

"Done" means what, exactly?

D8A.ACADEMY/RESOURCES/ACCEPTANCE -
CRITERIA

THE FORMAT

Given	the starting state: logged in, cart with 2 items, on the export page
When	exactly one action by one actor: clicks Export as CSV
Then	an outcome you can observe and test: a CSV downloads with all rows
And	chain sparingly. Five Ands means it is two criteria.

THE REVIEW CHECKLIST

testable	QA could automate it from the text alone
observable	a user or a test can see the outcome
singular	one behavior per criterion
edge-aware	the empty, error and permission cases exist
solution-free	says WHAT happens, not which button color

→ If QA cannot write the test from the criterion alone, the criterion is not done.

BEFORE / AFTER

"export works correctly"	Given a user with data, When they export, Then a CSV with every visible row downloads within 10s
"page is fast"	Given a cold cache, When the dashboard loads, Then content is visible in under 3s
"handles errors"	Given the API is down, When the user saves, Then a retry message shows and no data is lost

SMELLS

"user-friendly"	friendly to whom, measured how?
"fast", "robust"	adjectives are opinions. Add numbers.
"etc.", "and so on"	the missing cases are where the bugs live
"as expected"	expected by whom? That is the whole dispute.

01 Trap: criteria after coding

Written after the build, criteria describe what exists instead of what was needed.

the mistake	AC added at review time to match the demo
the symptom	every ticket passes, users still complain
the fix	criteria agreed before the first line of code

→ Acceptance criteria are a contract, and contracts signed after delivery protect nobody.

02 The three cases to always add

Happy path is one criterion. These three are where production incidents come from.

the empty case	zero rows, no data yet, brand-new account
the error case	API down, timeout, invalid input
the permission case	wrong role, expired session, shared link