

**JRS**<sup>TM</sup>

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**JUSTIFICATION  
REVIEW STANDARD**

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*Documentation Review Structure*

For HR, Compliance, and Investigation Workflows

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## | OVERVIEW

Records are reviewed later by individuals who were not present during the original events, discussions, or decisions. The reviewer may join the organization after the fact, inherit a case mid-process, or conduct audit review months or years after the record was created.

JRS supports records that remain traceable from the file without supplementary explanation. The review evaluates whether the support is visible in the file, regardless of outcome.

*What felt obvious during drafting may not be recoverable later.*

The framework operates within existing organizational workflows. No software changes, system replacements, or proprietary tooling are required.

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## | DEFINITION

The JRS is a documentation review structure used to evaluate whether organizational records:

- remain reviewable without follow-up or supplementary explanation,
  - contain support visible in the record itself,
  - and permit the basis for conclusions to be reconstructed later.
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## | REVIEWER LENS

The reviewer evaluating a record may have no knowledge of the underlying events, no access to the original participants, and no institutional memory of the context in which the documentation was created. Staffing changes, elapsed time, and organizational transitions are routine.

*The file usually outlives the participants.*

Three diagnostic gates guide evaluation:

- Can this record stand without additional context?
- What support in the file identifies the basis for the conclusion?
- Can the reasoning be traced to documented conduct, interactions, or referenced records?

*Reviewers often inherit records with no original context. What is obvious during drafting may not remain obvious later.*

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## | REVIEW CONDITIONS

Documentation sufficiency is evaluated against four conditions:

### **Independently Reviewable Records**

The basis for conclusions should be recoverable from the record by someone with no prior knowledge of the events, without additional context, institutional memory, or supplementary explanation.

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## Observable Support

Each conclusion requires a specific, verifiable anchor in the file: a date, a documented interaction, a log entry, or a referenced record. Supporting information may include:

- email timestamps and correspondence
- badge or access logs
- witness or interview notes
- meeting records and coaching notes
- documented interactions and policy references
- HRIS records and performance data

## Documented Reasoning

The path from evidence to conclusion should be visible within the record. Conclusions that depend on unstated assumptions or context not present in the file do not satisfy this condition.

*A smooth narrative is not the same as a supported record.*

## Source Integrity

Where automated drafting materially contributes to a record, the source material supporting substantive conclusions should be identifiable. Formal logging is not required, provided the basis for each conclusion remains traceable to referenced source material.

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### | OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Application may involve incomplete records, conflicting accounts, time pressures, or qualitative information requiring reviewer judgment. These conditions are acknowledged without eliminating the requirement for documented support.

Documentation is sometimes written after events, from memory, under time pressure, or by reviewers with partial information. Depth of review will vary by workflow and staffing conditions.

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### | REVIEW LIMITATIONS

This is not a substitute for substantive review. Procedural compliance does not resolve documentation insufficiency.

Specifically, JRS does not:

- Sanitize poor documentation through procedural formatting
- Enable box-checking without meaningful review
- Substitute formatting for support visible in the record
- Create the appearance of rigor where supporting information is absent

Where sufficiency is absent, the review identifies that gap. Wording quality and evidentiary support are distinct.

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### | WHEN REVIEW IS TYPICALLY TRIGGERED

Review applies when documentation may be subject to later scrutiny in employment, administrative, compliance, or investigative contexts. Typical triggers include:

- Termination and separation documentation
  - Disciplinary actions and performance improvement records
  - Performance escalation and formal counseling documentation
  - Formal complaints and grievance records
  - Investigation summaries and witness accounts
  - Documentation involving automated or AI-assisted drafting
  - Accommodation-related documentation
  - High-risk employment actions and adverse decisions
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## | REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

Five questions guide documentation evaluation from a later-reviewer perspective:

### **01 Can the record stand on its own?**

Assess whether the record is reviewable without additional context, institutional memory, or access to the original participants.

### **02 What support in the file identifies the basis for the conclusion?**

Identify specific, verifiable evidence: dates, logs, documented interactions, sufficient for review without follow-up.

### **03 Can the reasoning be traced to documented conduct, interactions, or referenced records?**

Evaluate whether the path from evidence to conclusion is visible within the record itself.

### **04 Are dates, timelines, and referenced materials identifiable?**

Confirm that chronological and evidentiary anchors are present and traceable.

### **05 Are operational limitations acknowledged where necessary?**

Note any incomplete information, conflicting accounts, or qualitative judgments that may affect review.

