

## Guidelines for Writing a Team Contract

### Rationale

According to concepts from Organizational Behavior, there are five stages of team development:

- **Forming Stage:** Teams tend to communicate in indirect polite ways rather than more directly.
- **Storming Stage:** Characterized by conflict, teams can be often be productive, but may consume excessive amounts of time and energy. In this stage it is important to listen well for differing expectations.
- **Norming Stage:** Teams formulate roles and standards, increasing trust and communication. This norming stage is characterized by agreement on procedures, reduction in role ambiguity, and increased “we-ness” or unity.
- **Performing Stage:** Teams achieve their goals, are highly task oriented, and focus on performance and production.
- **Adjourning Stage:** The task has been completed, the team adjourns.

To accelerate a team's development, a team contract is generated to establish procedures and roles in order to move the team more quickly into the performing stage.

Successful team performance depends on personal individual accountability. In a team environment, individuals are usually effectively motivated to maximize their own rewards and minimize their own costs. However, conflicts can arise when individualistic motives or behaviors disrupt team-oriented goals. For example, conflicts can stem from an unequal division of resources. When team members believe they are receiving too little for what they are giving, they sometimes reduce their effort and turn in work of lower quality. At this point, some individual team members may take on extra responsibilities while other team members may reduce their own efforts or withdraw from the team completely. These behaviors may engender anger, frustration, or isolation—resulting in a dysfunctional team and poor quality of work.

However, with a well-formulated team contract, such obstacles can usually be avoided.

### Team Contract Assignment

Your team contract template is divided into three major sections:

1. Establishing team procedures
2. Identifying expectations
3. Specifying the consequences for failing to follow these procedures and fulfill these expectations.

Since the basic purpose of this team contract is to accelerate your team's development, to increase individual accountability for team tasks, and to reduce the possibility for team conflict, make your contract **as specific as possible**. The more specifically you describe your team expectations, roles, and procedures, the greater chance you have for a successful team experience.



Use the Team Contract template to discuss and finalize your team roles, procedures, and standards. Complete, sign, and submit a **copy** of your finalized contract to your Housing Institute staff leader.

## TEAM CONTRACT

**Housing Institute Team:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Team Members:**

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	

**Team Procedures**

1. Day, time, and place for regular **team meetings between Housing Institute Workshops:**
2. Preferred method of **communication** (e.g., email, cell phone, work phone, face-to-face) in order to inform each other of team meetings, announcements, updates, reminders, problems:
3. **Decision-making policy** (by consensus? by majority vote?):
4. Method for setting and following meeting **agendas** (Who will set each agenda? When? How will team members be notified/reminded? Who will be responsible for the team following the agenda during a team meeting? What will be done to keep the team on track during a meeting?):
5. Method of **record keeping** (Who will be responsible for recording & disseminating minutes? How & when will the minutes be disseminated? Where will all agendas & minutes be kept?):

## **Team Expectations**

### **Work Quality**

1. **Project standards** (What is a realistic level of quality for team presentations, collaborative writing, individual research, preparation of drafts, peer reviews, etc.?)

2. **Strategies** to fulfil these standards:

### **Team Participation**

1. Strategies to ensure cooperation and equal distribution of tasks:

2. Strategies for encouraging/including ideas from all team members (team maintenance):

3. Strategies for keeping on task (task maintenance):

4. Preferences for leadership (informal, formal, individual, shared):

### **Personal Accountability**

1. Expected individual attendance, punctuality, and participation at all team meetings:

2. Expected level of responsibility for fulfilling team assignments, timelines, and deadlines:

3. Expected level of communication with other team members:

4. Expected level of commitment to team decisions and tasks.

**Consequences for Failing to Follow Procedures and Fulfill Expectations**

1. Describe, as a group, you would handle **infractions** of any of the obligations of this team contract:

2. Describe what your team will do **if the infractions continue:**

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- a) *I participated in formulating the standards, roles, and procedures as stated in this contract.*
- b) *I understand that I am obligated to abide by these terms and conditions.*
- c) *I understand that if I do not abide by these terms and conditions, I will suffer the consequences as stated in this contract.*

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_