

INCLUSIVE MINDSET, BELONGING & ORGANIZATIONAL INCLUSION

SHRM Learning Lab Study Guide | Inclusive Mindset

PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVE

This guide develops Inclusive Mindset as it is defined in the 2026 SHRM BASK. The competency is broader than demographic representation. It addresses fair and respectful treatment, access to opportunity and resources, belonging, collaboration across differences, organizational inclusion, equity, bias, cultural awareness, and effective operation across diverse boundaries worldwide.

STUDY BOUNDARY

The guide does not reteach general leadership theory, influence, motivation, ethical decision frameworks, confidentiality, investigations, employment discrimination law, recruiting systems, compensation systems, or global workforce management as stand-alone topics. Those areas appear only where the Inclusive Mindset sources explicitly connect them to inclusion.

Controlling authority: 2026 SHRM Body of Applied Skills and Knowledge (SHRM BASK). Supporting instructional content is synthesized only from the approved SHRM study materials available in the designated SHRM-SCP study collection.

01 2026 SHRM BASK CONTEXT

Inclusive Mindset is one of the three competencies in the 2026 Leadership Cluster. It is a newly refined 2026 competency created by combining the prior Inclusion & Diversity and Global Mindset competencies to reduce overlap and reflect current global HR practice.

OFFICIAL 2026 DEFINITION

The 2026 SHRM BASK defines Inclusive Mindset as the KSAOs needed to create a work environment in which individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, feel a sense of belonging, and can collaborate with understanding and shared purpose across diverse boundaries worldwide in support of organizational success.

OFFICIAL 2026 SUBCOMPETENCIES

- Connecting I&D to Organizational Performance — champions the importance of inclusion and diversity efforts in achieving key objectives and organizational goals.
- Building the Infrastructure for an Inclusive and Diverse Culture — creates and advocates for a framework that supports and promotes an inclusive and respectful work environment.
- Ensuring Impartiality & Fairness — safeguards fair treatment in access, opportunity, and advancement.
- Cultivating an Inclusive and Diverse Culture — cultivates a workplace in which people feel safe, welcomed, respected, supported, and a sense of belonging.
- Operating in a Global Environment — operates effectively in a workplace with a global focus to achieve organizational goals.

KEY CONCEPTS NAMED IN THE 2026 BASK

- Characteristics of a dynamic workforce: multigenerational, multicultural, multilingual, multitalented, and multigendered.
- Approaches to developing an inclusive workplace, including executive sponsorship, leadership buy-in, unconscious bias training, inclusive employee resource groups, mentorship, diversity metrics, psychological safety, strategic alignment, and coaching.
- Employee solutions supporting participation and access, including accessibility and flexible-work examples.
- Barriers to success involving conscious and unconscious bias, including stereotypes, ingroup/outgroup bias, social comparison bias, ableism, ageism, neurodiversity bias, microaggressions, identity covering, imposter syndrome, and cultural taxation.
- Techniques to measure and increase equity.
- I&D metrics.
- Cultural norms, values, and dimensions.
- Techniques for bridging and leveraging individual differences and perceptions.
- Best practices for creating and managing globally diverse workforces.

02 FOUNDATIONS OF INCLUSIVE MINDSET

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, EQUITY, AND BELONGING ARE RELATED BUT NOT IDENTICAL

The SHRM competency materials define diversity as differences between individuals on attributes that may cause another person to be perceived as different from oneself. Diversity therefore describes difference and variation within a workforce or group.

The instructional materials frame inclusion differently: diversity asks who is present, while inclusion asks whether people are welcomed and valued once they are present. The SHRM BASK definition of inclusion focuses on the extent to which a person is and feels welcomed, respected, supported, and valued as a team member.

Belonging is embedded directly in the 2026 Inclusive Mindset definition and in Cultivating an Inclusive and Diverse Culture. Belonging reflects the experienced condition of being accepted and supported as a legitimate member of the workplace, rather than simply being represented within it.

Equity is also distinct from equality. The SHRM materials define equality as equal treatment of individuals and groups. Equity is a relative form of equality that considers individual needs and characteristics, situational context, and circumstances that produce disparate outcomes. In practice, equity asks whether people have a fair ability to participate and contribute, not merely whether everyone receives an identical input.

