Spreadsheet Risk Checklist

General Assembly — Reference card

Usually acceptable

- One owner and a short-lived working purpose
- Clear version and as-of point
- Logic simple enough to explain quickly
- No hidden role as the only source of truth

Warning signs

- multiple versions or parallel copies
- manual merges and copied extracts
- hidden formulas, recodes, or business rules
- no visible owner, source, or refresh date
- recurring reporting chain built on personal files
- people trust the number but cannot explain the steps

Choose the next move

- **Keep**: still a local working file with one owner and low reuse.
- **Control**: add owner, version discipline, source, and transformation notes.
- **Migrate**: recurring or multi-user reporting should move toward a governed source or product.
- **Route**: if the request hides a pipeline, dashboard, or product need, involve the data team.

Fast test

If the original author were away tomorrow, could another person explain the source, rules, as-of, owner, and caveats without guesswork?