

Teams, diversity and inclusion

This topic has no formulas, so this page gives five key rules, each with a worked example, then the two model sheets. They serve IPMA, PMI and APM exams alike.

KEY RULES

Build the team on purpose

skills + motivation + fit with others → clear roles → a working agreement the team writes

It covers meetings, decisions, conflicts and what 'done' means. PMI: team charter; APM's glossary: project charter; the ICB4: team norms and rules. Review it whenever people join.

Example: A team of 12 from 2 organisations writes a 1-page agreement in week 1: core hours, a decision log, and concerns raised within 1 working day

Five conditions for an effective team (after Hackman, 2002)

a real team · a compelling direction · an enabling structure · a supportive context · expert coaching

A real team has clear members who depend on one another. Its goal is clear and worth the effort; its size, roles and norms fit the task; the organisation backs it; coaching comes at key moments.

Example: 9 people report to 3 different managers and share no goal: not yet a real team. First agree who the members are, 1 shared goal, and who coaches them

Diversity pays only with inclusion

diversity (who is in the team) + inclusion (every voice heard) → better solutions

Diversity without inclusion is wasted; inclusion without diversity brings few new ideas (after APM BoK 8, §4.5.1). Fairness means adapting to each person's needs. Check selection, credit and decisions for bias.

Example: In a design review of 8 people, the 2 who seldom speak write their views first, and 1 of them spots a rule the design breaks

Decide in two steps: diverge, then converge

name the decider → collect views, each person alone → discuss → decide → record why

The senior voice speaks last. One person deciding is fast but misses views; a group decision is slower but earns commitment. Escalate what is beyond the team's authority.

Example: 5 people each write 2 options before the meeting: $5 \times 2 = 10$ options on the table, not only the 1 the manager brought

Distributed teams: the same access for everyone

one screen each · meetings in the overlap hours · written norms · trust built on purpose

If one person is remote, run the meeting as if everyone were. Agree channels and response times. PMI and the ICB4: virtual teams; APM: dispersed teams; the PMQ adds hybrid.

Example: 2 offices, one 2 hours ahead, both open 09:00–17:00 local time: 6 hours of overlap (09:00–15:00 in the west, 11:00–17:00 in the east)

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Sources: IPMA ICB4 (2015); PMI, PMBOK® Guide, 8th ed.; PMI, PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); APM Body of Knowledge, 8th ed.; APM, PMQ handbook (v6, 2026); Tuckman (1965); Tuckman & Jensen (1977); Edmondson, The Fearless Organization; Hackman, Leading Teams (2002); IPMA International Certification Regulations (ICR) v4.4 (2025)

Key: IPMA = International Project Management Association; ICB4 = IPMA's Individual Competence Baseline (4.5.1 etc.: its competence elements); PMI = Project Management Institute; PMBOK® Guide = PMI's body-of-knowledge guide; PMP® = PMI's Project Management Professional; APM = Association for Project Management; BoK = APM's Body of Knowledge; PMQ = APM's Project Management Qualification; ICR = IPMA's International Certification Regulations. Unofficial study material for IPMA®, PMI® and APM exams. Not affiliated with, endorsed by or approved by IPMA, PMI or APM, and not an accredited or endorsed training provider. IPMA® and IPMA ICB® are registered trademarks of IPMA in Switzerland and other countries. PMI, PMP, CAPM and PMBOK are registered marks of Project Management Institute, Inc. APM is a trade mark of the Association for Project Management. Other marks belong to their owners. PMP® exam facts are from PMI's public PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); check the current version on pmi.org. APM's qualifications are its own; this series is not an APM Accredited Provider or APM Endorsed. Examples use a fictional city and its projects.



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Team development stages

Recognise where a team stands in its development, and change what you do as its leader so that the team can move on.

STAGE	WHAT YOU SEE	YOUR MOVE
Forming	Polite, careful, unsure of roles	Clear goal and roles; time to meet
Storming	Open disagreement on work and roles	Let views out; keep them on the work
Norming	Own rules; trust grows	Let the team set norms; step back
Performing	Solves most problems itself	Delegate; remove obstacles
Adjourning	The work ends; people move on	Thank, capture lessons, next roles

Stage names after Tuckman (1965) and Tuckman and Jensen (1977); the signs, moves and layout are our own. Teams can stall, slip back or skip a stage.

WHAT IT IS

Bruce Tuckman (1965) reviewed studies of small groups and named four stages: **forming, storming, norming and performing**. With Mary Ann Jensen (1977) he added **adjourning**. It is a pattern, not a timetable: teams stall, slip back when people join or leave, or skip a stage. As a team matures, its leader moves from direction to delegation.

HOW IT WORKS

- 01 Watch the signs: how people talk, disagree and decide.
- 02 Adjust your move: less direction, more delegation.
- 03 When people join or leave, form the team again.
- 04 Plan the end: thanks, lessons, each person's next role.

MID-LEVEL · WORKED EXAMPLE

Apply it well

The situation: A city team of 7 staff and a supplier team of 5 has eight months to move resident parking permits online. They start as two groups; in month 3 they argue about who tests what.

