

Possible Ground Rules for Teams

To work well as a team, you need to decide on some ground rules that will facilitate your joint work. Below is a list of common rules to consider adopting for your teams. Discuss each rule and decide whether you want to adopt it as a team. Make sure everybody commits to the rules you choose to adopt. You can also add your own rules; e.g., “add each member of the team to your IM buddy list”.

- Inappropriate remarks (such as sexist or racial) are unacceptable.
- Everybody will perform a fair share of the team’s work –free-riding is not acceptable.
- Decisions should be made democratically – in the absence of a clear consensus there should be a vote.
- Aggressive and dominating behavior is not acceptable.
- Everybody should have a telephone number and email address for every member of the group.
- All members should show up at meetings unless it has been agreed in advance that somebody cannot make a specific meeting or there are unavoidable circumstances such as illness.
- All members should come to the meeting prepared (e.g., having read the assignment, brainstormed some ideas on your own).
- Meetings will commence no later than five minutes after the agreed start time and everyone should be there by then.
- Roles such as chair of a meeting and note-taker should be clearly allocated and should rotate around the team so that responsibilities are shared.
- Anybody can initiate and redirect discussion.
- Members should try to encourage contributions– to discussions and decisions – from everyone, and to assess the value of all contributions.
- Everybody should practice active listening: listen to each other’s ideas, summarize them, ask questions, show respect for the other person’s opinion before challenging it.
- Tasks that individuals agree to undertake should be completed by the agreed deadline. If it looks as though there will be a problem meeting a deadline the person concerned should seek help from other members of the team in time to avoid a delay.
- If a teammate asks for help, everybody should try to help them out.
- If a conflict is emerging, it will be discussed in a team meeting and attempts will be made to resolve it within a team; if this is unsuccessful, it will be brought to the attention of a teaching assistant.
- Each person has the right to point out when these rules are being broken.
- All teammates have responsibility for implementing an effective team process
- All rules can be changed by consensus