

ENGG100/DPEN100 Major Project – Group Contract

You have been assigned to a group based on the enrolment in your computer lab class using a number of selection criteria. You are required to submit a completed contract with all group members signatures to the designated link on the Moodle page.

Rationale

The purpose of the group contract is to establish procedures and roles in order to move the group more quickly into the performing stage. The process of generating a group contract can actually help jump-start a group's collaborative efforts by immediately focusing the group members on a definite task.

The success of your group ultimately depends on the cooperation and professionalism of its members. In the future, employers will expect you to know how to work effectively in groups: how to determine what needs to be done; how to find information; how to assess information; how to share the workload; and how to resolve interpersonal conflicts that might arise. Effective collaboration includes, but is not limited to:

- participating fully (in spirit and actuality)
- participating professionally (i.e., civil discourse; abiding by the rules of academic integrity)
- meeting responsibilities (i.e. completing assigned tasks on time and to the best of your ability)
- taking the consequences of not abiding by the group's (appropriate) rules.
- giving group members appropriate credit where due.
- not giving credit where it isn't due.

Negotiation and Conflict Management

The group members must communicate and negotiate in order to identify the quality of work they all wish to achieve, and the level of group participation and individual accountability they all feel comfortable with. Successful group performance depends on personal individual accountability. In a group environment, individuals are usually effectively motivated to maximise their own rewards and minimise their own costs. However, conflicts can arise when individualistic motives or behaviours disrupt group-oriented goals. For example, conflict can stem from an unequal division of work. "Freeriding" (i.e. slacking) occurs most frequently when individual contributions are combined into a single product or performance, and individual effort is perceived as unequal. At this point, some individual group members may take on extra responsibilities while other group members may reduce their own efforts or withdraw from the group (subject) completely. These behaviours may engender anger, frustration, or isolation - resulting in a dysfunctional group and poor quality of work. However, with a well-formulated group contract, such obstacles can usually be avoided, or at least addressed.

Uneven completion of work or unacceptable work quality should be reflected in the Moodle Team Evaluation (Week 10 and Week 13). A negative rating trend by other group members will ultimately adversely affect the individual project grade of the offending member (Week 10).

The major project requirements will not be altered as a result of removal or non-responsiveness of a group member. As a consequence, the remaining group members would be required to complete all sections of the project. Therefore, it is in the interest of the group to establish a working relationship that fosters mutual accountability and support.

It is hoped that any disagreements or disputes between group members can be resolved through open communication and compromise. If necessary the group may seek guidance from the major project coordinator via engg100-enquiries@uow.edu.au as soon as an unsolvable problem arises, to ensure smooth continuation of the project can occur in a timely manner.

The Moodle Team Evaluations scheduled for both Week 10 and Week 13 are also avenues to rate individual contributions and provide comment accordingly, both positive and negative. If issues arise separate to these activities, do not wait to inform the major project coordinator as this will likely result in delays in the group making further progress, to your group's detriment.

Elements of Effective Group Work

As a group you should read through the list of skills below and each group member should identify which of the skills they feel they are strong in and any that they can work on/develop. This process will help in the planning and assigning of tasks for the major project.

COMMUNICATION

For effective group work to occur there needs to be a free, open and appropriate expression of ideas and feelings at all times. Each group member actively listens to other members, and after listening, provides effective non-judgmental feedback. Members must take responsibility to communicate their ideas, thoughts, concerns, etc. Respectful communication (verbal and non-verbal) in response to cultural and personal differences contributes to group cohesion.

PARTICIPATION

Group members need to contribute fully to the best of their ability. Members need to take initiative in participating in the group tasks, especially in areas where they may have strengths. Those with greater coding ability may also need to help (but not take over) those who may be struggling by guiding, coaching or critiquing. Peer learning is a proven means of cementing understanding. Those who may be struggling should be clear (and not afraid to speak up) when they need clarification or assistance. To make groups work well, members need to make concerted efforts to be available for all meetings. Wanting the group to succeed will contribute to success – begrudging contributions will erode success.

