Engineer Advisory

Enabled every linter rule as an error

Selected every rule the Python linter has as an error, working through 1,815 findings to reach zero, with each of the few exemptions carrying a written reason and two of them backed by a checker instead of a comment.

September 2026

1,815

linter findings worked through to zero

Situation. Most projects pick a comfortable subset of their linter's rules, and the subset is chosen by whichever rules were quiet on the day it was configured. That makes the configuration a record of the code's existing habits rather than a standard the code is held to, and every rule left off is a class of defect nobody will ever be told about.

Task. The default had to be inverted — every rule the tool implements enabled as an error — and the resulting backlog worked to zero rather than negotiated down by turning rules back off.

Action. Selecting the complete rule set produced 1,815 findings on first run. They were worked through by category rather than by file, because the categories tell you something: unused arguments and shadowed builtins are noise, but the security category, the mutable-default category and the exception-handling category each pointed at real behaviour. Genuine incompatibilities exist — a formatter and a linter can disagree about the same line, and a few rules contradict the project's own deliberate choices — and each of the small number of exemptions carries a written reason at the point of exemption saying what the rule wanted and why this code does otherwise. Two of them go further and are backed by a check rather than a comment, so the exemption cannot quietly widen: the rule is off, and a test asserts the specific property the rule would have enforced. Type checking runs in strict mode alongside it, which is a separate and harder standard, and it is the one that caught defects the linter could not see because they are about what a value is rather than how it is written.

Result. The linter runs at full strength with zero findings, and every deviation is documented at the line where it is taken. The cost is real and worth naming: the strictest setting produces findings that are genuinely not worth acting on, and someone has to make that judgement 1,815 times rather than once.

Bring this experience to your project

Use “Enabled every linter rule as an error” as a starting point for a similar challenge in your organisation. The services behind this work are available for your project. Somebody on your side of the table when a supplier, a budget or an architecture decision needs a second informed opinion.

Explore our services Get in touch →

Look behind the result

Read the situation, decisions and result in this example. We can discuss which parts transfer to your constraints and which need another approach. Enabled every linter rule as an error — 1,815 linter findings worked through to zero

Explore our services Get in touch →

Ready to turn every warning into a real error?

Talk through your project with the engineer responsible for delivery. We agree the scope, price basis and handover in writing before work begins.

Role context: Python Engineer. It draws on DevOps, Automation & CI/CD, Testing & QA, Python and Documentation. And while you are here, we are rather good at Backend & API Development, DevOps & CI/CD Automation and Technical Leadership & Consulting.

Get in touch Explore our services

One piece of **a longer record** — and it is all on this site.

Every entry is written the same way: the situation, the task, what we did and what changed.

See the whole record

Define the improvement you need

Bring the decision, the people affected and the options already considered. We can make the tradeoffs explicit and leave a documented recommendation.

See what it costs Get in touch →

Ready to turn every warning into a real error?

Ask about the decisions behind “Enabled every linter rule as an error”. You will speak with the people who can explain the work and assess your own project.

Explore our services

welcome@engineer.company +45 50 10 61 84 Copenhagen, Denmark

Take this page with you

Contact card

Carefully Crafted With Love by D.

CVR 45969703 · Tagensvej 105C, 3. th, 2200 København N

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