THREE TYPES OF DIVERSITY IN THE SHRM MATERIALS

Type	Source-supported meaning	Why it matters for inclusion
Legacy diversity	Generally recognizable or visible traits such as culture, race/ethnicity, nationality, gender, physical attributes, age, and language.	Visible or socially recognized differences may affect access, assumptions, interactions, and belonging.
Experiential diversity	Differences based on lived experience, such as upbringing, education, family, hobbies, and interests.	Shared experiences can create connection, but they can also contribute to cliques or exclusion.
Thought diversity	Different perspectives influenced by education, socioeconomic background, and other experiences.	Different perspectives can reduce groupthink, add insight to decisions, and broaden problem solving.

INCLUSION IS AN ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

The sources do not treat inclusion as a matter of interpersonal politeness alone. Inclusive Mindset connects individual behavior with organizational structures, policies, culture, access, metrics, leadership sponsorship, and business outcomes. An organization can have a diverse workforce and still have weak inclusion if people do not have meaningful access, participation, support, or influence.

INCLUSION AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS

Connecting I&D to Organizational Performance makes the business connection explicit. HR is expected to connect inclusion and diversity practices to measurable organizational objectives, rather than treating I&D as a separate activity with no relationship to organizational performance. The competency materials identify benefits such as attracting and retaining talent, collaboration, flexibility, and stronger organizational effectiveness.

03 UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENCE, PERSPECTIVE & BIAS

DIFFERENCE DOES NOT PREDICT THE INDIVIDUAL

Cultural and demographic frameworks can help HR recognize patterns, but the Inclusive Mindset sources also require respect for individuals and their specific circumstances. Cultural awareness should expand inquiry, not replace it with assumptions. A person should not be treated as a stereotype of a demographic, national, generational, cultural, or other group.

CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

The SHRM materials divide bias into two broad categories. Conscious bias is bias the individual recognizes in themselves. It can produce intentional exclusion or other deliberate behavior. Unconscious bias operates without the person recognizing the bias, yet it can still shape attitudes, behavior, and decisions.

Unconscious bias is presented as pervasive and capable of operating at both individual and systemic levels. Its effects may be small in a single interaction but significant when repeated through organizational decisions and processes. The instructional emphasis is therefore not simply on proving intent; it is on identifying and reducing the effects of bias.

BIAS BARRIERS NAMED IN THE 2026 BASK

The BASK lists a broad set of barriers involving conscious and unconscious bias. These examples should be recognized as possible inclusion signals rather than treated as a separate legal taxonomy.

- Gender-based discrimination and racism, including systemic racism.
- Stereotypes.
- Ageism and ableism.
- Ingroup/outgroup bias.
- Sexual orientation bias.
- Social comparison bias.

- Extroversion/introversion bias.
- Neurodiversity bias.
- Microaggressions.
- Personal barriers such as imposter syndrome and identity covering.
- Cultural taxation.

STEREOTYPE VS. BIAS

A stereotype is a generalized belief or assumption about a group. Bias is a preference, inclination, or judgment that can shape perception and action. A stereotype can feed bias, but the concepts are not identical. In an SHRM scenario, the important application is whether assumptions about a group are replacing fair assessment of the actual person or situation.

INTERSECTIONALITY

The SHRM competency materials recognize that individuals can hold multiple overlapping identities and that these combinations can shape distinct experiences. Inclusive practice therefore avoids reducing an employee to one dimension of diversity.

INCLUSIVE INTENT VS. INCLUSIVE IMPACT

The sources' treatment of unconscious bias makes an important application point: a person may lack deliberate discriminatory intent and still contribute to exclusionary effects. Inclusive Mindset therefore evaluates the effect of behavior and systems, not only the stated intention behind them.

04 INCLUSIVE BEHAVIORS & INTERPERSONAL PRACTICE

RESPECT, ACCEPTANCE, AND ADAPTABILITY

At the interpersonal level, Inclusive Mindset requires awareness of cultural differences, respectful daily interaction, acceptance of colleagues from different cultures, and the ability to adapt behavior to different cultural conditions, situations, and people.

