

Team Work and Group Projects

University courses often require students to work with colleagues in team settings. For small groups to function effectively, all members must be attentive to each other, and to the task at hand. A group project is not just a putting together of facts, data, readings, etc. It is a collaborative effort in which all members must work together to ensure a valuable end product. Below are some techniques for maximizing academic success as a group.

Academic group reports usually (but not always) include...

- Title page (incl. authors, date, course number, professor name)
- Table of contents
- Introduction and Conclusion
- Key findings, statistical data, graphs, charts, diagrams, etc.
- APA/MLA formatting throughout
- Oral/visual presentation (PowerPoint, poster, etc.)

How to be an Effective Team Member

Listen carefully to others, and **seek input**

“What does everyone think about using this particular method/theory? Is there a better one?”

“Could we please go over this part again? I am not sure I really understand it.”

Contribute your own ideas

“I found an excellent article that explains _____.”

“I think it would be a good idea to meet with Professor X about this topic. Maybe we could go during this week’s Office Hours?”

Be responsible and accountable for your role

“Would it be okay with everyone if I did section X? I would really like to do that part!”

“I booked the study room for DATE/TIME our practice presentation.”

Support, respect, and trust your team members!

“I think MEMBER 1 makes an excellent point about the _____.”

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Adapted from University of Waterloo Centre for Teaching Excellence, “Making group contracts.” Web accessed November 16, 2016 at <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/group-work/making-group-contracts> and other sources by Jessica Singh © 2016, The CAC, University of Victoria, as part of the Centre for Academic Communication’s Learning Plan Consultation program. This copy is solely for the use of students in this program. Any other use may be infringement of copyright if done without securing the permission of copyright owners.

'Group contract' – allocating time effectively

Once students are in teams, they should develop a team contract in which they decide on: **group goals; member roles; ground rules.**

Sample Contract

Project: Group report with in-class presentation (15-20 pages)

Ground rules:

- All members are responsible for meeting the deadline(s)
- All members will be present at meetings
- Each member is responsible for his/her role and the associated tasks

Member 1: Moderator/facilitator

In charge of scheduling; Ensures fairness and equality at all times; Ensures all members understand tasks.

- First point of contact for team members
- Organizes meetings outside of class time
- Arranges online messaging threads (emails, texts, CourseSpaces, etc.)
- Submits the final project

Member 2: Editor

Regularly receives copies of each group member's contributions; Keeps an eye out for errors; Compiles final document.

- Receives each group members' submissions
- Checks spelling, grammar, formatting, source referencing
- Compiles everything into one final document

Member 3: Notes and timekeeper

Keeps track of meeting times to avoid spending excessive time on one topic; Follows up with members afterwards; Makes sure the meetings stay structured

- Compiles notes during meetings
- Distributes summarized notes to group members after the meeting
- Keeps track of the group's progress

Member 4: Team Support #1

In charge of specific parts of the report (e.g. Summary, Method, Hypothesis, Results, etc.)

- Introduction and Summary
- Conclusion
- Visual presentation prep (PowerPoint, poster, etc.)

Member 5: Team Support #2

In charge of specific parts of the report (e.g. Summary, Method, Hypothesis, Results, etc.)

- Title Page and Table of Contents
- Bibliography
- Visual presentation prep (PowerPoint, poster, etc.)