

Ground rules are shared expectations set by the group to define how the group and the individuals within the group will function. Setting Ground Rules at the start of the Team Process will clarify expectations, prevent incorrect assumptions about how members should act, and prevent unnecessary conflict. They will also be helpful in keeping the group on track. Below are some starting points and questions to consider. (Adapted from Using Student Teams in the Classroom, Ruth Federman Stein and Sandra Hurd).

Goals:

- What is the purpose of this team?
- What is the purpose of this project?
- How will we evaluate our ability to meet goals?

Attendance

- Other than our weekly meetings, how often should we meet?
- How long should our meetings be?
- When is it OK to miss a meeting?
- How do we inform each other when we can't be there?

Lateness

- How will we handle people who are late for meetings?
- What does "on time" mean?

Roles

- How will we define necessary roles?
- How will we assign these roles?

Focus

- How will we handle side conversations?
- How will we monitor the length of our meetings/conversations?
- What can we do to stay "on track"?

Interpersonal

- How will we handle personality clashes?
- What does it mean to treat your group members with "respect"?
- How will we handle major disagreements?

Interruptions

- How do we deal with interruptions?
- What is allowed? Phone calls? Messages?

Participation

- What do we mean by participation?
- How will we encourage participation?

Communication

- What will be our main form of communication outside of meetings?
- What communication skills will be necessary to work together?

Norms

- What behaviours are permissible?
- How do we deal with people who dominate, resist, are too quiet or noisy?
- How do we deal with people who do not contribute?
- How will we monitor our process and progress?

Decision Making

- How do we make decisions?
- What decisions must be agreed to by all?
- What does consensus mean?

Quality of work

- What do we mean by quality?
- How do we encourage quality?
- Will we have standards or group norms to encourage quality?
- What will we do if a group member's work doesn't meet our quality standards?

Criticism/Feedback

- What is appropriate?
- What is considered constructive feedback?
- How will you handle disagreements?

Other things to consider:

- Group atmosphere
- Creativity
- Confidentiality
- Respect