Release Checklist

A checklist for releasing a software version from final prep to post-release.

Plan the release

- ○ Confirm the scope and the features and fixes included in this version.
- ○ Verify all planned work is merged and the release branch is frozen.
- ○ Choose the version number using your versioning scheme.
- ○ Schedule the release date and time, and a maintenance window if needed.
- ○ Confirm owners for deploy, comms, monitoring and support.
- ○ Check for dependencies, migrations or coordinated changes.

Prepare the version

- ○ Bump the version number in code, packages and config.
- ○ Update the changelog with features, fixes and breaking changes.
- ○ Write user-facing release notes in clear, benefit-led language.
- ○ Prepare internal notes covering technical and migration details.
- ○ Tag the release in version control and create a release branch or tag.
- ○ Update documentation, help articles and API references.

Final tests and approval

- ○ Run the full automated test suite and confirm it passes.
- ○ Complete regression and smoke testing on the release candidate.
- ○ Confirm no open blocker or critical defects remain.
- ○ Verify any feature flags are set correctly for the release.
- ○ Obtain final QA and stakeholder sign-off.
- ○ Confirm rollback and backup plans are ready.

Deploy and verify

- ○ Back up the database and record the current production version.
- ○ Deploy the new version to production following your deploy process.
- ○ Run migrations and confirm they complete successfully.
- ○ Smoke test critical paths and confirm the correct version is live.
- ○ Check error rates, performance and integrations after deploy.
- ○ Roll out gradually with a canary or staged release if available.

Communicate the release

- ○ Publish release notes to users via the appropriate channels.
- ○ Notify internal teams including support, sales and product.
- ○ Brief the support team on changes and likely questions.
- ○ Update status pages or in-app announcements as needed.
- ○ Inform key customers of any breaking changes or required actions.
- ○ Confirm marketing or social posts are scheduled if planned.

Monitor and follow up

- ○ Watch dashboards, logs and alerts closely after release.

- ○ Track adoption and key metrics against expectations.
- ○ Monitor support channels for new issues or confusion.
- ○ Be ready to hotfix or roll back if a serious problem appears.
- ○ Close out release tickets and update records.
- ○ Hold a brief retrospective and capture improvements for next time.