A guide to group and team work

Why work in a group or a team?

Develops excellent graduate attributes:

- decision making and problem solving skills
- project management and organisational skills
- communication and conflict resolution skills.

The process

1. Build a strong foundation
   - Get to know your team.
   - Discuss strengths and weaknesses.
   - Meet early and set rules.
   - Agree on the aims, scope, and quality of the project.

2. Get organised
   - Decide on a method of group communication.
   - Agree on who will do what.
   - Set early deadlines.
   - Plan on how to present the project as a unified work.

3. Hold productive meetings
   - Make sure everyone knows the goal of the meeting, and what to bring.
   - Have a leader to keep the meeting on track.
   - Have a note-taker to record decisions.

4. Maintain relationships
   - Resolve problems as a group. Don’t exclude others.
   - Address concerns as soon as they appear.
   - Renegotiate as needed.
   - Understand the other person’s point of view.
Leadership

**Means**

- Helping the group work efficiently.
- Monitoring progress.
- Knowing when a team member needs help.
- Keeping the group motivated.

**Does NOT mean**

- Doing all the work.
- Making decisions and telling others what to do.
- Being solely responsible for the success or failure of the project.

*Everyone is responsible for the success or failure of the project, not individual team members.*

Difficulties

- You can’t work as quickly in a group as you can by yourself.
- Group/team members may have conflicting ideas or viewpoints.
- Group/team members may not contribute equally.

**For successful group and team work**

- Be patient, demonstrate good communication skills and be committed.
- Focus on the process rather than just the end product.