

# Common Group Problems and Tips to Help

## 1. Tasks not being completed by the deadline

- Discuss and establish timelines that ALL members can agree on
- Ask each member to present a progress report each meeting on what they have completed since the last meeting
- Offer to assist one another to complete tasks if necessary

## 2. Difficulty in getting started

- Take time for all members to introduce themselves, including name, background, specific strengths
- Develop a shared understanding of the task by brainstorming
- Ensure each member has an opportunity to speak and make suggestions
- Develop an agenda and a timeline
- Nominate someone to act as the manager or leader, either for that team meeting or for the term of the project
- Exchange names and contact details, including email addresses and phone numbers
- Decide on jobs or sub-tasks for each member

## 3. Ideas not thoroughly discussed as a group

- Engage in more brainstorming, particularly focusing on the ‘What if ...?’ and ‘What else ...?’ type questions
- Ask each member individually for ideas
- If few ideas are generated, organize to complete some further research individually and then meet up as a team at a later date

## 4. Members not contributing

- Establish why a member is quiet or not participating.
- Communicate that all opinions will be valued.
- Ensure that each member gets their turn to contribute, this may mean ‘going around the circle’.

## 5. Ineffective communication

- Identify specific issues which seem to affect communication
- Consider how to address such issues. For example, if team members seem to be misunderstanding each other, it may be helpful to clarify what is being said

## 6. Conflict between group members

- Respect the ideas of other group members
- Show that you have heard other member’s ideas and when disagreeing do so politely and respectfully
- Understand that working in a team requires some negotiation and compromise
- Take a break to diffuse the situation and recollect thoughts at a later meeting

## 7. Domineering personalities

- Create time limits on individual contributions or have a ‘talking stick’
- Ensure that each member has a chance to speak, without interruption
- Remind all members that it is important to hear all opinions in relation to the topic and respect those opinions

## 8. Inability to focus on a task

- Set particular tasks to be completed in each session

- Meet first and then go for lunch after you have completed some work to give yourselves a reward for staying on task
- Ensure that individuals prepare for meetings and talk through what they have completed since the last meeting

\*Retrieved from <http://www.uq.edu.au/student-services/learning/problems-associated-group-work>