

Documentation Review Guide: Subject Matter Experts

Why you're reviewing

You know how this product actually works. The technical writer has structured the content for the reader — your job is to verify that the content is **accurate**. No one else on the review list can do this part.

These docs serve both human readers and AI systems (chatbots, search, retrieval-augmented tools). AI systems surface individual sections, not full pages — so accuracy and clarity matter at the section level, not just the document level.

What to look for

- **Procedures:** Do the steps match the current build? Walk through them mentally (or actually) and flag anything that's changed, is missing, or is out of order.
- **Parameters and values:** Are field names, defaults, ranges, and data types correct?
- **Edge cases:** Does the doc account for common exceptions, workarounds, or known limitations?
- **Terminology:** Are product-specific terms used correctly and consistently?
- **Screenshots or examples:** Do they match the current UI or API behavior?
- **Section completeness:** Can each section be understood on its own? If a section depends on context from a previous section (e.g., "use the value from Step 2 above" without restating what that value is), flag it. AI retrieval systems pull individual sections — they won't have the surrounding page for context.
- **Ambiguous references:** Flag pronouns or shorthand ("it," "this," "the system") that wouldn't make sense if the section were read in isolation. Humans read linearly and resolve these; AI systems surface fragments and don't.

How to review

1. Read the sections relevant to your area of expertise. You don't need to read the entire document unless asked.
2. Focus on **technical accuracy**, not writing style or formatting.
3. Check the reviewer instructions or cover note for specific sections or questions flagged for your attention.

How to leave comments

- Use the review tool specified in the reviewer instructions (e.g., PR comments, shared doc comments, review platform).
- **Be specific.** "This is wrong" doesn't help. "Step 4 is wrong — the default timeout is 30s, not 60s" does.
- If a section is correct, say so. A quick "verified" on a section saves the writer from chasing confirmation.
- If you're unsure about something, flag it as a question rather than guessing.

Turnaround

Complete your review by **[DATE]**. If you need more time, let the writer know before the deadline — not after.

What NOT to do

- **Don't rewrite for style.** If a sentence is technically correct but you'd phrase it differently, leave it. The writer handles style and structure.
- **Don't reorganize sections.** If you think the order should change, leave a comment explaining why — don't move content around.
- **Don't review areas outside your expertise.** If you don't own or know the feature, don't guess. Skip it or flag that someone else should check it.
- **Don't silently approve.** "No news is good news" isn't a review. If you've read it and it's accurate, say so.
- **Don't collapse information into tables or lists without context sentences.** AI retrieval systems often extract tables poorly or lose column headers. If critical information lives only in a table with no surrounding prose, flag it.