OPENNESS TO PERSPECTIVE

The competency materials support practices that expose employees to different experiences and viewpoints, including inclusive ERGs, reverse mentorship, focus groups, mentoring, and opportunities to work with people from different backgrounds. The purpose is not difference for its own sake; it is to improve understanding, participation, collaboration, and organizational effectiveness.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Psychological safety is explicitly listed in the 2026 BASK as an approach to developing an inclusive workplace. The competency materials connect it to an environment in which people can contribute, collaborate, share learning, report errors, and participate in innovation without interpersonal conditions suppressing their voice.

At the advanced level, the BASK specifically expects HR professionals to develop policies and programs that support and reinforce psychological safety. This places psychological safety within organizational inclusion when the issue is whether employees can participate and contribute across differences.

AUTHENTICITY AND IDENTITY COVERING

The sources connect inclusion with authenticity. Identity covering is listed as a barrier to success, and advanced professionals are expected to drive a culture that supports authentic, courageous, and honest I&D-related conversations. An inclusive workplace does not require people to suppress meaningful parts of themselves merely to fit an assumed dominant norm.

COMMUNICATION ACROSS DIFFERENCES

Inclusive communication requires respect for differences in language, cultural norms, accepted behavior, and individual preference. In a global context, this may include accurate translation, sensitivity to local communication norms, and practical adjustments such as accounting for time zones. The competency does not require HR to abandon organizational standards; it requires HR to distinguish legitimate organizational needs from avoidable barriers created by assumptions or home-country bias.

05 BELONGING, PARTICIPATION & WORKPLACE INCLUSION

BELONGING IS MORE THAN PRESENCE

The 2026 definition explicitly includes a sense of belonging. Presence answers whether someone is in the room. Belonging asks whether the person experiences themselves as accepted, respected, supported, and able to participate as a legitimate member of the group.

REPRESENTATION VS. MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

Representation is a workforce-composition question. Meaningful participation concerns whether people have access to opportunity, resources, voice, support, and advancement. The BASK therefore includes both diversity metrics and practices intended to create equal opportunity, equity, psychological safety, and inclusion.

ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY

Ensuring Impartiality & Fairness and Building the Infrastructure for an Inclusive and Diverse Culture both focus on access. The source-supported issue is whether organizational structures create or remove barriers to opportunity. Examples in the BASK include accessibility, flexible work options, culturally inclusive practices, and other employee solutions.

EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

The SHRM materials describe ERGs as employee groups that can serve multiple functions: social connection and support, career development, organizational input, advocacy, mentoring, education, and

communication with inclusion councils. Their inclusion value comes from providing structured connection and voice, not simply from the existence of affinity groups.

MUTUAL RESPECT, TRUST, AND RETALIATION

Cultivating an Inclusive and Diverse Culture includes supporting workplace culture and practices characterized by mutual respect, trust, and zero tolerance for retaliation. In an Inclusive Mindset scenario, this matters particularly when fear of negative interpersonal consequences prevents participation, voice, or belonging.

06 BUILDING INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES

LEADERSHIP BUY-IN AND EXECUTIVE SPONSORSHIP

The 2026 BASK identifies leadership buy-in and executive sponsorship as approaches to developing an inclusive workplace. Inclusion initiatives are more likely to become part of organizational practice when leaders visibly support them, connect them to organizational objectives, and provide authority and resources for implementation.

INTEGRATION RATHER THAN ISOLATION

The SHRM materials emphasize integrating I&D into ordinary organizational operations rather than treating inclusion as a stand-alone event or campaign. Inclusion becomes sustainable when it is reflected in normal policies, management practices, communication, development, measurement, and decision processes.

METRICS AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

The BASK expects HR to collect, review, analyze, and communicate I&D metrics to demonstrate measurable effects on organizational objectives. Examples of I&D metrics include gender diversity, race diversity, retention rates for diverse employees, and diversity among external stakeholders.

At the advanced level, metrics become strategic inputs. Advanced HR professionals assess the talent lifecycle for inclusiveness, incorporate equity-audit results into strategy and programs, set and track I&D goals, and evaluate the organization's cultural climate.

EQUITY AS A SYSTEMS QUESTION

Equity shifts attention from whether a rule looks identical on paper to whether organizational structures provide fair access and opportunity in context. The BASK includes techniques to measure and increase equity and expects advanced HR professionals to plan interventions when inequities are identified.

INCLUSIVE CULTURE

Culture is not established by a diversity statement alone. The BASK connects inclusive culture to equal opportunity, authenticity, honest conversations, access, employee development, psychological safety,

respectful interaction, and consistent organizational practices. Advanced professionals are expected to evaluate cultural climate and drive strategic changes where needed.