*Missing dates become critical during escalation. Most review problems start earlier than people think.*

*Adjective Alert. Evaluative adjectives, such as difficult, hostile, unprofessional, or poor, appearing without a corresponding behavioral anchor do not satisfy the Documented Reasoning condition. Each adjective requires a fact: what occurred, when, and where.*

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## | OPERATIONAL WORKFLOW PLACEMENT

Integration occurs at the documentation stage, before records enter official systems of record or are relied upon in formal proceedings. No dedicated platform or tooling is required.

*Records are reviewed later by people with no original context. Some records are reviewed years later. The review structure is applied before the record leaves the drafting stage.*

## Typical Workflow Position

1. Documentation drafted (manager, investigator, HR, or automated tool)
  2. Review applied using this structure before submission
  3. Record submitted into official system of record
  4. Later review by HR, compliance, legal, or audit personnel
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## | IMPLEMENTATION MATURITY

Organizations apply JRS at varying levels of integration depending on documentation sensitivity, organizational structure, and workflow. These models are illustrative.

### 01 Foundational: Self-Correction

The reviewer applies the diagnostic questions before finalizing. No secondary review required. No dedicated tooling required.

### 02 Intermediate: Secondary Review

Secondary HR or compliance review for elevated-risk records. Applied selectively. Organizations apply secondary review differently depending on workflow and staffing capacity.

### 03 Systemic: Audit and Governance

Periodic sampling of organizational records for identifiable support and traceable reasoning. The reviewing function is independent of the drafting chain.

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## | SECOND-LINE REVIEW

Higher-risk records may require secondary review by HR, compliance, legal, audit, or supervisory personnel. Secondary review is not universally required and is calibrated to documentation type and organizational workflow.

### Escalation indicators include:

- Evaluative language without observable behavioral anchors
- Missing source records for substantive conclusions
- Automated summarization without documented human review
- Disciplinary conclusions without referenced conduct
- Termination documentation with insufficient factual grounding

*Secondary review cannot repair unsupported drafting. Records that reach escalation without a traceable basis present the most significant review exposure.*

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## | APPLICATION

JRS applies to organizational documentation across the following contexts:

<p><b>Performance Documentation</b></p> <p>Evaluations, feedback discussions, and employment decisions where later review may occur.</p>	<p><b>Hiring Documentation</b></p> <p>Recruitment records, candidate evaluation, and hiring decisions traceable from the file.</p>
<p><b>Termination Documentation</b></p> <p>Records supporting employment termination, including supporting disciplinary documentation.</p>	<p><b>Administrative Records</b></p> <p>Organizational documentation used in employment, administrative, or compliance review.</p>
<p><b>Investigation Records</b></p> <p>Records from workplace investigations, including witness accounts and incident documentation.</p>	<p><b>Compliance Documentation</b></p> <p>Regulatory or policy compliance records where documented reasoning is required for audit.</p>

Secondary review may involve HR, compliance, legal, or supervisory personnel depending on documentation type and organizational workflow.

## | COMMON DOCUMENTATION FAILURE MODES

Each example shows a documentation pattern that does not satisfy the review conditions, the questions a later reviewer would ask, and a revision that would.

### 01 | UNSUPPORTED GENERALIZATION

RECORD STATEMENT	REVIEWER QUESTIONS	SUPPORTED REVISION
"Employee has attendance issues."	– What absences occurred, and when? – What was the impact on record? – Which policy applies? Later review risk: A reviewer cannot identify the dates, conduct, or policy basis supporting the conclusion.	"Employee was absent on January 5, January 12, and February 3 without advance notice, contrary to attendance policy acknowledged January 2. Counseling note issued February 4."

### 02 | MISSING OBSERVABLE BEHAVIOR

RECORD STATEMENT	REVIEWER QUESTIONS	SUPPORTED REVISION
"Employee demonstrated unprofessional conduct."	– What conduct occurred, and when? – Is it documented anywhere? – What record supports this? Later review risk: A reviewer cannot reconstruct what behavior occurred or identify any support in the file.	"Employee interrupted two client meetings on April 4 and April 11 after repeated instruction. Incident report dated April 12 on file."

### 03 | MISSING PERFORMANCE STANDARD

RECORD STATEMENT	REVIEWER QUESTIONS	SUPPORTED REVISION
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<p>"Employee does not meet expectations."</p>	<p>– What expectations, and over what period? – What record supports this? – What coaching is on file? Later review risk: A reviewer cannot identify the standard, timeframe, or evidence underlying the conclusion.</p>	<p>"Employee missed three project deadlines (Jan 20, Feb 17, Mar 1) against performance plan established January 5. Check-in notes and improvement discussion on file."</p>
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**04 | MISSING TIMELINE ANCHORS**

