

TEAM POLICIES¹

Working in a team requires you to assume a number of responsibilities as you and your team member(s) complete each step towards developing the working prototype.

- *Assign team roles:* coordinator, recorder, checker, monitor. Rotate these roles for each milestone.
- *Agree on a common meeting time and what each member should do before the meeting* (readings, taking 1st cut as some or all of the assigned work, etc.)
- *Do the required individual preparation.*
- Before each meeting, the coordinator reminds the other team members when and where they will meet and what each of them is supposed to do in preparation for the meeting.
- *Meet and work.* Coordinator keeps everyone on task and makes sure everyone is involved. Recorder prepares the final solution in the team logbook. Monitor checks to make sure everyone understands both the solution and the strategy used to obtain it. Checker checks the solution before it is handed in. *Agree on meeting time and roles for next assignment.* For teams of three, the same person should cover the monitor and checker roles.
- Checker turns in the assignment, with the names on it of every team member who actively participated in completing it.
- *Consult with the instructor if a conflict arises that can't be worked through by the team.*
- *Dealing with non-cooperative team members.* If a team member refuses to cooperate on an assignment, their name should not be included on the completed work in the logbook. If the problem persists, the team should meet with the instructor so that the problem can be resolved, if possible. If the problem continues, the cooperating team members may notify the uncooperative team member that they are in danger of being fired, sending a copy of the memo to the instructor. If there is no subsequent improvement, they should notify the individual in writing (copy to the instructor) that they are no longer with the team. The fired student should meet with the instructor to discuss options. Similarly, students who consistently do all the work for their team may issue a warning memo that they will quit unless they start getting cooperation, and a second memo quitting the team if the team cooperation is not forthcoming. Students who get fired or quit must either find another team willing to add them as a member or work on their own for the rest of the term.

As you will find out, group work isn't always easy – team members sometimes cannot prepare for or attend group sessions because of other responsibilities, and conflicts often result from different skill levels and work ethics. When teams work and communicate well, however, the benefits more than compensate the difficulties. One way to improve the chances for successful team work is to agree beforehand on what everyone on the team expects from everyone else. Reaching this understanding is the goal of the assignment on the *Team Expectations Agreement* handout.

Also keep in mind that, in order to become a successful team member, you need to:

- Understand team goals, responsibilities, and timelines.
- Know how success is measured.
- Understand how information is to be provided to stakeholders (team members, instructor).
- Know who is responsible for what.
- Know how issues are handled and escalated for resolution.
- Be proactive in handling issues.
- Be as tolerant as possible.
- Keep the instructor in the loop as often as possible.

1. B. Oakley, R.M. Felder, R. Brent, and I. Elhajj, "[Turning Student Groups into Effective Teams.](#)" *J. Student Centered Learning*, 2(1), 9–34 (2004).

TEAM EXPECTATIONS AGREEMENT¹

On a single sheet of paper, write your names and list the rules and expectations you agree as a team to adopt. You can deal with any or all aspects of the responsibilities outlined above – preparation for and attendance at group meetings, making sure everyone understands all solutions, communicating frankly and with respect when conflicts arise, etc. Each team member should sign the sheet, indicating acceptance of these expectations and intention to fulfill them. Give one copy to the instructor, and keep remaining copies for yourself.

These expectations are for your use and benefit – they won't be graded or commented on unless you specifically ask for comments. Note, however, that if you make the list fairly thorough without being unrealistic you'll be giving yourself the best chance. For example, "We will each solve every problem completely before we get together" or "We will never miss a meeting" are probably unrealistic, but "We will try to set up problems individually before meeting" and "We will make sure that anyone who misses a meeting for good cause catches up on the work" are realistic.

1. B. Oakley, R.M. Felder, R. Brent, and I. Elhajj, "[Turning Student Groups into Effective Teams.](#)" *J. Student Centered Learning*, 2(1), 9–34 (2004).