

The Portfolio Audit: 20 Points

A companion checklist to "What Your Portfolio Is Actually Being Judged On" — CodeTalentHub.io

HOW TO USE THIS

Run through all 20 checks before you submit your next application. Most take under a minute. Be honest — the point of the audit is to catch what a time-constrained recruiter would catch, not to feel good about your GitHub profile.

SECTION 1 — GITHUB PROFILE (Items 1–7)

- **1.** Exactly 3–6 repos pinned, varied by tech stack and problem domain — not six variations of the same framework.
- **2.** Every pinned repo's description names an outcome ("cut sync latency to 200ms"), not just a technology ("React app").
- **3.** Every pinned repo has a working live demo link, or explicitly states why not (CLI tool, library, local-only).
- **4.** Your profile README exists and answers three things: what you build, what stack you prefer and why, how to reach you.
- **5.** Commit messages on your three best projects read like short technical decisions — not "fix", "update", or "stuff".
- **6.** Any repo you'd be uncomfortable discussing in an interview is set to private, not just unpinned.
- **7.** Your contribution graph shows activity in the last 30 days. A dead graph reads as disengagement, fair or not.

SECTION 2 — PROJECT & README QUALITY (Items 8–13)

- **8.** Every link in your portfolio works. Test each one manually — a 404 on your featured project is an instant rejection.
- **9.** Each README follows: problem → approach → outcome → what you'd do differently. The last part is almost always missing.
- **10.** At least one project documents an architecture decision with the tradeoff explained ("chose Postgres over SQLite because...").
- **11.** No tutorial-clone projects are pinned — no freeCodeCamp calculators, no unmodified Traversy Media walkthroughs.
- **12.** At least one open-source contribution shows a visible collaboration artifact: a PR thread, a review exchange, an issue discussion.
- **13.** If you claim AI/ML skills, there's a deployed model or working integration behind the claim — not just a Jupyter notebook.

SECTION 3 — SITE, RESUME & LINKEDIN ALIGNMENT (Items 14–20)

- **14.** If you have a personal portfolio website, it loads in under 3 seconds and works cleanly on mobile.
- **15.** Your LinkedIn headline names specific skills and current focus — not just a job title.

- **16.** Your resume has been keyword-matched against 3–5 real target job descriptions, not written once and reused everywhere.
- **17.** Every bullet point in your resume and README states an outcome with a number, not a responsibility.
- **18.** Your handle/username is consistent across GitHub, LinkedIn, resume, and portfolio site — reviewers should find the same person everywhere.
- **19.** Incomplete projects include what stopped you and what you'd do differently — reflection turns an unfinished project into a transparency signal, not a liability.
- **20.** A quarterly review is on your calendar. Outdated projects get archived or unpinned every three months, not left to accumulate.

BONUS — README TEMPLATE (Problem → Approach → Outcome)

Copy this structure into any project README. It works for finished projects, in-progress projects, and abandoned ones — the last two sections do the heavy lifting either way.

```
## [Project Name]

**What it does:** One sentence. What problem does this solve, for whom.

**Why I built it:** The specific frustration or gap that prompted this – not
"to practice React."

**Approach**
- Key architectural decision #1 and why (what tradeoff you accepted)
- Key architectural decision #2 and why
- Anything you'd call out as a deliberate constraint (time, scope, data)

**Outcome**
- What works today, in concrete terms (not "it's done")
- A number if you have one (latency, error rate, users, time saved)

**What I'd do differently**
- The honest one. This is the line that separates a builder from a
tutorial-follower.

**Stack:** [languages / frameworks / infra]
**Live demo:** [link] · **Repo:** [link]
```