GROUP WORK

Every student knows that group work often goes hand in hand with frustration and procrastination. How do you turn your online group work into a success story? Below you will find some useful tips for efficient collaboration and active participation of every group member.

PREPARATION

- **Schedule as soon as possible a virtual meeting.** This can be done on campus between classes or virtually through Microsoft Teams or another application.
- **Prepare the meeting.** Read the instructions for the task again and note questions you want to ask. Already think about an approach yourself. Keep in mind stated deadlines.

DURING THE GROUP MEETING

- **Divide** clear and concrete tasks between group members. Divide the tasks fairly among the group members.
- **Plan a follow-up meeting** at the end of the first meeting.
- **Plan internal deadlines.**
  - When will you share your part with the group members?
  - What are the deadlines to give feedback on each others part and rework it?
- **Make a report of each meeting**

GETTING STARTED

- **Make a group planning** and put it online. Start planning at the official deadline(s), and work your way forward.
- **Keep track of all the work** by using an online and shared document. This way, your group members can follow what you are doing and can give feedback easily.
  Use following tools: OneNote, Google Drive, Dropbox,...

Lab work or practical work in group?

- Check the instructions carefully in advance. What is the purpose of the lab/practical work? Do you need to submit a report?
- Distribute clear and concrete tasks to complete during the lab/practical work.
- At the end of the lab/practical work, discuss what the next steps are. When do you forward your work to each other? Will there be a follow-up lab/practical work
Communication is key!

Group work = working together, making decisions together, helping and reinforcing each other. Interaction is very important: you don’t work alone, you need to integrate your knowledge and the input of others to get a good result. A good communication is therefore very important, take into account the opinion of everyone and listen to each other.

Getting feedback

- Do you get negative feedback? Think of it as a learning process for the next group work.
- Prepare for the feedback moment. What would you like to ask your groupmates and/or your supervisor?
- Note down the feedback from others and take it with you to the next task/group work.

Giving Feedback

- Be objective and honest.
- Name each other’s strengths.
- Give constructive feedback, give concrete points of improvement.
- Topics you can discuss: taking initiative, creativity, communication, contribution to the group atmosphere, meeting deadlines, contribution to the final product,...

What if something goes wrong?

- What if students leave the work to the rest of the group? Divide the work fairly during your first meeting. Speak to the student and ask about the cause of the decreased effort. Is there no improvement after this? Notify the supervisor/teacher.
- What if everyone is working individually? Establish some meetings in advance to discuss the progress. Work in a shared document in which you can comment on each other’s work.
- What if your group members don’t stick to the deadlines? Make a clear timeline and discuss internal deadlines that are monitored by the whole group.
- Is the group communication going wrong? First discuss this internally. Are you not able to reach a solution? Talk to the supervisor/professor about this and ask for the possibility of completing a peer assessment.