

Top tips for working effectively in a group



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1. Assemble the team.

When forming a group, try to choose according to each individual's work habits, skills and compatibility with the other proposed group members. Remember that friends do not always make the best group members.

2. Designate a group captain.

After the group is formed, have all group members agree on a team captain. While it is ultimately up to each individual group member to complete the work assigned to them, having a designated team captain to keep everyone on track and mindful of upcoming deadlines can be very helpful. Groups may decide to elect other positions as they are needed; use personal judgement to elect these additional positions.

3. Set group rules and guidelines.

After the initial formation of the group, it is beneficial to outline certain rules and guidelines that all members should follow. This will help increase the likelihood that each group member pulls their own weight and does what is required.

4. Divide work equally.

Divide work equally among the group members while paying close attention to the individual strengths and weaknesses of each person in the group. This should maximize efficiency and increase the overall quality of the work.

5. Schedule meetings.

Not all group members will have the same study/work habits. Some may complete work early and others might procrastinate. Set meetings ahead of time in accordance with the schedules of each member to ensure consistent attendance. By pre-planning, no group member has an excuse for being absent.

6. Set early deadlines.

Set deadlines for each part of the assignment to allow enough time for proofreading and formatting. In many cases, some components of the assignment will have to be completed before other parts can be started. If this is the case, make sure these preliminary parts take top priority.

7. Work together when possible.

Set up designated work times so that the majority of the work can be done together. Working on the assignment as a group can lead to greater motivation to complete it. Durham College has many locations that can accommodate groups looking for places to meet, including Student Academic Learning Services (SALS), Learning Commons and the Campus Library, which all provide the necessary space for students looking to complete work with their group.

8. Communicate effectively.

The most important consideration when working with a group is communication. Failure to communicate effectively can result in the mismanagement of time and resources, which could hinder the completion of the work.

9. Manage conflict.

At times, problems or conflicts may arise between one or more group members. If a problem or conflict does occur, consult a third party. This can be a neutral member of the work group or even the professor. Have this individual arbitrate the dispute and help attempt to rectify the problem(s).

10. Use available academic support.

Talk to your professor if you are unsure about the assignment details or if you need suggestions for working effectively in your group. Visit SALS if further help is needed.