RECORD STATEMENT	REVIEWER QUESTIONS	SUPPORTED REVISION
<p>"Employee repeatedly failed to communicate project updates."</p>	<p>– Which communications were missing? – What dates? – What expectation was documented? Later review risk: A reviewer cannot reconstruct when, how often, or in what context the failure occurred.</p>	<p>"Employee failed to provide project updates on March 3, March 10, and March 17 during scheduled team meetings, despite three direct requests from the project lead on record."</p>

**05 | AUTOMATED SUMMARY WITHOUT VERIFICATION**

RECORD STATEMENT	REVIEWER QUESTIONS	SUPPORTED REVISION
<p>"AI summary: Employee is difficult to work with."</p>	<p>– What source records were reviewed? – Are the underlying interactions identifiable? – Was human review completed? Later review risk: A reviewer cannot verify what source material, if any, supports the automated conclusion.</p>	<p>"Summary reviewed against meeting notes dated March 4, 11, and 18. No unverified sentiment introduced. Human review completed March 19 prior to finalization; confirmed against original notes."</p>

**| WORKFLOW INTEGRATION MODELS**

Each model illustrates how JRS may be integrated into existing documentation workflows. All are illustrative and may be adapted to organizational context.

*The reviewer may not be able to contact the original author. The integration model determines whether that matters.*

**M1 Manager Self-Review**

Managers apply the review considerations before submitting documentation. Applied at the drafting stage, before the record enters an official system of record.

**M2 HR Secondary Review**

HR personnel apply the framework during review of performance, disciplinary, termination, or accommodation documentation. Particularly relevant for records with elevated risk or regulatory exposure.

**M3 Investigation Review**

Investigators apply the framework when evaluating witness summaries, incident records, or narrative conclusions. Source material is identified and reasoning tested for traceability.

**M4 Audit Sampling**

Compliance or audit personnel periodically sample records for identifiable support and documented reasoning. Used as a consistent evaluation reference.

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## | DOCUMENTATION SOURCE VERIFICATION

Documentation may derive from direct observation, interview notes, written communications, system records, or automated drafting. The review conditions apply equally regardless of source.

### Source Verification Considerations

Wording from automated tools should be reviewed against identifiable source material before the record is finalized. Substantive conclusions should be traceable to:

- documented interactions and communications
- referenced records, email correspondence, and logs
- meeting notes, coaching records, and witness statements
- HRIS records and policy references

*Drafting vs. Attesting. Automated tools may assist in drafting. Only a human reviewer can attest to the accuracy, completeness, and sufficiency of the final record. That attestation must confirm that AI-assisted wording does not introduce unverified characterizations not present in the original source material.*

Content that cannot be verified against source records does not satisfy the Source Integrity or Documented Reasoning conditions.

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## | ADMINISTRATIVE NEUTRALITY

JRS evaluates documentation sufficiency independently of organizational intent, legal liability, or substantive employment outcome. A record may satisfy all four review conditions even when the underlying decision is later disputed on substantive grounds.

*A supported record can still be disputed. The review evaluates the file, not whether people agree with the outcome.*

A record is JRS-compliant when the supporting basis is clearly present in the file, regardless of whether a secondary reviewer agrees with the substantive outcome. Compliance reflects process quality, not decision correctness.

This does not establish legal sufficiency. It does not replace professional judgment. It makes the evidentiary basis of a record visible enough to support later review.

### Specifically, JRS does not:

- Determine whether an employment decision was substantively correct
- Establish legal sufficiency or eliminate organizational risk
- Replace professional judgment, legal counsel, or HR expertise
- Guarantee compliance with applicable employment or regulatory law

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## | RECORD REVIEW PRINCIPLES

## Core Principles

- Records should remain reviewable without supplementary explanation.
  - Conclusions should be understandable by someone with no direct knowledge of events.
  - The basis for each conclusion should be anchored within the record itself.
  - Source material should be traceable before the record is finalized.
  - The review evaluates whether the support is in the file, regardless of outcome.
  - Reviewer judgment remains necessary in all applications of this framework.
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## | DISCLAIMERS

Not legal advice. Organizations should consult with legal counsel regarding applicable law and documentation requirements in their jurisdiction.

Legal sufficiency. Application does not establish legal sufficiency or eliminate legal risk.

Jurisdiction variability. Documentation standards and legal requirements differ across jurisdictions and regulatory frameworks.

Operational context. Designed for use under reasonable operational constraints. Reviewer judgment is not replaced.

Implementation. JRS operates within existing workflows without requiring dedicated software platforms, system changes, or proprietary tooling.

Illustrative examples. Workflow models, failure mode examples, and implementation maturity descriptions are illustrative and may be adapted to organizational context.

Purpose. The goal is not more paperwork. It is to ensure that the documentation produced is actually useful: supported, self-contained, and recoverable during later review.