07 GLOBAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL INCLUSION

The 2026 BASK formally incorporates global effectiveness into Inclusive Mindset through the Operating in a Global Environment subcompetency. This is a significant 2026 curriculum change: global mindset is no longer a separate behavioral competency.

GLOBAL MINDSET WITH LOCAL SENSITIVITY

All HR professionals are expected to understand and respect cross-cultural differences, understand the organization’s business from a global perspective, customize HR initiatives to local needs, respect differences in rules and accepted business practices, apply global trends, and operate globally while remaining sensitive to local issues.

CULTURAL FRAMEWORKS

The BASK names cultural norms, values, and dimensions as key concepts and provides Hall, Hofstede, Schein, and Trompenaars as examples. These frameworks are useful for understanding possible cultural patterns, but they should not become a substitute for examining local context and the actual people involved.

ADVANCED GLOBAL APPLICATION

Advanced HR professionals move from adapting individual initiatives to shaping strategy. They incorporate global competencies and perspectives into HR strategy and analyze global HR trends, economic conditions, labor markets, and legal environments when setting strategic direction and evaluating the impact of inclusion and diversity on HR strategy.

08 HIGH-VALUE DISTINCTIONS

Concepts	What separates them
Diversity vs. inclusion	Diversity concerns differences and who is represented. Inclusion concerns whether people are welcomed, respected, supported, valued, and able to participate.
Inclusion vs. belonging	Inclusion describes workplace conditions and practices that support participation. Belonging is the experienced sense of being accepted and supported as a member of that environment.
Equality vs. equity	Equality is equal treatment. Equity considers individual needs, context, and circumstances that can produce disparate outcomes in order to create fair opportunity.

Concepts	What separates them
Conscious vs. unconscious bias	Conscious bias is recognized by the person and may produce intentional behavior. Unconscious bias operates outside awareness but can still shape decisions and systems.
Stereotype vs. bias	A stereotype is a generalized belief about a group; bias is an inclination or judgment that affects perception or action. Stereotypes can contribute to biased behavior.
Representation vs. participation	Representation measures presence. Participation asks whether people have access, voice, opportunity, resources, and meaningful involvement.
Cultural awareness vs. stereotyping	Cultural awareness uses knowledge of possible differences to improve inquiry and adaptation. Stereotyping assumes that an individual must behave according to a group generalization.
Individual inclusion vs. organizational inclusion	Individual inclusion appears in respectful interaction, openness, and adaptation. Organizational inclusion appears in policies, access, systems, culture, metrics, leadership sponsorship, and accountability.
Ethical Practice bias vs. Inclusive Mindset bias	Ethical Practice treats bias as an integrity and ethical-decision concern. Inclusive Mindset examines how bias creates barriers to fairness, participation, access, belonging, and organizational inclusion.
Inclusive intent vs. inclusive impact	Positive intent does not establish inclusive impact. Unconscious bias and structural barriers can produce exclusion without deliberate intent.
Operational vs. strategic inclusion	Operational application addresses immediate programs, interactions, implementation, and identified barriers. Strategic application shapes enterprisewide systems, goals, metrics, culture, and HR strategy.

09 FAST RECOGNITION

MLS STUDY AID — The following cues are learning supports created for recognition practice. They are not official SHRM exam wording.

A scenario is likely testing Inclusive Mindset when the central issue is:

Cue	Recognition signal
01	Whether people are welcomed, respected, supported, valued, or able to belong.
02	A barrier to access, opportunity, participation, advancement, or contribution.
03	Bias, stereotypes, assumptions, microaggressions, identity covering, or other BASK-listed inclusion barriers.
04	A difference between representation and actual participation or inclusion.
05	Whether an HR practice produces parity, equity, or fair access across groups.

Cue	Recognition signal
06	How to include or leverage different experiences, perspectives, cultures, or ways of thinking.
07	Psychological safety as a condition for voice, participation, learning, or collaboration.
08	An ERG, mentorship, inclusion council, employee solution, or similar inclusion infrastructure.
09	I&D metrics, equity audits, inclusion goals, or the organizational business case for I&D.
10	Cross-cultural adaptation, local sensitivity, or global inclusion.

