

Risk & Evidence Portfolio Kit

Build a fictional decision file you can inspect, revise and explain.

03

ORIGINAL CASES AND WORKED REASONING

Editable practice companions included

Expanded cases and browser-editable working pack

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PROJECT FILE / 01

Build a decision file, not a collection of templates

Using this expanded edition

Chapters 1-11 develop the supplier decision file. Chapters 12-18 build a separate recovery-readiness project; chapters 19-21 add extensions, a review clinic and a fresh transfer exercise. The companion archive includes [START-HERE-working-pack.html](#): open it in a browser to edit the supplied tools, save a local working copy or print. Changes are not saved until you use the save control. Markdown and CSV originals remain available for text editors and spreadsheet software. Keep your own attempt separate from completed references.

This kit is for a candidate who wants to practice creating a small, coherent evidence file. You will work with a fictional services company, a document-processing supplier and a pilot decision. The output is a set of connected records: an evidence register, risk scenarios, a procedure worksheet, a finding, a decision memo and a short explanation of your work.

The exercise is suitable for preparation across GRC, IT audit and third-party risk, with different emphasis for each role. It does not grant a credential or demonstrate that you have performed a real assessment. Every supplied company, person, event and record is fictional. Retain that label in any portfolio you share.

You should understand basic terms such as account, role, permission, system configuration and supplier. You do not need a live cloud account, access to employer information or paid software. A text editor and spreadsheet application are enough. The practice value comes from the decisions you document and revise, rather than a complicated technical setup.

The decision you are supporting

Morrow Services wants to evaluate Finch Documents in a workspace called `morrow-pilot-01`. Six staff would process synthetic forms from September 21 through September 30. A possible later production connection is a different proposal. The operations director wants a recommendation by September 18, while procurement faces a commercial deadline on the same date.

Your role is to prepare decision support. You are not the pilot approver. The fictional procedure identifies the operations director as the approver and assigns technical-boundary work to the technical owner. Keeping those responsibilities separate will matter when you write the recommendation and interpret the later records.

This is a September case variant. If you have used the Interview Case Workbook, do not merge its June/July account list into this file. The company and supplier names are reused to make the setting familiar, but the population, period and records here are distinct. Give this project its own folder and case identifier.

Read the packet in two stages

The companion case-packet.md contains nine initial records and four follow-up records. Begin with PK-01 through PK-09. Write an initial recommendation before reading PK-10 through PK-13. If you have already seen the follow-up, you can still practice, but record that the attempt was not blind.

The initial packet includes the business request, an approved fictional procedure, a technical-owner statement, a human-account export, a human-role review, a dated connector check, a service-account inventory, a supplier summary and a procurement note. These records do different jobs. A requirement does not establish execution; a review decision does not automatically approve the pilot; a commercial deadline does not create exception authority.

The follow-up resolves some account questions, records a pilot decision, introduces a proposed scope change and supplies a historical activation event. The exercise deliberately contains both improvement and a newly supported deviation. A useful file should be able to record both without forcing every development into a single positive or negative story.

What you will produce

The evidence register records the source, scope, date and limits of each item. The risk register turns concerns into specific scenarios and identifies which assumptions matter. The assessment worksheet states a question, criterion, planned procedure and what the supplied packet supports. The finding explains a supported deviation without inventing consequences. The decision memo gives an owner a short, traceable recommendation.

Your README explains that this is educational work, identifies your contribution and describes the file's limits. A revision log shows how new evidence changed the analysis. Together, these artifacts let another person follow your reasoning without attending a presentation or trusting a polished cover page.

Do not fill every cell merely to make a spreadsheet appear complete. "Not established from the supplied packet" can be the accurate entry. The important next step is to explain what that uncertainty means for the decision and which request would reduce it.

A practical folder structure

Keep an untouched copy of the supplied packet in a source folder. Put your working register, worksheets and memo in a separate analysis folder. Use a version label or dated filename when your conclusion changes. Store a short README at the top level so someone can understand the project before opening a spreadsheet.

For this exercise, filenames such as evidence-register-v1.csv, decision-memo-v1.md and decision-memo-v2.md are enough. A complex document-management system is unnecessary. The useful discipline is preserving the original record and making changes visible.

If you prefer a single workbook, use separate tabs for the source inventory, risk scenarios, procedures and revision log. Keep the memo as a readable document rather than squeezing several paragraphs into one spreadsheet cell. A reviewer should be able to inspect the reasoning without learning your personal formatting conventions.

The first ten minutes

Read PK-01 and PK-02 first. Write the requested decision, intended service boundary and approval requirement in your own words. Then read PK-04, PK-05 and PK-07 together. Ask which account types are covered and which decisions remain open. Only then read the supplier summary and commercial note.

This order is a teaching suggestion, not a mandatory assessment sequence. It helps prevent the commercial deadline or an impressive-looking supplier document from defining the review before you understand the request. In real work, the engagement plan and organizational process would determine the sequence.

Your initial scope sentence might be: "This file supports the proposed synthetic-form pilot in morrow-pilot-01 for six staff during September 21-30. It does not approve customer-data processing or the later production connector." That sentence will become a useful reference when a stakeholder asks a broader question.

A quality bar you can inspect

Before moving on, ask whether another reader could identify the decision, the period, the relevant records and your authority. If any of those are unclear, fix the case brief before creating more artifacts. An elaborate register built around an ambiguous decision will carry that ambiguity into every later document.

