CAM Software Trial Scorecard

A practical worksheet for evaluating CAM software against your real parts, machines, programmers, and production workflow.

CAM software: _____	**Vendor / reseller:** _____
Machine / controller: _____	**Test part(s):** _____

A CAM trial is not really a software trial. It is a workflow trial.
Test the path from customer geometry -> programmer -> machine -> operator -> finished part.

How to use the scorecard

1. Use real work. Select parts your shop already knows, including at least one troublesome or representative job.

2. Score each category 1-5. Use the scale at right and make notes while the experience is fresh.

3. Weight what matters. Give each category a weight from 1-5 based on its importance to your shop.

4. Calculate the weighted score. Multiply Score x Weight. Use the same method for every CAM system.

5. Mark non-negotiables first. A failed post processor or unsupported machine can outweigh a high total score.

6. Repeat the same test. Use the same parts, machines, questions, and evaluators whenever practical.

Suggested scoring scale

5 - Excellent	Strong fit; little compromise or extra work.
4 - Good	Meets needs well; minor limitations.
3 - Acceptable	Usable, but meaningful tradeoffs exist.
2 - Weak	Significant friction or implementation burden.
1 - Poor	Does not meet the shop's practical requirement.

Weighting guide

5 = Critical 4 = Very important 3 = Important 2 = Useful 1 = Minor

Weighting is optional, but it prevents a long list of nice-to-have features from overpowering the few capabilities that determine whether the CAM system can actually run your work.

Before the trial clock starts

[ ] Collect 2-4 representative test parts	[ ] Confirm machine/controller and post availability	[ ] Gather programming or cycle-time benchmarks
[ ] Gather training/tutorial materials	[ ] Identify must-pass requirements	[ ] Decide who will evaluate and score

Non-negotiable / pass-fail requirements

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Score 1-5. Weight 1-5. Weighted Score = Score x Weight. Use Notes for observations, risks, and follow-up questions.

Evaluation area	What to test	Score 1-5	Weight 1-5	Weighted score	Notes
CAD import & geometry preparation	Imports customer files cleanly; repair and modification are practical.				
Programming speed	Time from geometry to a program you would trust on the machine.				
Toolpath quality	Stable, efficient motion with sensible linking, entry, exit, and retract behavior.				
Cycle-time potential	Reduces air cutting, unnecessary motion, and machining time.				
Tool & holder management	Practical creation, reuse, sharing, and maintenance of shop tooling.				
Feeds & speeds management	Useful cutting data and control for materials, tools, and processes.				
Machine support	Accurate support for your machine configuration, axes, kinematics, and controller.				
Post-processor quality	Reliable NC output for your actual machine/controller; customization is manageable.				
Simulation & collision detection	Useful verification of stock, tools, holders, fixtures, axes, and machine motion.				
Handling engineering changes	Toolpaths survive realistic model revisions with limited rework.				
Setup sheets & documentation	Clear communication of tools, fixtures, offsets, setups, and instructions.				
Ease of learning	Another programmer can become productive without excessive training.				
Vendor / reseller support	Responsive, technically capable help with applications, posts, machines, and training.				
Implementation requirements	Reasonable setup for machines, posts, libraries, translators, and migration.				
Total cost	License plus posts, modules, services, training, maintenance, hardware, and programmer time.				

Total weighted score: _____ **Pass/fail requirements met?** [ ] Yes [ ] No **Recommendation:** [ ] Advance [ ] Re-test [ ] Reject

Final observations / issues to resolve before purchase