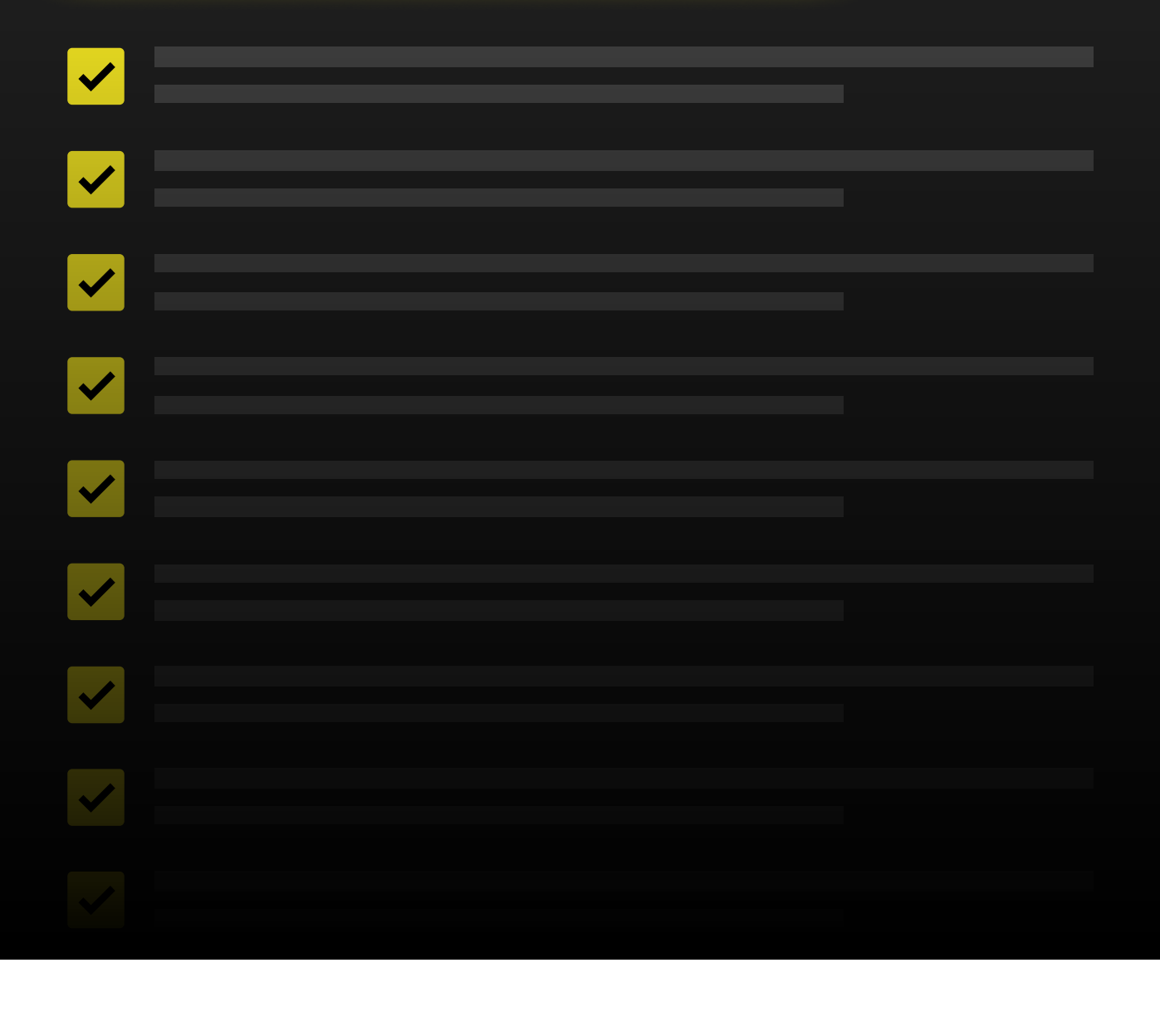


The SOC 2 Auditor Selection Checklist

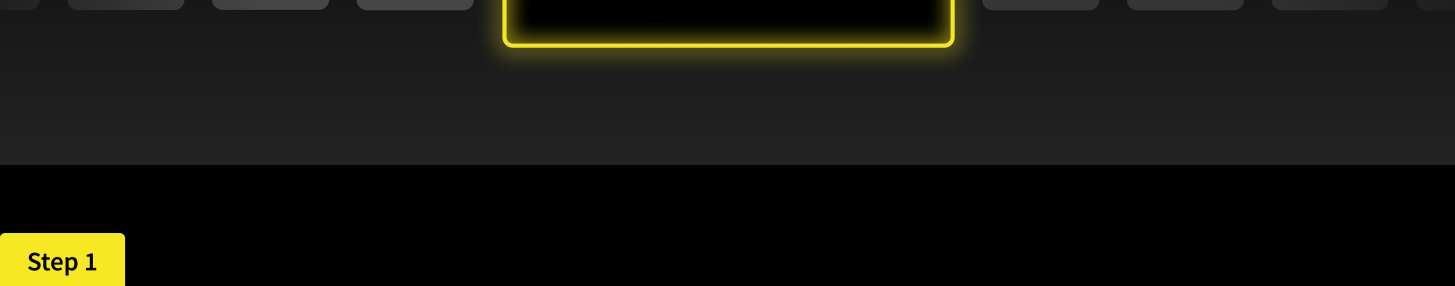
Choose the Right Auditor. Walk Into Your Audit, Ready.



Choose the Right Auditor. Walk Into Your Audit Ready.

Choosing a **SOC 2 auditor** isn't a box-ticking exercise. It's one of the most consequential decisions in your entire compliance journey. The wrong firm produces a generic report, blows your timeline, and leaves your team firefighting mid-audit. The right one flags issues before they become findings — and helps you walk into your next big deal with a report that holds up.

