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.