# Group Work Guideline

# Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) This Guideline outlines the main points to consider in order to meet the three areas of requirements when implementing summative group assessment as specified in Assessment Policy and Assessment Procedure.

(2) Resource materials for assessing teams and groups are available on the Institute for Teaching and Learning Innovation (ITaLI) website.

# Section 2 - Process and Key Controls

(3) This Guideline ensures the following compliance requirements are met in designing group assessments:

(4) Group assessment can only be used in a course if:

a. group work is specified as a learning outcome in the course profile;
b. students have had the opportunity to learn how to work effectively in teams / groups by way of specific training within the course, in a prerequisite course, or in an online module; and
c. Course Coordinators provide students with resources and support within the course to enable management of situations where individual students or teams require additional support. Directions to these resources and support must be provided in the learning management system.

# Section 3 - Key Requirements

### Learning Outcomes

(5) Where group work is assessed, it is necessary to explicitly state the need for group work as its own learning outcome. It may be group or team work is the best way to develop and assess collaboration, communication or other important abilities, which may be incorporated into the learning outcome. Clear specification of the learning outcome communicates to the students that they will be assessed against this learning outcome and makes the assessment process transparent. However, it is important to further discuss the purpose of the group activities with students throughout the course.

#### Method of Assessment

(6) Consider whether group work is the most suitable method of assessment to meet the course learning outcomes, and if the assessment item will give suitable evidence of students' performance in regards to the learning outcomes. Ask yourself: Has the assessment task been specifically designed for group work? And is there enough task complexity to ensure that all group members meet the required learning outcomes in completing the task together?

(7) Refer to Proactively Ensuring Teams Success (PETS) for further considerations when deciding on whether or not to include group assessment in your course.

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**Learning Outcomes**

(8) Learning outcomes are defined as what you want the student to know, to achieve, to be capable of, and/or to be able to do when they have completed the course. If students are required to work in groups to complete an assessment task, this needs to be specified as its own learning outcome.

> Sample Learning Outcomes
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> After successfully completing this course you should be able to:
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> a. Team Work: Work effectively in an engineering team, identify the characteristics of effective team work and critically evaluate personal and peer contributions to team processes (e.g. ENGG1100 - Professional Engineering)
> b. Develop skills and attributes of collaborative team work (e.g. NUTR2050 - Contemporary Topics in Nutrition)
> c. Work effectively in teams to make informed team decisions and demonstrate interpersonal communication skills (e.g. COMU2140 - Digital Media Industries).

(9) Further information is available at: ITaLI Teaching Toolkit Series – Learning Outcomes.

**Assessing Group Work**

(10) For marking purposes, distinguish between the product and process of group work. In group work, there are usually two methods to grade students within each group: students get either (i) the same mark as everybody else in the group because the 'product' assessed (e.g. a presentation or report) represents the whole group's contribution, or (ii) an individual mark based on one's contribution to the group work and 'product' assessed. The second method of individual assessment is justifiably regarded as more equitable and must be used in the case of group work contributing to the research component of a bachelor honours program.

(11) There are three recommended ways of assessing whether a student has met the required learning outcomes of working as a group. These techniques can be used individually or in combination:

a. Observe in class - teaching team to use a rubric and/or a checklist for making judgements with regards to a student demonstrating the required criteria for working in a group (PETS Process PDF, Team Assessment Mark - TAM p.20);
b. Collect and grade individual evidence - a separate individual assessment item (e.g. report or responses to questions) can be used in combination with the group assessment to determine individual input and whether learning outcomes have been met;
c. Peer assessment - A Peer Assessment Factor (100 points divided equally amongst group members) can be applied to a group score to determine an individual score for the group assessment. Support is available using the Peer Assessment tool.

## Teaching Effective Group Work

(12) When implementing group work it is important to consider students' prior experience of working in teams, which may be evident from their prior courses and/or year level of their degree program. It is important however not to assume that all students know how to work effectively as a member of a team. Therefore, when designing any type of group work tasks, take into account the time needed to educate students around the principles of teamwork including communication, organisation, time management, task management, conflict resolution, reflection and collaboration.

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### Timing

(13) Allow sufficient time to make how to work in teams/groups explicit to students.

### Supporting Material

(14) Incorporate support materials for students to learn how to work more effectively in teams.

> Sample Support Material
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> The Working in Teams: A Practical Guide MOOC explores ways in which to learn how to build effective teams, be a great team player and manage team conflict. Consider incorporating this MOOC into your course or sections of it, scaffold/debrief content with students. Refer to Teams101x MOOC.

## Ongoing Student Support

(15) Team dysfunction needs to be identified as early as possible and appropriate strategies put into place to manage any issues as they arise. Unfortunately, dysfunctional teams may only become apparent at the end of the semester when it is too late to rectify the problems. Processes must be put into place and communicated to the students so that they can identify and raise issues at all stages of team/group work.

### Support Resources

(16) Ensure that the ECP has links to relevant student resources and an outline of the escalation process with relevant contact details for the teaching team that are responsible for mediating team conflict as it arises.

### Strategies

(17) Put strategies into place for the identification of team dysfunction to be dealt both proactively and/or reactively. Formative peer assessment or individual student reflection can be used to proactively identify any team conflict and/or dysfunction. The teaching team can also identify any causes of concern through observation and deal with these as they arise (reactively).

## Other Support Materials

(18) Below are some further support materials:

a. ITaLI guide to Assessing teams and groups
b. Group Work Assessment: Some Key Considerations in Developing Good Practice (Mellor, 2015)
c. Templates for team contracts: UQ Library group charter example, Team Contract Charter Template
d. Student Support and Wellbeing Services resources: Forming a group, Working as a group, Resolving group work issues.
e. Refer to Tuckman's stages in team development for further details on stages of group formation and potential problems that might arise (PETS Process PDF, Appendix E Tuckman's stages in team development p.47).
f. Sample workshop outline for Initial Teamwork Briefing and Training (PETS Process PDF, Sample workshop outlines p.14-15).
g. Online module for students: Working in Teams - A Practical Guide.

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# Section 4 - Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

(19) Refer to Teaching and Learning Roles, Responsibilities and Governance Policy.

# Section 5 - Monitoring, Review and Assurance

(20) The Academic Registrar is responsible for implementation and communication of this Guideline, including ensuring that faculties and schools are informed of their obligations under this Guideline.

(21) The Assessment Sub-Committee is responsible for monitoring university-wide compliance with, and review of this Guideline for its effectiveness and ongoing relevance.

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