

Getting Started

A common problem in group work is a lack of understanding and connection between group members. Below are a number of key considerations for your first meetings.

Does the whole group...

Know each other?

Ask group members to briefly introduce themselves and say a little bit about themselves. Depending on the mood in the group you can also consider using an icebreaker activity.

Feel supported?

Ensuring everyone feels welcome in the group and that their contributions to discussion are respected is crucial. If anyone has become disengaged try to speak with them as soon as possible to find out if there is anything the group can do to help them become more involved.

Have a good understanding of the task?

Before making a start go through the task and the assessment as a group highlighting the key points and considerations. If you are unsure about anything then you should seek clarification from your tutor straight away.

Know what they are being asked to do?

Using a group work planner can help make it clear who has agreed to do what and when they are expected to have finished by.

Individual's roles in teams

Groups can benefit from having agreed roles in order to provide structure and direction. You can play to a team's strengths by allocating roles to individuals most suited to tasks, challenge people to take on a role less familiar to them or rotate responsibilities on a meeting by meeting basis to ensure everyone has the opportunity to perform each role.

Chair

Keeps meetings focused and ensures everyone has chance to speak.

Secretary

Records key decisions, deadlines and responsibilities

Sceptic

Questions the decisions of the group to ensure they are well thought-out. This should be done in a constructive and measured way.

Harmonizer

Ensures the group is working well by trying to build consensus and reconcile disagreements.