

FREE AUDIT TOOL

INTERNAL AUDIT RESOURCE LIBRARY

PLANNING

Audit Time Budget Planner Tool

Allocate audit hours according to risk, complexity, evidence effort and review needs

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1. Purpose & When to Use It

Use this tool to convert an engagement scope into a realistic time budget. It helps teams avoid equal-time allocation across unequal risks and makes trade-offs visible when deadlines, travel or resource constraints change.

Use this tool when

- Preparing an engagement plan
- Staffing a multi-process audit
- Reforecasting after scope changes
- Explaining why some areas receive more testing

Core Inputs

1. Engagement deadline	
2. Available team hours	
3. Scope areas	
4. Risk level	
5. Process complexity	
6. Data / evidence effort	
7. Locations	
8. Expected issue complexity	
9. Review requirements	

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	1	2	3	Budget effect
Risk	Low	Medium	High	More testing / senior attention
Complexity	Simple	Mixed	Complex	More walkthrough and analysis time
Data effort	Ready	Some cleanup	Difficult	More extraction / validation time
Locations	One	Few	Many	More coordination / travel time
Issue likelihood	Low	Possible	High	More validation / reporting time

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.

Scope area / workstream	
Risk score	
Complexity score	
Data effort score	
Planned fieldwork hours	
Planning hours	
Reporting / review hours	
Owner	
Total planned hours	

4. Worked Example

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

Engagement	Procure-to-pay audit, 180 team hours.
High allocation	Vendor master and payment controls because fraud exposure and data testing are high.
Medium allocation	PO approval and receiving controls.
Lower allocation	Low-risk administrative procedures with strong prior assurance.
Decision	Reduce low-risk procedural testing rather than cutting high-risk payment analytics when the deadline shortens.

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

Budget by risk, not by number of process steps.

2

Include data cleaning and evidence chasing - they consume real hours.

3

Protect review and reporting time.

4

Reforecast when scope changes; do not hide overruns.

5

Document what will not be tested if hours are reduced.

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