This **checklist** walks you through every stage of auditor selection — from the first discovery call to the moment you sign the engagement letter — so you choose with confidence, not guesswork.



Step 1

Verify Qualifications and Accreditation

☐

Confirm AICPA accreditation – The firm must be a licensed CPA firm operating under AICPA AT-C 205 attestation standards. Ask for written confirmation. No accreditation, no engagement.

☐

Check their SOC 2 audit volume – Ask how many SOC 2 audits they've completed in the last 12 months. Experience at scale signals familiarity with edge cases, not just the basics.

☐

Ask about peer reviews – Reputable firms undergo regular quality reviews from governing bodies. Ask when their last peer review was and whether results are available. A good auditor welcomes the question.

☐

Confirm the team's credentials – Find out who is actually conducting your fieldwork. Many firms pitch with senior partners and deliver with junior associates. Get names and credentials before you sign anything.

What Good Looks Like

👍

A qualified auditor answers every accreditation question confidently and in writing. If they hesitate, deflect, or can't confirm their CPA license on the spot — that tells you everything.

15% completed

Step 2

Assess Industry and Stage Relevance

☐

Ask for case studies from your vertical – An auditor experienced in SaaS, fintech, or digital health will scope your audit differently than one used to enterprise legacy environments. Ask for specific client examples, then follow up on them.

☐

Confirm experience with your company size – An auditor calibrated to Fortune 500 complexity may impose requirements that don't fit a scaling startup. Make sure their process matches your maturity level.

☐

Check familiarity with your tech stack – Modern SaaS environments run on AWS, GCP, Okta, GitHub, and similar tooling. Your auditor should recognize these without needing a primer.

☐

Ask about multi-framework experience – If you're pursuing SOC 2 alongside ISO 27001, HIPAA, or PCI DSS, confirm the firm can support overlapping frameworks and evidence reuse. This saves significant manual effort.

What Good Looks Like

👍

The right auditor asks detailed questions about your infrastructure and services before proposing a scope. If their proposal could describe any SaaS company in existence, that's exactly how your final report will read too.

30% completed

Step 3

Evaluate Process and Evidence Approach

☐

Ask how they handle evidence collection – Top firms use secure portals for document sharing and real-time tracking. If the proposed process is "send everything to a shared Google Drive folder," that's a preview of the whole engagement.

☐

Ask about readiness assessments – A pre-audit readiness assessment surfaces control gaps before the observation window begins. Confirm whether this is included in the quoted fee or billed separately — and strongly consider firms that build it in.

☐

Clarify the scope definition process – The scope, timeline, and deliverables — including Type I vs. Type II distinction — should be defined before the engagement begins. Not during it.

☐

Ask how they handle exceptions – Exceptions aren't failure; they're honesty. Ask how findings are communicated, documented, and followed up. No credible auditor can guarantee a clean report before examining your controls. If they do — walk away.

What Good Looks Like

👍

A well-run audit surfaces a few exceptions with clear remediation notes. A zero-exception report from a firm with a suspiciously perfect track record deserves more scrutiny than one with documented findings and proper follow-up.

45% completed

Step 4

Scrutinize Pricing and Timeline

☐

Request a detailed fixed-fee breakdown – Distinguish between fixed and variable charges. Ask what's included: readiness assessment, evidence review, fieldwork, and follow-up. Get it in writing.

☐

Ask what would cause the price to increase – Scope creep is the most common driver of budget overruns. Understand the conditions under which variable fees kick in before you're mid-engagement.

☐

Check current capacity and peak season impact – Q1 and Q4 are busy periods for audit firms. Ask about current availability and whether your timeline could be affected by their workload.

☐

Confirm the timeline from kickoff to final report – A realistic timeline gives you something to plan around. An auditor who won't commit to one is a risk to your roadmap.

What Good Looks Like

👍

A detailed, fixed-fee proposal with a clear scope is a sign of a firm that's done this before. A suspiciously low quote with vague scope is a sign of one that's cutting corners — or planning to charge you for them later.

60% completed

Step 5

Test Communication and Fit

☐

Confirm your day-to-day point of contact – You need a named contact who will be consistent throughout the entire engagement — not a helpdesk queue or a rotating cast of associates.

☐

Ask about communication tools and cadence – If you run on Slack and they run on formal email threads with 48-hour response windows, that friction will compound over weeks of fieldwork. Confirm they can work the way you work.

☐

Ask how often they provide status updates – Proactive updates during the observation period prevent last-minute panics. An auditor who goes quiet for two weeks mid-fieldwork creates chaos.

☐

Check what post-delivery support looks like – Your relationship with the auditor shouldn't end the moment the report lands. Confirm they're available for questions after delivery and that the relationship is built for repeat engagement at the next audit cycle.

What Good Looks Like

👍

The best auditor relationships feel like a compliance partnership, not a procurement transaction. You should finish the engagement knowing exactly who to call — and confident they'll pick up.

75% completed

Step 6

Prepare for Certification & Continuous Improvement

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Senior staff confirmed on your engagement — not just for the pitch

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Familiar with your tech stack, cloud environment, and compliance tooling

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Detailed fixed-fee pricing with variable charges clearly identified

☐

Readiness assessment included or clearly scoped as a separate line item

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Peak season capacity checked and timeline confirmed

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Peer review history available on request

☐

Doesn't guarantee clean reports before examining your controls

What Good Looks Like

👍

If every box above is ticked and you still have doubts — trust them. The auditor relationship matters as much as the accreditation. You're going to be working closely with these people. Make sure it feels right.

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