SOFTWARE ACCEPTANCE TEST PLANNING / ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

Which failed test should hold up a release?

The management decision

Agree which failures would stop the business from operating before looking at the overall pass rate. A mandatory invoicing or dispatch failure warrants its own decision.

A release can look ready in a demonstration while failing the one task needed to issue an invoice or approve a dispatch. A high pass rate can hide those differences. Acceptance test planning gives business owners and delivery teams a shared view of what must work before they agree to go live.

Worked example

Twelve of 15 test scenarios pass. That is 80%, but one of the three failures could still block a mandatory customer task. Record its consequence before deciding to approve the release.

Example figure	What it represents
15	Test cases
12	Passed
3	Unresolved

What changes the answer

Suppose a fix resolves two failures and breaks one previously working task. The net improvement is one passing scenario. Retest the affected work before approving the next version.

Software acceptance test planning

What to commission

Prepare acceptance tests for one release and one essential journey, with routine cases and a material exception.

We agree what successful results look like, what evidence testers should capture and which failures would delay approval. Tests use representative examples so that people who understand the business process can take part without having to interpret a technical test script.

How to judge the result

Each mandatory task has a named reviewer, expected result and evidence that can support a go-live decision.

Weigh the cost of delay against the consequence of the unresolved defect. Recheck related tasks after each fix before revising the release decision.

Decision worksheet

Project detail	Starting point for your team
Decision owner	Release sponsor or business process owner. Name the person who will approve the next step.
Records to gather	The release scope, typical user tasks and examples of important exceptions.
Agreed output	A test workbook with sample inputs, expected results and a place to record issues.
Decision date	Record the deadline, any unresolved assumption and who will confirm it.

Discuss this case

Tell us when the software is due to go live and which tasks must work on day one. Mention who will approve the release and any failure that would affect customers, payment or delivery. An outline of one ordinary task and one exception is enough to begin.

Email info@oxetc.co.uk and mention IT-09. All figures in the worked example are illustrative.