In week one, the project manager runs a joint start: one goal, clear roles, a working agreement both groups write (forming). When they argue (storming), she keeps it on the work; the team agrees who tests what and adds it to the agreement (norming).

In the exam: Name the stage from what you saw, your move and why, and what changed. Mention a step back after people joined or left.

SENIOR · WORKED EXAMPLE

Design and lead it

The situation: A city is joining 14 online services under one login over 30 months, in 3 groups of services; staff from 2 suppliers and the owners of 9 older systems come and go with each group.

The project manager plans a fresh start for each group, with one working agreement for all parties. She coaches her team leads to read their team's stage, and plans each ending with line managers: thanks, lessons, next roles.

In the exam: Show that you designed team development for many teams: planned fresh starts, developed other leaders, and agreed people's release with line managers.

WHERE IT SITS

IPMA · ICB4	PMI · PMBOK® GUIDE 8 · PMP® EXAM	APM · BOK 8 · PMQ EXAM
4.4.6.1, p. 81: the leader's activities change as the team matures. Knowledge: team life cycle models, none named	Guide: the Tuckman ladder, p. 211 (teams may get stuck, regress or skip). Exam outline: People, task 3	BoK (APM's Body of Knowledge) §4.4.1: five stages in APM's words, inspired by Tuckman, ending in reintegration. PMQ (APM's Project Management Qualification) objective 13a

Sources: Tuckman (1965); Tuckman & Jensen (1977); IPMA ICB4 (2015); PMI, PMBOK® Guide, 8th ed.; PMI, PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); APM Body of Knowledge, 8th ed.; APM, PMQ handbook (v6, 2026)

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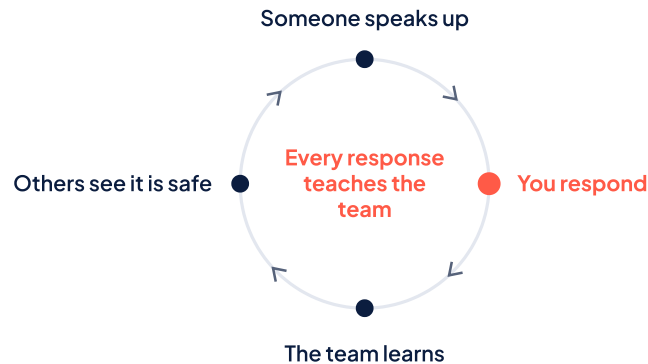
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Psychological safety

Build a team climate where people raise concerns and mistakes early, while problems are small.



Our own loop, after Edmondson (2018). Thanks and help make the next speak-up likelier; blame makes silence likelier.

WHAT IT IS

Amy Edmondson (2018) describes **psychological safety** as a shared belief in a team that people can ask, disagree or admit a mistake without being embarrassed or punished. It belongs to the group, unlike trust between two people, and it does **not** lower standards: a strong team needs both. Our loop shows why: every response to a speak-up teaches the team.

HOW IT WORKS

- 01 Set the stage: say that you need every view.
- 02 Invite input: real questions, the quiet people first.
- 03 Respond well: thank, help, fix the cause in the process.
- 04 Keep standards: deliberate breaches get a firm response.

MID-LEVEL · WORKED EXAMPLE

Apply it well

The situation: A city team is moving resident parking permits online in eight months. A tester finds a flaw in the migrated data that the team had missed for 2 weeks.

The project manager thanks her in the weekly meeting. The team traces the flaw to a missing check, not a person, and adds it. Weekly meetings now open with: what worries you this week?

In the exam: Describe a moment when someone raised a problem, how you responded, and what changed. Link it to learning from mistakes, not to being nice.

SENIOR · WORKED EXAMPLE

Design and lead it

The situation: A city is joining 14 online services under one login over 30 months, with 2 suppliers, 9 system owners and a board; a council election in month 20 adds pressure.

The project manager agrees with the board that early warnings are welcome from every party; the sponsor thanks the first ones in public. After incidents, her team leads run reviews without blame.

In the exam: Show how you built safety across organisations and levels, through the sponsor, reviews and other leaders, while keeping standards high.

WHERE IT SITS

IPMA · ICB4	PMI · PMBOK® GUIDE 8 · PMP® EXAM	APM · BOK 8 · PMQ EXAM
4.4.6.5, pp. 82–83: tolerate mistakes and learn from them; 4.4.6.2: ask for concerns. The term is not used	Guide: open and safe communication, p. 86; a safe, respectful setting, p. 89. Exam outline: People, task 3	BoK (APM's Body of Knowledge) §4.4.1 (teams challenge one another), §4.5.2 (everyone welcome). PMQ (APM's Project Management Qualification) objectives 13b and 14b

Sources: Edmondson, The Fearless Organization; IPMA ICB4 (2015); PMI, PMBOK® Guide, 8th ed.; PMI, PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); APM Body of Knowledge, 8th ed.; APM, PMQ handbook (v6, 2026)

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