Group Work & Collaboration

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Group work is an important and essential part of your education! It helps you learn important content and also helps you develop your interpersonal, collaboration, and team work skills, which will support you in your future career. However, when doing group work it is important for you and your group members to understand the do's and don'ts of group work and collaboration.

How do I know if I can work/collaborate with others?

- If you aren't sure if you're allowed to work with others then **check with your Professor!**

- Ask yourself the following questions:

    - Am I getting graded individually? **If yes,** then you should be working alone.

    - What did my professor say about this assignment? What do the instructions say?

- **But what if this is the study group I always work with?** – **Check with your Professor!** If this is an individual assignment then you likely should be working on it alone.

- **What if I'm working with a tutor?** – Tutors are there to help you understand the content, **NOT** to help you complete your assignments.

Successful Groups Do the Following:

- Review the assignment and make sure everyone in the group understands what the Professor expects.

    DETERMINE:

    - ⭐What elements of the assignment are to be completed as a group

    - ⭐What elements of the assignment should be done individually

    - ⭐How/When the assignment is being submitted

    - ⭐How the professor will evaluate referencing

    - ⭐Whether the entire group will be accountable for failures to reference properly

- Create a contract between group members to identify:

    - What each group member is responsible for in the assignment

    - Referencing requirements and citations style

    - Timelines – set a schedule for when each member will have their work completed, and schedule check in dates with group members

- Review the College's Academic Integrity Policy AA48 to ensure all group members are aware of their individual academic integrity responsibilities and how they impact the group collectively.
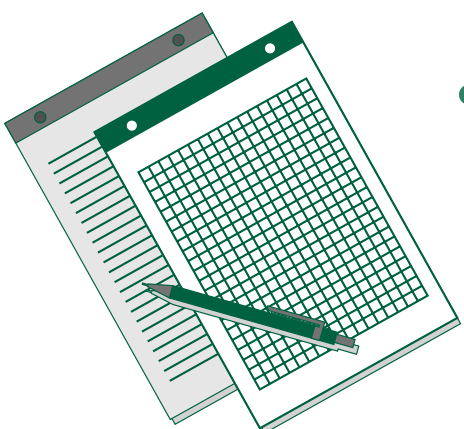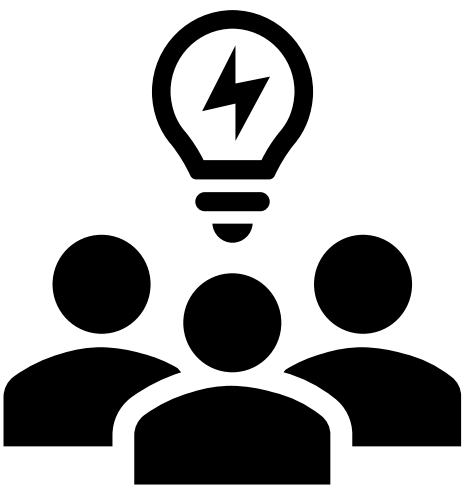
Examples of Acceptable & Unauthorized Collaboration

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Scenario	Acceptable	Unauthorized Collaboration (unless authorized by professor)
The instructor has assigned an individual course activity, but the student does not understand how to complete the activity.	The student consults with their instructor for help and clarification on the activity.	The student contacts a friend or classmate and ask them to share their completed activity with them so that they can understand how to do the activity.
The instructor assigns a major project and informs the students that they are not permitted to collaborate on the project.	The students do not work together at any point and do not share their work with their peers. The students all submit unique projects.	The students work together in study groups, meet via zoom or in-person, or collaborate through other communication tools such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram etc., and share their project files with one another.
The student is struggling with the course content and is worried because they have a course assignment to complete.	The student works with a tutor who helps the student better understand the course content so that they can complete their course assignment on their own.	The student uses previous course content or documents found online to complete the assignment. The student uses examples/templates provided by their tutor to complete their course work, and/or has the tutor complete their course assignment for them.
The student is unsure of what resources/references to use for a project that has been assigned.	The student consults with their instructor or seeks help from the Librarian on how to find appropriate resources/references.	The student asks a friend to share their reference list and uses that reference list to complete their project.
A student forgets about an assignment that is due, that they have not completed, and they are currently at work.	The student emails the instructor to explain the situation and ask for an extension on the assignment.	The student emails a friend and asks them for their completed assignment and provides their friend with their login details so that the friend can submit the assignment for them.
A student does not understand how to reference information for an assignment.	The student contacts their instructor and asks for support, or the student contacts the Library and uses the support tools provided regarding referencing.	The student sends their assignment to a friend to have them complete the referencing for the assignment.