Distinguish Inclusive Mindset from Ethical Practice when the primary question is fairness, access, belonging, bias as an inclusion barrier, or cross-cultural participation rather than integrity, confidentiality, conflicts of interest, or ethical reporting. Distinguish it from Leadership & Navigation when the primary challenge is inclusion rather than general influence, organizational politics, vision, or project execution. Distinguish it from a functional HR topic when the question is how inclusion is applied, rather than the technical mechanics of recruiting, compensation, employment law, or another HR function.

10 2026 SHRM BASK CONNECTION

CONNECTING I&D TO ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE — ALL HR PROFESSIONALS

- Reviews HR programs, practices, and policies to ensure parity for all.
- Designs and executes I&D initiatives and programs to achieve business goals.
- Collects, reviews, analyzes, and communicates I&D metric results to show measurable impacts on organizational objectives.
- Demonstrates understanding of and advocates for the strategic connection between I&D practices and organizational success.
- Designs, recommends, implements, and audits HR programs, practices, and policies intended to promote inclusion and diversity.

CONNECTING I&D TO ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE — ADVANCED HR PROFESSIONALS

- Partners with business leaders and HR professionals on enterprisewide programs, practices, and policies leading to an inclusive and diverse workforce.
- Assesses the talent lifecycle for inclusiveness and diversity using I&D metrics.
- Incorporates equity-audit results into HR strategy and programs.
- Develops and advocates for the organizational business case for I&D.
- Partners with leaders to incorporate I&D goals into the strategic plan.
- Sets and tracks I&D goals and metrics tied to organizational objectives.
- Identifies workforce and workplace changes needed for organizational success.
- Drives HR strategy that embraces and leverages inclusion, diversity, and cultural differences.
- Evaluates the organization's cultural climate and identifies areas for improvement.

BUILDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR AN INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE CULTURE — ALL HR PROFESSIONALS

- Recognizes, supports, and advocates for an inclusive workforce across multiple dimensions of diversity and their intersectionality.
- Communicates the benefits of I&D to employees and leaders.
- Identifies opportunities to enhance equity in organizational policies and procedures.
- Implements and manages benefits and HR programs supporting a diverse workforce.
- Promotes the benefits of an inclusive, diverse workforce.
- Fosters a culture that values equal opportunities and promotes inclusion and diversity.

BUILDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE — ADVANCED HR PROFESSIONALS

- Advocates to leadership to eliminate barriers and obstacles that hinder workforce inclusion.
- Drives a culture that encourages authenticity and courageous, honest I&D-related conversations.
- Identifies, advocates for, and manages programs supporting an inclusive, diverse, and unbiased workforce.
- Drives HR initiatives, programs, and policies supporting organizational inclusion.
- Ensures employees at all levels receive appropriate learning and development related to inclusion, diversity, and cultural sensitivity.

ENSURING IMPARTIALITY & FAIRNESS — ALL HR PROFESSIONALS

- Maintains knowledge of applicable trends and HR practices relating to I&D.
- Contributes to a culture providing access, equal opportunity, and equity.
- Demonstrates awareness, understanding, and respect for cultural differences.
- Promotes inclusion and acceptance of colleagues from different cultures in daily interactions.
- Uses organizational I&D policies and philosophy to inform business decisions and HR implementation.
- Ensures HR programs, practices, and policies are applied consistently and respectfully for all.

ENSURING IMPARTIALITY & FAIRNESS — ADVANCED HR PROFESSIONALS

- Ensures HR staff maintain current I&D knowledge and aligned HR practices.
- Designs and manages HR programs, practices, and policies that promote access, equal opportunity, and equity.
- Plans interventions to resolve identified inequities.
- Drives initiatives intended to be applied equally, consistently, and fairly.

CULTIVATING AN INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE CULTURE — ALL HR PROFESSIONALS

- Identifies and implements employee solutions that support inclusion and align with applicable requirements.
- Identifies and addresses evidence of bias, stereotyping, microaggressions, and exclusionary behavior.
- Provides development, mentoring, coaching, and guidance on cultural and diversity differences.
- Facilitates opportunities for employees to work with people who possess diverse experiences and backgrounds.
- Supports culture and practices based on mutual respect, trust, and zero tolerance of retaliation.
- Guides managers to distinguish performance issues from I&D differences.

