Joomla Migration Checklist

Printable todo list for planning, executing and testing a Joomla migration.

Before the Migration

- [ ] Confirm the current Joomla version.
- [ ] Confirm the target Joomla version.
- [ ] Check the recommended upgrade path.
- [ ] Review PHP, database and web server requirements.
- [ ] Check whether the hosting environment supports Joomla 6.
- [ ] Create an inventory of installed extensions.
- [ ] Check extension compatibility with the target Joomla version.
- [ ] Update all compatible extensions.
- [ ] Remove unused or abandoned extensions.
- [ ] Review template compatibility.
- [ ] Check template overrides.
- [ ] Identify custom PHP, CSS or JavaScript changes.
- [ ] Review third-party integrations.
- [ ] Decide whether the existing template will be kept or replaced.
- [ ] Define the migration scope.
- [ ] Decide whether content will be cleaned before or after migration.
- [ ] Export important Joomla content if bulk review is required.
- [ ] Identify high-priority SEO pages.
- [ ] Record important existing URLs.
- [ ] Prepare a migration timeline.

Backup and Staging Checklist

- [ ] Create a full website backup.
- [ ] Back up all Joomla files.
- [ ] Export the full database.
- [ ] Download or securely store the backup outside the live website.
- [ ] Verify that the backup completed successfully.
- [ ] Test the backup restore if the website is business-critical.
- [ ] Create a staging copy of the website.
- [ ] Protect the staging site from search engines.
- [ ] Password-protect the staging site where possible.
- [ ] Update staging configuration paths.
- [ ] Disable live email sending on staging if needed.
- [ ] Disable payment gateways or switch them to test mode.
- [ ] Disable scheduled tasks that could modify data.
- [ ] Confirm that staging behaves like the live site before migration.

Content Preparation Checklist

- [ ] Review article titles.
- [ ] Review article aliases.
- [ ] Identify URLs that should not change.
- [ ] Find outdated articles.
- [ ] Find duplicate or near-duplicate articles.
- [ ] Decide which articles should be kept, improved, archived or deleted.
- [ ] Review category structure.
- [ ] Identify categories that should be merged or renamed.
- [ ] Check intro images and full article images.
- [ ] Check image paths and missing files.
- [ ] Review meta descriptions.
- [ ] Review browser page titles.
- [ ] Review custom fields.
- [ ] Review multilingual article associations if used.
- [ ] Prepare redirects for changed URLs.
- [ ] Use Content Uploader Pro to export Joomla articles to Excel or CSV where bulk review is needed.
- [ ] Use a spreadsheet to clean titles, aliases, categories, metadata, images and custom fields.
- [ ] Test content imports on staging before applying them to the final website.

Migration Execution Checklist

- [ ] Update the current Joomla branch to its latest version.
- [ ] Update all compatible third-party extensions.
- [ ] Remove incompatible extensions that are no longer needed.
- [ ] Disable extensions that must not run during migration.
- [ ] Check the Joomla pre-update information.
- [ ] Resolve PHP or database requirement warnings.
- [ ] Switch PHP version only when required and tested.
- [ ] Migrate one major Joomla version at a time where appropriate.
- [ ] Check administrator access after each major upgrade.
- [ ] Check frontend loading after each major upgrade.
- [ ] Review PHP and Joomla error logs.
- [ ] Apply Joomla database fixes where required.
- [ ] Update extensions again after each major Joomla upgrade if needed.
- [ ] Document all migration steps.
- [ ] Document every error and fix.
- [ ] Do not continue to the next major version while the current stage is unstable.

Post-Migration Testing Checklist

- [ ] Test the homepage.
- [ ] Test important article pages.
- [ ] Test category blog pages.
- [ ] Test menu items.
- [ ] Test hidden menu items used for routing or SEO.
- [ ] Test modules and module positions.
- [ ] Test contact forms.
- [ ] Test email sending.
- [ ] Test login and logout.
- [ ] Test user registration if used.
- [ ] Test password reset.
- [ ] Test user permissions and access levels.
- [ ] Test ecommerce, booking or membership functionality if used.
- [ ] Test search and filters.
- [ ] Rebuild Smart Search index if used.
- [ ] Test Media Manager.
- [ ] Test file uploads.
- [ ] Test third-party components on frontend and backend.
- [ ] Test Content Uploader Pro export and import workflows if used.
- [ ] Check mobile layout.
- [ ] Check tablet layout.
- [ ] Check browser console errors.
- [ ] Review Joomla logs.
- [ ] Review server logs.

SEO and Performance Checklist

- [ ] Check that important old URLs still work.
- [ ] Create 301 redirects for changed URLs.
- [ ] Check for 404 errors.
- [ ] Fix broken internal links.
- [ ] Remove links to staging URLs.

- [ ] Check page titles.
- [ ] Check meta descriptions.
- [ ] Check canonical URLs.
- [ ] Check robots settings.
- [ ] Remove noindex rules from live pages that should be indexed.
- [ ] Regenerate the XML sitemap.
- [ ] Submit the XML sitemap in Google Search Console.
- [ ] Check structured data if used.
- [ ] Verify analytics tracking.
- [ ] Verify conversion tracking.
- [ ] Check download tracking if used.
- [ ] Check contact form tracking if used.
- [ ] Review page speed.
- [ ] Optimise large images.
- [ ] Enable or test caching carefully.
- [ ] Check compression such as Gzip or Brotli.
- [ ] Check mobile performance.
- [ ] Monitor Search Console after launch.