**Group work for Further Web Science Module** **Writing a group report**

* There is a quick turn-around for the written work – you need to set hard deadlines for reading/writing/editing and who will do what.
* Decide how best to work for your group – Face-to-face meetings? Virtually?
* Decide on platforms for sharing reading/writing – messaging platform/documents/reading (online shared ref manager?)
* Division of workload/roles? Fixed? Rotating? Need readers/writers/editors – all? Some of? Strengths? Weaknesses?
* How are you going to resolve conflict?
* Reading skills – requires fast, efficient reading, and a suitable method for recording findings which can be shared with group
* First task - Parliamentary Committee Reading – how to get through it all? Suggestions for strategies?

**Writing a group report**

Writing a group report can be challenging. If you divide responsibility for drafting chapters or sections between the different members of your group, you will need to nominate someone to take overall responsibility for pulling the final piece together. Careful copy editing at this stage is essential to make sure that the document is logical and consistent. Key things to watch out for here include:

• have the authors used the same writing style (tense/voice/person)?

• do the individual sections lead on from each other logically?

• is the use of references, units, abbreviations and notation consistent?

You will need to make sure that you have left plenty of time for this final stage.

<https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/resources/study-guides-pdfs/study-skills-pdfs/successful-group-projects>

**GROUND RULES FOR GROUP WORK**

[*http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk/working-with-others/group-work-working-with-others/ground-rules-for-group-work/*](http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk/working-with-others/group-work-working-with-others/ground-rules-for-group-work/)

The natural differences that people tend to have can cause problems later if the group haven’t talked about it at the start. For this reason it is a very good idea to set out your own ground rules.

Generally these come under two main headings:

* Rules about personal conduct
* Rules about working practice

**Personal conduct**

These are agreed expectations that the group has about how each member will behave. They usually cover things like:

* treating people with respect,
* encouraging participation,
* being polite and understanding,
* being reliable and honest.

**Working Practice**

These are agreed expectations about how the group will work. There are a number of things to consider here:

* Will there be a team leader and/or other roles.
* When, where and for how long will the group meet?
* How will meetings run?
* How should the group stay in contact?
* What should someone do if they cannot attend a meeting or complete work on time?
* How will you decide things?
* What if there is disagreement?
* What if someone falls unwell?

**Trouble shooting**

Occasionally, groups can run into trouble, and it is useful to be aware of some of the problems (and the appropriate solutions) right from the start. The following list highlights some of the most common difficulties.

**Unfair division or take-up of labour between different group members:** this can lead to resentment if someone feels they are doing all the hard work or if the group thinks that one or more members aren't doing their fair share. Use your meetings to check that people are happy with their workloads and discuss problems openly, making sure that issues are addressed as a group concern rather than putting pressure on individuals.

**Conflict between different group members:** this might arise for many different reasons including two people competing for leadership or simple disagreement about ways forward. Don't be afraid to rotate leadership responsibilities or find ways of accommodating differing opinions. Your group practices should be flexible and democratic rather than rigid and leader-led.

**Tackling inappropriate tasks as a whole group:** groups are notoriously bad environments for carrying out such activities as writing first drafts of documents or carrying out detailed searches. Be aware of the limitations of group activity and don't be afraid to delegate responsibility for particular tasks to individuals.

Always consult your course tutor if there are overwhelming problems in your group. An independent voice can often help diffuse tension and help your group get back on the right track.

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**CREATING YOUR TEAM**

[*http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk/working-with-others/group-work-working-with-others/creating-your-team/*](http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk/working-with-others/group-work-working-with-others/creating-your-team/)

A gathering of people could be considered a group, but for group to work effectively together, they need to become a team. But how can you help your group become a team? The tips below will give you an idea of some key things to consider.

**1. Be positive and open to the group experience.** There are many benefits to working in a team.You may gain new knowledge and the ability to work well with others is highly prized by employers. See group work as an opportunity to develop key skills and experience for your CV.

**2. Take time to get to know your team** It is worth spending time introducing yourselves and/or discussing group work at the start.What are your strengths? What are your fears? A team that takes time to talk to each other first, will bond and work better.

**3. Create a productive group environment.** Find a good place to talk as a group. Is it somewhere you won’t be disturbed or distracted too much? Can you all see and hear each other? Is everyone comfortable? Do you need any extra materials (pen, paper, flipchart etc.)? A good environment will help the team work better together.

**4. Set your team ground rules.** Ground rules are important! Everyone should feel safe, respected and able to voice their thoughts. People should attend meetings and apologise if they can’t make it. Group members should stick to deadlines and be professional in all communication. Write down the rules and give everyone a copy!

**5. Decide on your group working practices.** How often, when and where will you meet? How are you going to make decisions and allocate work? What will you do if you think someone is not contributing enough to the team effort? Effective teams sort this stuff out first!

**6. Decide on your team/meeting roles.** It is usually helpful to have roles for your meetings. Common roles include: note-taker, time-keeper and meeting chair/facilitator. Roles can be set or rotate for each meeting. Roles can help keep meetings focussed and productive.

**7. Check your understanding of the task.** It is vital that you check that everybody has a clear understanding of the task before you start. People often interpret things in different ways and every group should allow time to discuss this at the outset of a project.

**8. Establish your goal/aims.** Every group needs to have a clear idea of the overall goal of the group. Group members may have lots of different ideas and it is important that you allow time to discuss this and decide on the best course of action. A team that is clear on goals will not waste time with confusion.

**9. Get everyone’s contact details.** You should decide how the group is going to stay in touch (by email, phone, text etc.) and everyone should have each group member’s contact details.

**10. Agree your next meeting date/time.** Finally, it is surprising how many groups forget this last, vital step. It might be useful to agree a regular slot that is convenient for everyone so you don’t have to keep to keep remembering new times and dates every week!