Teamwork Guidelines

Step 1 - Create your repository

- Create a new *group* repository on GitLab.
- Add your teammate as a group member.
- Create a new project in the group and mark it as private. **Add your trainers as members (with Reporter role)**. Adding the trainers as members will send them email notification with url of the repo.
- Create a README.md file in your repository with details about your project.

Step 2 – Plan your tasks

How you organize you work is crucial to the success of the team. Create a GitLab Issues board with the following data, fill it and keep it updated:

You can have several columns (lists) in the board:

- **Open** – the backlog of your project, containing all open issues
- **To do** – issues that have been assigned and scheduled with a deadline
- **Doing** – what issues are currently in progress (no more than 2 per person)
- **For review** – the issues that need to be reviewed by your teammates
- **Closed** – all issues that are done

You can use different issues for different purposes:

- **Features**:
  - **Name** - the name of the card would be the given feature/task that needs to be done.
  - **Size** - what is the size of the feature in terms of programming effort i.e., Large/Medium/Small.
  - **Priority** - what is the importance of the feature i.e., Must/Should/Could.
  - **Owner** - who is responsible for the successful completion of the given feature/task.
- **Bugs**:
  - **Name** - the name of the card would be the given issue/problem of the software that need to be fixed.
  - **Size** - what is the size of the feature in terms of programming effort i.e., Large/Medium/Small.
  - **Priority** - what is the importance of the feature i.e., Must/Should/Could.
  - **Owner** - who is responsible for the successful completion of the given feature/task.
- **Ideas** - any additional ideas for new features or improvements in the project.
  - **Name** - the name of the card would be a short description of the idea that occurred to you.

Step 3 – Coding!

Try to adhere to this project specification and make your project as close to it as possible. Also, do not go crazy on features, implement a few but implement them amazingly!

Always remember, quality over quantity!

Step 4 – Validation.

Review the code and test the behavior of the features of your team members. All team members should be aware how a feature works, even if they were not the ones to implement it.

Step 5 – Teamwork.

It is important that you work as a team towards a common goal:

- You should prepare a common plan that you agree to follow.
- You should take responsibility for your tasks.
- You should communicate and ask for details with regards to the project implementation.
- You should be able to explain how you have contributed to the project.
- You should be able to explain the source code of your team members.

Step 6 – Give Feedback about Your Teammates.

You will be asked to provide feedback about your teammates, their attitude to this project, their technical skills, their team working skills, their contribution to the project, etc. The feedback is important part of the project evaluation so take it seriously and be honest.

Working Effectively in Teams

Project Scope and Ground Rules

Establish project objectives, team norms and guidelines.

To work effectively as a team discussing project objectives and assigning team roles, guidelines and division of labor is critical. Think through who will:

- Schedule meetings and make sure you follow a timeline/agenda
- Take notes at meetings to send to everyone afterwards
- Research topics for the project
- Compile and design presentation for partners[i]
- Present your project work[ii]

Create a timeline and split work into smaller tasks

A timeline is important to make sure the project isn't left until the last minute. This will also help estimate work effort and identify dependencies between activities (one cannot start if the other hasn't finished, etc.) Set aside buffer time in case there are delays in delivery.

Discuss and assign tasks according to each person's preferences to make it less overwhelming. This also makes it easier to complete the project work because team members can work independently on their sections. Write off the tasks and time estimates in the project management system in GitLab.

Schedule Meetings

Your team meetings can be in person or virtual. This will allow you keep yourselves on track and ensure you have an opportunity to share ideas, notes and research.

Discuss communication ground rules.

However, you decide to organize your communication, it is important to set mutually agreed upon ground rules for contribution. For example, if you miss a meeting, you could be expected to get back to the person in 24 hrs. Or, if you consistently miss meetings/fail to communicate/produce work, you may not be given credit for the project. Life happens. Put yourself in the shoes of your team members. Try and understand where they are coming from and be inclusive as much as possible.

Peer-to-Peer Feedback

Keep a Positive Mindset

The first thing to remember when giving or receiving feedback is that it's intended to help. It shouldn't be viewed as a personal attack. Feedback should be

written/delivered with positive intentions: To help your peers grow as they progress along their career journey.

Be Specific and Actionable

When possible, try to provide actionable steps for improvement. For example, rather than saying, "You need to be better about finishing projects on schedule", you could say, "It would be helpful if you provided progress updates so that we can offer additional support as deadlines approach."

Focus on Problems, Not People

Again, constructive criticism shouldn't feel like a personal attack. To avoid defensiveness, you should focus on your peers' work, not their personality. Writing comments in the passive voice can actually help with this. For example, rather than saying, "You didn't provide enough data in the presentation," you could say, "The presentation would be more convincing if it included more data."

Teamwork Challenges and Solutions

Challenges	Description	Solution
Scheduling problems	This can create roadblocks to getting started/continuing with your project. It can be frustrating for you as a learner to feel that others aren't compromising and don't take their situation into consideration.	• Try and be understanding of your team member's schedules and responsibilities which may be different from your own. • Consider using online channels to communicate. • Take turns picking when and where you will be meeting next time.
Group conflict	Group conflict is natural and often necessary for effective projects. Sometimes though, it escalates and makes it even more difficult to focus.	• Don't let personal feelings impact your work in the team. Focus on the task. • Address issues openly directly and respectfully. • Try and find common ground between two ideas to reach compromise.
Uneven contribution	Some team members don't contribute to the team project or aren't perceived to be contributing to the team. This creates tension in	• Discuss and set clear guidelines and work expectations at the beginning of the team project.

	the team and is unfair to the team members	• Assign roles and responsibilities so that each person will be making an equal contribution. • Speak directly, but respectfully to the person who is not completing their work.
Different expectations	Some members strive for perfection, while others simply want to pass. Some begin projects in advance, while others procrastinate. This can create tension because the team is not working towards the same goal.	• Early communication is key to make sure everyone is focused on common goals. • Keep goals realistic and understand that your actions affect others in the team. • Make a timeline so that your team can stay on an agreed plan for getting the project done.
Getting stuck	At some point teams may get 'stuck' and hit a mental roadblock. This is discouraging and can lead to procrastination and avoidance.	• Reread project requirements and goals. • Have a brainstorming session where ideas are discussed. • Seek help from trainers and your peers and/or mentors, if you remain stuck.
Groupthink	'Groupthink' occurs when members of a group agree with other group members to avoid conflict. This kills creativity and constructive evaluation of alternative ideas.	• Thinking critically about ideas presented, offering and assessing alternatives, and embracing diverse opinions from team members. • Work through projects analytically using the teams' combined knowledge and experience.

i This is applicable for the final project
ii This is applicable for the final project