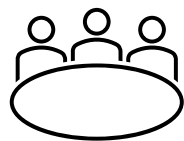


# Working in Groups

## Group Work

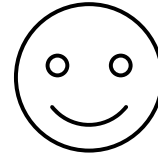
- involves collaborative learning
- develops interpersonal, social, academic, and vocational skills
- pools individual skills and knowledge for a common goal
- develops leadership, support, record keeping, mediation, thinking, organisational, and collaboration skills, attributes, and roles



## Effective Groups

- Agree on the group culture:
  - communicate respectfully within and outside of meetings
  - commit to equal participation
  - support and encourage
  - give timely response to communications
  - attend meetings
- Define goals
- Arrange regular meeting times
- Share contact information
- Define individual's roles and responsibilities
- Provide respectful and helpful feedback
- Defuse potential conflict immediately

## Resolve Challenges



**Unfair division of labour**—Tasks allocated do not require similar effort.

Initial tasks delegation is to be clear and fair.

**Free riding**—One or more individuals leave the work to their colleagues

Define roles and responsibilities Support and encourage fair participation.

**Leadership issues**—Ineffective or weak leadership, competition for leadership, no nominated leader, or domination by one member can lead to frustration and conflict.

Shared leadership, and flexibility in who fills the role may resolve a leadership issue.

**Deference to authority**—Some members may feel reluctant to express a viewpoint, especially if it challenges the leader.

Agree on a culture of encouragement, support, and safety in the group from the start, and stick to it!

**Blocking**—Team members may be inappropriately outspoken, negative in their attitude, domineering, refuse to participate, or feel excluded; others may withdraw or wil not compromise.

Strong teams build on differences, harnessing individual strengths. Team building exercises, or “getting to know you” activities at the beginning may help to break down initial barriers.

**Problems relating to the task**—Difficulty in finding resources, time constraints, shortage of skills within the group, not understanding the task, and difficulty in getting everybody together for regular meetings.

Address these collaboratively as they occur, and discuss with your tutor if necessary.

*Reviewed 30 January 2025*