMPLING

Audit Sampling Planner Tool

Structure a defensible sampling approach before selecting transactions or control instances

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1. Purpose & When to Use It

Use this planning tool to define the population, sampling objective, risk factors and selection approach before pulling a sample. It is designed to make judgmental or statistical sampling decisions explicit; it is not a statistical sample-size calculator.

Use this tool when

- Testing recurring controls
- Reviewing transactions or documents
- Selecting items from a large population
- When the team needs to explain why the sample was chosen

Core Inputs

1. Sampling objective	
2. Population definition	
3. Population size	
4. Control / transaction frequency	
5. Expected exception rate	
6. Risk concentration	
7. High-value or unusual items	
8. Data quality	
9. Selection method	

2. Decision / Scoring Matrix

Use this matrix as a disciplined prompt for professional judgment. Adapt thresholds to the organization, engagement risk and available evidence.

Factor	Low	Medium	High	Planning implication
Risk severity	Limited impact	Material process impact	Major / regulatory impact	Increase coverage and targeted selection
Expected exceptions	Rare	Possible	Known / recurring	Increase coverage; include known risk strata
Population variability	Homogeneous	Mixed	Highly varied	Stratify or segment population
Control frequency	Annual / quarterly	Monthly / weekly	Daily / continuous	Ensure period coverage
Data reliability	Strong	Some gaps	Weak	Validate population before sampling

Judgment Notes

RECORD THE RATIONALE BEHIND YOUR DECISION

3. Working Sheet

Complete this page during planning or fieldwork. Keep entries brief, evidence-based and specific enough for another auditor to understand your reasoning.

Sampling objective	
Population definition	
Population period	
Population size	
Known high-risk strata	
Expected exceptions	
Selection approach	
Coverage across time / locations	
Rationale for sample design	

4. Worked Example

The example shows the level of detail the tool is designed for. Replace it with your own engagement information.

Objective	Test whether travel claims comply with policy and approval requirements.
Population	All employee travel claims paid Jan-Dec.
Risk strata	High-value claims, policy-limit overrides, weekend claims, repeated claimants.
Approach	Targeted high-risk items plus a spread across months and employees.
Why	The design combines risk-based selection with period coverage rather than choosing only a convenient random handful.

Auditor Reflection

What conclusion would you draw from this example? What evidence, challenge or additional test would you need before relying on it?

REFLECTION / NEXT STEP

5. Quick Reference

Five reminders to keep the tool practical and audit-ready.

1

Define the population before selecting items.

2

Separate high-risk targeted items from representative coverage.

3

Cover different periods, locations or users where relevant.

4

Document why the sample can answer the audit objective.

5

If population completeness is doubtful, test the population first.

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