* Modified from University of Waterloo

Group Work Tips

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START by:

Getting Organized! → Creating a Group Work Contract → Assigning Each Member Specific Tasks → Scheduling your meetings & Check-ins → Identifying how your group will communicate

How to be an Effective Group Member!:

- Communicate with your group regularly
- Meet the deadlines established by your group
- Contribute equally to the group activity
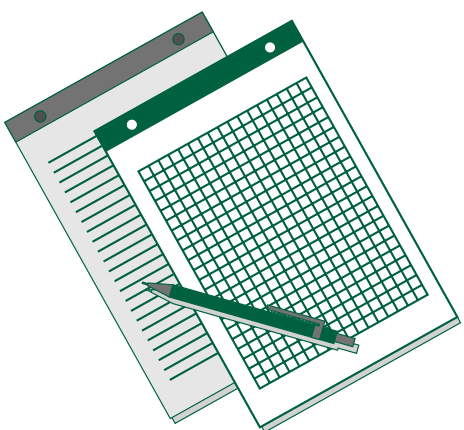- Respect your group members
- Be solution focused
- Know what you are responsible for in the group activity
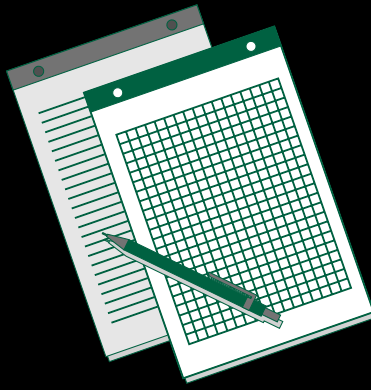- Help other group members out if necessary

Why should your group create a contract and use checklists?

★ Contracts help ensure every group member is assigned an equal sized portion of the assignment, and verify everyone agrees with the workload distribution.

★ Contracts help groups get organized and establish timelines, roles and responsibilities.

★ Checklists help you verify that all required elements of your assignment have been assigned/completed.

In the space below please identify the Group Project specifics:

Project Name: Example Presentation Project   **Project Due Date:** Day, Month, Time

TEAM AGREEMENTS & RULE (EXAMPLE):

Item	Agreements
Personal Interactions	• Be respectful always • Respond to emails in a timely and respectful manner • Listen to everyone's opinions
Roles & Responsibilities	• [Assign roles & responsibilities based on the needs of the project] • Assign someone as the team lead to ensure good communication
Distribution of Workload	• All work will be equally distributed as indicated in the work distribution table below.
Managing Conflict	• Should a disagreement occur between members group members will first try to work it out on their own, & then if necessary involve professor/other mediator when appropriate.

What will the group generate to complete this project?:

• EXAMPLE: The group will create a PowerPoint Presentation & a demo video

What research is needed to do this project?:

• EXAMPLE: The group will research the presentation topic with the primary source being the program webpage.
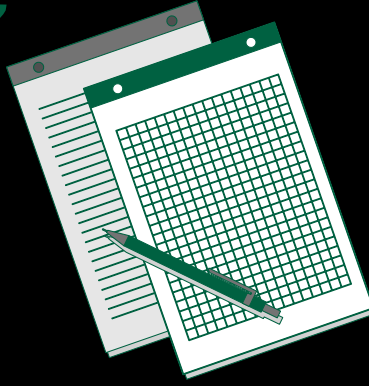
What is the proposed timeline for completing this project?:

	Date Completed?	Completed by?
Research Completed	April 26	Jane Doe
Demo Video Completed	April 30	John Doe

Group Work
CONTRACT EXAMPLE
Continued

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In the space below please identify what each group member will be responsible for completing in this group

Jane Doe	John Doe	Jennifer Doe	Jeremy Doe
• **[Add assignment responsibilities here]** • Example: Create 3 Main body slides for PowerPoint Presentation • Create Agenda slide • Submit project to discussion forum	• Create a custom theme/design for PowerPoint • Create 3 main body slides • Ensure appropriate animations are included on each slide	• Create title slide and concluding slide • Create 3 main body slides • Ensure presentation is accessible (AODA)	• Create 3 main body slides • Create SmartArt Graphic's for the presentation • Ensure a table structure has been used in presentation

In this area please identify the shared responsibilities:

★ (EXAMPLE)

★ References – Works Cited

★ Images and Video Clips

★ Spelling/Grammar

★ All Assignment elements are completed

★ Meet at scheduled times

Meeting Dates:

• Monday, September 20 @ 6:00 PM

• Thursday, September 23 @ 6:00 PM

• Saturday, September 25 @ 3:00 PM

Group Members Sign below to identify agreement with the details above:

Jane Doe	*John Doe*
Jeremy Doe	*Jennifer Doe*