- Enables others to adapt behavior across different cultural conditions, situations, and people.
- Identifies and reconciles organizational practices and policies that conflict with cultural norms.

CULTIVATING AN INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE CULTURE — ADVANCED HR PROFESSIONALS

- Creates and manages opportunities for employees to work with people possessing diverse experiences and backgrounds.
- Develops policies and programs supporting and reinforcing psychological safety.
- Advises business leaders on developing more empathetic and inclusive behaviors.

OPERATING IN A GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT — ALL HR PROFESSIONALS

- Conducts business with understanding and respect for cross-cultural differences in customs and acceptable behaviors.
- Understands the organization's line of business from a global perspective.
- Customizes HR initiatives to local needs using understanding of cultural differences.
- Respects differences in rules, regulations, and accepted business operations and practices.
- Applies knowledge of global trends when implementing or maintaining HR programs, practices, and policies.
- Operates with a global mindset while remaining sensitive to local issues and needs.

OPERATING IN A GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT — ADVANCED HR PROFESSIONALS

- Creates HR strategy incorporating global competencies and perspectives on organizational success.
- Analyzes global HR trends, economic conditions, labor markets, and legal environments to set strategic direction and inform HR initiatives.
- Analyzes global conditions to evaluate the impact of inclusion and diversity on HR strategy.

11 EXAM-LEVEL APPLICATION — OPERATIONAL / SHRM-CP VS. STRATEGIC / SHRM-SCP

The 2026 BASK identifies the SHRM-CP with operational HR roles and the SHRM-SCP with senior-level strategic roles. Inclusive Mindset appears at both levels, but the scope of responsibility changes.

Dimension	Operational / SHRM-CP application	Strategic / SHRM-SCP application
Immediate inclusion issue	Recognize a barrier, gather relevant perspectives, apply I&D policy, and support fair participation.	Determine whether the issue reflects a broader cultural or systemic pattern and shape an organizational response.
Bias	Identify and address bias, stereotyping, microaggressions, or exclusion in a specific situation.	Design or influence systems, policies, leadership practices, and interventions that reduce recurring bias and inequity.

Dimension	Operational / SHRM-CP application	Strategic / SHRM-SCP application
Access and equity	Implement programs and practices respectfully and identify opportunities to improve access.	Use audits, metrics, and organizational analysis to redesign systems and resolve identified inequities.
Belonging and culture	Support respectful interaction, participation, and inclusive practices in teams and HR processes.	Evaluate cultural climate and drive policies and programs that strengthen belonging and psychological safety.
I&D and performance	Implement I&D initiatives and collect or communicate relevant metrics.	Build the business case, set strategic I&D goals, connect metrics to organizational objectives, and integrate findings into strategy.
Global context	Adapt HR implementation to cultural and local needs while respecting global objectives.	Incorporate global perspectives, trends, labor markets, and local environments into HR strategy.
Typical exam lens	What should HR do in this employee, manager, team, or program situation?	What should the senior HR leader design, influence, evaluate, or integrate at the organizational level?

The SHRM-SCP response is not automatically the broadest intervention. The strongest answer should match the facts, the authority of the role, the organizational scope of the problem, and the relevant BASK proficiency indicator.

12 SOURCE FOUNDATION

Controlling source:

- 2026 SHRM Body of Applied Skills and Knowledge (SHRM BASK) — controlling authority for Inclusive Mindset terminology, competency structure, subcompetencies, definitions, key concepts, proficiency indicators, and the operational/strategic exam distinction.

Primary supporting instructional source:

- SHRM Certification Prep System — 2026 Competencies materials, used for source-supported explanations of diversity, inclusion, equity, belonging, conscious and unconscious bias, types of diversity, inclusive infrastructure, psychological safety, ERGs, metrics, and cross-cultural/global application.

Curriculum-control note: The 2026 BASK combines the former Inclusion & Diversity and Global Mindset competencies into Inclusive Mindset. Where earlier or supporting instructional terminology differs from the 2026 structure, the 2026 BASK controls. Employment law, investigations, recruiting, compensation, L&D, and global workforce management are not expanded as separate functional topics in this guide.

Fast Recognition note: The Fast Recognition section is an MLS-created study aid derived from the source-supported distinctions in this guide. It is not official SHRM exam wording.