Project Teams

# The course project can be exciting and rewarding, but it’s also one of the most challenging parts of the class—especially if you try to complete it solo. To set you up for success (and to make the project considerably easier!), you will be required to work with a partner. This document explains how partners will be assigned, what’s expected of you as a teammate, and how peer evaluations and reassignments work. All checkpoints in the project are subject to these policies. Most teams find that working together not only makes the project more manageable, but also more fun and less stressful.

# Partner Assignment

To make teams, I will use a tool that matches students based on three criteria, in order of priority:

1. Availability – Partners will be matched so you have overlapping times to meet and work together. This project works best when teams can collaborate in person, not just divide the work.
2. Avoid requests – If there is someone you know you cannot work productively with, you may indicate that confidentially.
3. Preferred partner – If you and another student both request each other, I will try to honor that when possible.

This approach ensures that teams are formed with the *best chance of success*. Experience shows that students who choose partners based only on friendships often run into problems with scheduling and workload balance. By using availability and structured preferences, we maximize the chance that your team will be able to meet regularly, work effectively, and complete the project smoothly.

# Collaboration Expectations

Teamwork is a professional skill, and collaboration is part of the assignment, not just a convenience. Teams are expected to:

* Meet regularly.
* Share work equitably.
* Keep commitments.
* Communicate clearly about progress and obstacles.

If you run into problems, bring them up early — don’t wait for peer evaluations to reveal issues.

# Peer Evaluation

At each checkpoint, you will complete a short peer evaluation about your teammate’s contributions. Peer evaluation is **required at every checkpoint**. You cannot earn an *Achieved* without completing it.

The peer evaluation process exists mainly to confirm that things are working as expected. Most students collaborate just fine — they contribute fairly, communicate well, and their teams run smoothly.

In the rare case that a peer evaluation shows you are *not* contributing reliably, you will need to submit a written improvement plan that explains how you will improve at the next checkpoint. Without this plan, your checkpoint cannot earn *Achieved*. This requirement is not a punishment — it is a chance to recognize a problem early and make concrete improvements if your partner’s evaluation raises serious concerns about your contribution, reliability, or communication. For the vast majority of students, the issue will never come up.

If you receive two **consecutive** poor peer evaluations, I will meet with you to determine appropriate actions to ensure fairness to all parties involved. The most likely outcome is that your team will be split. If a team is split, the student who has been contributing will be reassigned so they are not penalized for a partner’s lack of participation; the student who was not contributing may be required to continue solo or join another student in the same situation.

# Conclusion

These policies are in place to make sure everyone has a fair chance to succeed. Most teams will never need them, but if issues do arise, this process ensures they can be addressed fairly.