

The Accountable Mediation Checklist

Keeping AI-assisted work tethered to sources, evidence, and professional judgment

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Disclaimer

This checklist is intended for informational and educational purposes only. It is not legal, regulatory, audit, compliance, or professional advice. Readers should apply their own judgment and consult appropriate experts before relying on this material in high-stakes settings.

Purpose

AI tools can help professionals draft, summarize, compare, organize, and test ideas. But AI-assisted fluency can make partial contact sound complete. This checklist helps consultants, analysts, writers, governance professionals, and other knowledge workers keep AI-assisted work tethered to sources, evidence, experience, and accountable judgment.

The point is not to avoid mediation. Professional knowledge is already mediated through documents, meetings, records, expertise, data, summaries, institutions, memory, and professional judgment. The point is to discipline mediation so that claims remain traceable, proportionate, and reviewable.

This checklist is adapted from the Reality-Contact Resilience Explorer note “Reality-Contact Is Accountable Mediation,” where the central claim is that reality-contact is not purity of access, but accountable mediation. A mediated claim remains reality-tethered when usable paths remain back to the source, object, person, event, institution, data, or world being invoked.

Core Rule

Before leaning on a claim, ask:

What kind of contact supports this?

Then ask:

Is the strength of the claim proportionate to that contact?

Strong prose should not launder weak contact.

Contact-Type Tags

Use these tags in drafts, notes, margin comments, review passes, or client workpaper notes. They do not need to appear in the final published work unless disclosure, citation, policy, or professional accountability requires it.

Tag	Meaning
READ	I have read the work substantially.
PARTIAL	I have read parts, excerpts, or key passages.
SUMMARY	I know it through summaries, reviews, or secondary treatment.
REPUTATION	I know its cultural, professional, or institutional position, but not the underlying work itself.
MEMORY	I encountered it before, but details may be faded or incomplete.
DISCUSSED	I know it mainly through conversation, teaching, briefing, or professional exchange.
AI-MEDIATED	I know it through chatbot output, AI-assisted search, synthetic summary, or generated synthesis.
DATA-DERIVED	I am relying on a dataset, indicator, dashboard, table, benchmark, or metric.
EXPERIENTIAL	I know it through direct personal or professional experience.
UNVERIFIED	I cannot presently verify the claim.

These tags are not a compliance system. They are a small habit of epistemic discipline.

The Six-Question Checklist

1. Contact

What kind of contact supports the claim?

Use the contact-type tags. Be especially careful with AI-mediated claims. An AI-generated summary is contact with a synthesis. It is not automatically contact with the underlying source.

2. Proportionality

Does the claim sound stronger than the contact behind it?

Avoid writing as if you directly reviewed a source when you relied on a summary, reputation, memory, or AI synthesis. Weaker contact does not make a claim useless, but it should affect tone, confidence, and wording.

Examples:

- “This source argues...” requires stronger contact than “This source is commonly associated with...”
- “The data show...” requires stronger contact than “The available summary suggests...”
- “The rule requires...” requires stronger contact than “A secondary source describes the rule as...”

3. Traceability

Can the claim be traced back?

There should be a usable path back to the source, record, dataset, client fact, conversation, professional experience, institution, or world being described. If the path is missing, the claim should be weakened, verified, or removed.

4. Verification

What must be checked before use?

Factual, technical, legal, regulatory, financial, clinical, benefits-related, employment-related, or high-stakes claims require stronger verification than low-stakes drafting or brainstorming. When consequences rise, return to primary sources, authoritative references, client facts, source documents, or qualified human review.

5. Judgment

Who owns the conclusion?

AI may assist with drafting, comparison, critique, structure, and alternative framings. It does not own the professional judgment. The accountable professional remains responsible for the final claim, recommendation, interpretation, and communication.

6. Disclosure

Should AI assistance be disclosed?

Disclosure is appropriate when AI use is material to the work product, expected by the audience, required by policy, relevant to trust, or important to understanding how the work was prepared. Disclosure should be plain, bounded, and specific enough to distinguish drafting assistance from source authority or final judgment.

Minimum Review Standard

Before sending, publishing, or relying on an AI-assisted work product, confirm that:

- Major claims have contact-type tags in the working draft, notes, or review process.
- High-stakes claims have been checked against appropriate sources.
- AI-generated synthesis has not been treated as source authority.
- Unverified claims are labeled, softened, checked, or removed.
- Final judgment remains with a named human author, consultant, reviewer, or accountable role.

Practical Rule of Thumb

If it is only for orientation, AI-mediated contact may be enough.

If it supports a recommendation, verify it.

If it affects people, money, compliance, legal rights, safety, employment, benefits, reputation, or governance, strengthen the contact and document the review.

Optional AI Use Disclosure Language

General Professional Disclosure

AI tools were used as drafting and analytical aids in preparing this work, including for brainstorming, organizing material, summarizing inputs, comparing alternatives, testing phrasing, and identifying issues for further review. AI-generated outputs were treated as mediated synthesis, not as authoritative source material. Final claims, judgments, conclusions, and recommendations remain the responsibility of the human author.

Consultant / Client Work Disclosure

AI tools may have been used to support drafting, summarization, organization, comparison, or quality review of this work product. AI outputs were treated as draft inputs only and were subject to human review. Final conclusions, recommendations, and judgments remain the responsibility of the consultant. No AI output should be treated as a substitute for verified source material, client-specific facts, professional judgment, or applicable legal, regulatory, contractual, or fiduciary requirements.

Short-Form Disclosure

AI tools were used to assist with drafting, organization, and review. Final responsibility for the content, claims, conclusions, and judgments remains with the human author.

Bottom Line

AI-assisted work is not disqualified because it is mediated.

It becomes risky when the mediation is hidden, overstated, or disconnected from correction.

Accountable mediation keeps paths of return open: back to the source, back to the data, back to the client fact, back to the person affected, back to the institution, and back to the shared world.

Ethics, Disclosure, and Acknowledgements

Ethical Considerations

This checklist does not draw on private, sensitive, or personally identifiable data. It is intended as a practical discipline for improving transparency, proportionality, and accountability in AI-assisted professional work.

Use of AI Tools

AI language models, including ChatGPT, were used as drafting and thinking aids in developing this checklist. They were used for brainstorming, structure, wording, and consistency review. Responsibility for the final framing, claims, and conclusions remains with the human author.

Disclosure Statement

This work was conducted independently. The views expressed are the author's alone and do not represent any current or former employer. No conflicts of interest are declared.

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Related Work

This checklist is adapted from the Reality-Contact Resilience Explorer note "Reality-Contact Is Accountable Mediation."

It also complements:

- The 4-Philosophers AI Use Discipline
- Automate the Repeatable, Own the Judgment
- The CONTEXT Prompt Framework
- Where GPT Behavior Comes From

Version History and Document Status

Version	Date	Description
1.0.0	July 2026	Initial release of the Accountable Mediation Checklist, adapted from the Reality-Contact Resilience Explorer note "Reality-Contact Is Accountable Mediation."