The completed examples in this kit are reference answers, not the only acceptable wording. You can reach a different recommendation if it follows from the supplied facts and clearly stated assumptions. You cannot invent an earlier approval, a completed technical test or a legal conclusion because it makes the recommendation easier.

YOUR WORKING NOTE

Write the pilot decision and one activity outside its scope.

PROJECT FILE / 02

Give each record a job

An evidence register helps you find and interpret material. It should tell a reader what a record is, where it came from, which question it informs and what it cannot establish. A filename list alone does not do that work. Nor does a column marked “received” imply that the material answers the review question.

Start with the initial nine records. The completed reference register covers this first packet; a separate blank is provided for your own attempt. Try filling the blank before comparing it with the reference. When you disagree with the reference, write why. The goal is to practice interpretation rather than reproduce wording.

Record source and scope separately

PK-04 is a human-account export for one workspace at a specified time. Its source is the supplied fictional export. Its scope explicitly excludes service accounts. Both details matter. If you record only “account list,” someone could later mistake it for the complete population required by the pilot procedure.

PK-07 identifies two service accounts. It contributes additional scope information, but it is not itself a role-review decision. S-01 has an owner named in the inventory; its role decision is absent. S-02 lacks both a named owner and a role decision in the initial packet. Those are distinct gaps and should not be collapsed into “two failed accounts.”

PK-05 accepts the roles for six human IDs matching PK-04. That supports the described review of those listed identities. It does not cover the service accounts and does not fulfill the separate requirement to approve pilot activation. A single document can be useful for one question and insufficient for another.

A completed row, unpacked

For PK-04, a useful “supports” entry is: “Six distinct listed human accounts and roles in the specified workspace at the export time.” A useful limitation is: “Parameter excludes service accounts; does not establish complete population across account types.” The next request asks for a complete workspace listing or an explained reconciliation appropriate to the procedure.

Notice that the limitation follows directly from the record's stated parameter. You do not need to speculate about a hidden system defect. The question is whether the evidence covers the requirement. By writing the reason, you help a later reader understand why the request is necessary.

For PK-06, the supported statement is different: the technical owner recorded a check showing no enabled connectors at 11:00 on September 16. The packet does not show that you performed the check or that nobody can change the configuration afterward. Your register should preserve the activity's source and point-in-time nature.

Use status labels carefully

This kit uses plain labels such as “received,” “follow-up open” and “resolved by later record.” They describe your working file. They are not formal assurance ratings or a substitute for an organization's assessment methodology.

You can have a received document with an open question. You can also resolve one question while retaining another limitation. PK-06 may answer whether a dated check was recorded while leaving change authority unresolved. A single green cell would hide that distinction, so the reference register includes a next-request field.

Avoid a confidence score unless you can explain its criteria and intended use. Assigning “92% confidence” to an owner statement creates precision the packet does not support. A short sentence about source, coverage and corroboration gives the reader more usable information.

Keep time visible

Document date, event date and date received may differ. PK-13 will later illustrate why that matters: a historical event can arrive after an initial recommendation. Recording only the day you received it could obscure the sequence you need to evaluate.

For the initial register, retain each record's date and any stated event time. If a date is unavailable, use an explicit unknown rather than guessing. If the timing would change your conclusion, make the missing time a focused request.

Do not overwrite an original register row when a follow-up arrives. Add the new record, then link the earlier open question to it. This preserves the basis of your first recommendation and shows how the file developed. The reference version is a teaching snapshot, not an instruction to erase history.

Distinguish a request from work performed

Suppose you write “reconcile all accounts.” That could mean you plan to ask the owner for a reconciliation, you performed one using supplied lists, or someone else supplied the result. Those are different activities. Add enough detail to make the status clear.

In this exercise, you can compare IDs across the fictional records and document that comparison. You cannot claim to have queried Finch's systems, interviewed a real owner or independently confirmed the export. Use verbs that match the work: “compared the supplied IDs,” “read the recorded explanation” and “proposed a follow-up procedure.”

Make the request answerable

A weak request says, “Send all access evidence.” A stronger request says, “Provide the account population for morrow-pilot-01 covering human and service accounts, describe the inclusion criteria, and identify the owner and role decision for each assigned account.” It explains the scope and the missing decision.

You might split that into two requests if different owners hold the information. Keep the decision date visible so the recipients understand why timing matters. In real work, follow the approved data-sharing and evidence-handling process. For this project, synthetic IDs are sufficient; do not collect actual employee records to make it look authentic.

Your completed first pass

Your register should contain nine initial rows, with IDs that match the packet. Check that PK-03 is identified as a statement, PK-06 as a supplied activity record, PK-04 as human-only and PK-05 as a role review rather than pilot approval. These distinctions are the foundation for the rest of the project.

Then write three sentences: what the packet establishes, what the most consequential open question is, and what you would request next. A reasonable answer identifies the human-role decisions and dated connector check, then points to incomplete service-account decisions and the missing pilot approval. Another question may also matter, but explain its connection to this limited pilot rather than listing every possible supplier concern.

Keep the reference register alongside your attempt. Mark the change that most improved your reasoning. That comparison can later form part of your portfolio presentation: an initial interpretation, a specific correction and a clearer decision record.

YOUR WORKING NOTE

Choose one record. State what it supports and one question it leaves open.
