



Terminology Standard – Template

The fillable standard: one page of vocabulary law, ratified like any other policy

Fill every bracket, strike nothing silently, and ratify with named owners — a standard nobody signed is a suggestion. The worked Meridian example in [examples/](#) shows this template filled in and in force. Keep the whole thing under three pages: a terminology standard that tries to be a dictionary will not be read; this is vocabulary law, and law is short.

1. Purpose and scope

This standard governs the vocabulary of [ORGANIZATION]'s knowledge content and client-facing materials: [SCOPE — e.g., "the knowledge base, delivery documents, proposals, and social channels"]. It exists because terms are retrieval keys — for people searching and for machines assembling answers — and because language in front of clients carries the brand. Out of scope, deliberately: [EXCLUSIONS — e.g., "third-party quotations, legal boilerplate owned by counsel, code identifiers pending the next major version"].

2. Canonical terms

One concept, one name. Synonyms map **to** the canonical term; they never appear as headings, metadata values, or first references.

Canonical term	Definition (one line)	Maps from (synonyms)	Never confused with
[TERM]	[DEFINITION]	[SYNONYM · SYNONYM]	[NEAR-MISS TERM]
[TERM]	[DEFINITION]	[SYNONYM]	[NEAR-MISS TERM]

Seed this table from your audit findings: every concept the audit found living under multiple names gets a row. Expect 10–25 rows, not 100.

3. Deprecated terms

These terms do not appear in new content. Each row records the replacement and — for contested entries — the decision, so the argument happens once.

Deprecated term	Use instead	Tier	Decision note (for judgment calls)
[TERM]	[REPLACEMENT]	1	—
[TERM]	[REPLACEMENT]	2	[WHO decided WHAT, WHEN, and the one-line why]

Seed Tier 1 from the term inventory. Walk Tier 2 in a single working session; a decision you log is a debate you never have again.

4. Naming rules

- **New names** (features, internal tools, metadata values) are checked against this standard before first public use — the cheapest moment to fix a name is before anyone has learned it.
- **Precision rule:** a replacement must be at least as precise as the term it replaces. If every candidate loses meaning, keep looking — this standard never trades clarity for comfort.
- **Idiom rule:** client-facing content prefers plain statements over idiom. An idiom that survives must survive translation: if a non-native reader (or a retrieval system) gets nothing from it, it goes.
- [ORGANIZATION-SPECIFIC RULES — e.g., product-name casing, trademark handling, abbreviation policy]

5. Enforcement

Language is checked where content is already checked — at the curation gate, using the gate addendum's line-items — not in a separate review. The deprecated-terms column doubles as a scan list: [AUTOMATION — e.g., "the CI lint job greps drafts against it; hits block merge with a link to this standard"]. Speech in meetings is coached, not policed: correct the artifact, model the replacement, move on.

6. Change process

Amendments follow the same path as any policy: proposed with a reason, decided by the owner, logged in the decision log, batched at the [CADENCE — e.g., quarterly] review. Three identical overrides in a quarter mean the standard is wrong — amend it rather than continuing to override.

7. Ownership and review

- **Owner:** [NAME, ROLE] — arbiter of contested calls between reviews
- **Review cadence:** [CADENCE] — the review reads the decision log and the audit deltas, not opinions
- **This standard lives at:** [LOCATION — the system of record, not a slide]

Ratified by: [NAME (ROLE)] · [NAME (ROLE)] · [DATE] · Terminology Governance Pack, Module 8 · Contextkeeping Toolkit

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