

FREE PRACTICAL GUIDE

INTERNAL AUDIT RESOURCE LIBRARY

FOLLOW-UP

How to Perform Audit Follow-Up

A practical guide to validating whether actions were completed and whether risk was actually reduced

This guide is designed for internal auditors who need a concise, practical way to apply perform audit follow-up in real engagements. It focuses on decisions, evidence and common failure points rather than theory.

THE OUTCOME YOU WANT

A practical guide to validating whether actions were completed and whether risk was actually reduced.

The six-step approach

- 1 Prioritize open actions by residual risk, age and recurrence.
- 2 Obtain evidence of implementation, not just status updates.
- 3 Reperform key controls or analytics where necessary.
- 4 Assess interim controls when permanent fixes are delayed.
- 5 Close only when the action outcome is verifiable.
- 6 Escalate overdue or repeatedly extended high-risk items.

Steps 1-3: Build the foundation

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1

Prioritize open actions by residual risk, age and recurrence.

Define the decision, risk or process question before collecting evidence. Write down what a good outcome would look like.

2

Obtain evidence of implementation, not just status updates.

Use actual transactions, system evidence, data and accountable owners to confirm how the process operates in practice.

3

Reperform key controls or analytics where necessary.

Record assumptions, exceptions and boundaries early so later testing remains focused and reproducible.

AUDITOR PROMPT

Ask: "What evidence would convince another experienced auditor that this conclusion is reasonable?" If the answer is unclear, strengthen the planned work before moving on.

Steps 4-6: Turn work into assurance

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4

Assess interim controls when permanent fixes are delayed.

Match the depth of work to the severity of the risk. High-risk conclusions need stronger evidence and clearer documentation.

5

Close only when the action outcome is verifiable.

Challenge exceptions for frequency, impact, root cause and management awareness before deciding what they mean.

6

Escalate overdue or repeatedly extended high-risk items.

Finish with an explicit conclusion and next action: no issue, improvement opportunity, finding, escalation or follow-up.

QUALITY CHECK

Before you finalize, ask whether the work directly answers the original audit question, whether evidence is sufficient, and whether a reader can understand the reasoning without being in the audit team.

ACTION

Independent verification of supplier bank changes.

EVIDENCE RECEIVED

New procedure document only.

FOLLOW-UP TEST

Select recent bank changes and verify that independent confirmation was actually performed and recorded.

DECISION

Do not close based solely on the procedure.

What makes the example useful?

- It starts from a specific risk or audit question.
- It connects evidence and testing to a conclusion.
- It avoids treating process description as proof of control effectiveness.
- It leaves a clear path for management action or follow-up.

Quick reference - use this on your next audit

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Five practical reminders

- An action can be “implemented” while the risk remains unchanged. Validate the outcome.
- Status percentages are not evidence.
- Extensions should consider current risk and interim mitigation.

Mini self-check

- ☐ Have I linked the work to a clear audit objective or business risk?
- ☐ Is the evidence strong enough for the importance of the conclusion?
- ☐ Have I distinguished facts, explanations and assumptions?
- ☐ Have I considered root cause and recurrence, not only the immediate exception?
- ☐ Can management understand what decision or action is required?

RESOURCE NOTE

This is a practical learning resource, not formal professional guidance. Adapt the approach to your organization, applicable standards, regulation and audit methodology.