GIVE AND TAKE

There may be various ideas of how to achieve success within the group. Therefore, members need to be open to compromise and recognise that it is sometimes better to give in than be “right”. Members need to discern the differences between their own needs and those of the group, ideally putting needs of group before the needs of the individual.

LEADERSHIP

Each group member can contribute by being a leader in the group – a group can have more than one! Members lead with the skills and abilities they possess. A member who promotes group actions, decisions and ideas demonstrates leadership. A leader recognises that they need the group, and lets each member know where they stand. Leadership is also required to initiate the resolution of group breakdowns.

ORGANISATION

An effective group needs to be organised. Members determine how the group is organised. This in turn, contributes to a member understanding their responsibilities, ensuring tasks are getting done and that there is no repetition in completing tasks.

PREPARATION

For groups to be successful, members need to be responsible with their duties and do the work required as agreed upon. Otherwise, group progress could be impeded, especially when further steps are dependent on the required work. Everyone needs to know that they can rely on their group members in completing assigned tasks/preparation work so that the group can progress in its objective(s).

PROCEDURE

In order for groups to function well, they need to set up procedures, which will clearly identify members' responsibilities and expectations for each other. Some type of order is necessary for groups to function effectively and smoothly, otherwise group work may end up being inefficient, inconsistent and regularly in “crisis”. Members need to function according to the agreed upon procedures which will help to guide them in times of dilemmas.

CAPABILITY

Each member brings their own strengths to the group – not only existing skills and/or knowledge, but also the potential to learn, problem-solve and further contribute to the group. Demonstrating one's interest and potential will often lead others to have more confidence in that member.

COMMITMENT

Members who are committed will often be the ones taking the initiative to achieve the goals/objectives of the group. They will be the ones who want to make sure the goals are clear to achieve success. Commitment needs to be directed to group goals, not individual goals. The level of commitment is usually related to the level of reliability.

PROGRESS and ASSESSMENT

A well running group is always interested in how things are going. Members of an effective group will contribute to an attitude of action and momentum. Often, progress is a good indicator of how well the group is working together. Regular assessment is necessary for a group to ensure it is continuing to work well together. An effective group is not afraid to make changes in how it is organised or in its procedures so that improvement in achieving the goal/objective occurs.

The above list identifies the elements that make team work effective. Additional to this, it is recommended that you take a look at the information contained at the following link <https://www.belbin.com/about/belbin-team-roles>, which explains what they consider the 9 team roles that facilitate effective team progress. This might further help your group determine who is allocated what components, which are required on page 5 of this document.

Skill Strength Identification

Each group member should identify at least one skill from the “**Elements of Effective Group Work**” list that they believe is one of their strengths and provide an example of how it will apply to the major project.

Group Member Name	Skill Strength	Example of how this skill will be useful in the major project
Joe O'Brien	Capability	I can bring my own knowledge and strengths to contribute to the project.

Skill Development Identification

Each group member should identify at least one skill from the “**Elements of Effective Group Work**” list that they find challenging and provide an example of how they can develop it further in the major project.

Group Member Name	Skill Strength	Example of where you can develop this skill in the major project
Joe O'Brien	Organisation	Learn from other members how to be more organized in teamwork contributions

Group Allocations

Now that you have read through the “**ENGG100/DPEN100 Major Project – Group Contract**” document, understood the expectations of how a group should function and identified the skills you are strong in and others you need to further develop, your group should finalise the allocation of tasks needed to complete the major project over the next weeks. Remember that minor adjustments to this plan could occur at a later stage depending on group dynamics.

When considering the “Leadership” skill, you may want to consider one group member take the lead of coordinating the completion/collection of the coding for the major project and another to coordinate the compilation of the final report. There may be other “leader” responsibilities that your group comes up with as well.

Tasks within the group should include, but not necessarily limited to:

- arranging meetings,
- who is responsible for the various scripts/functions within the code,
- components of the final report, and
- who is responsible for uploading submissions to Moodle.

Group Number _____

Group Member Name	Agreed Task(s)	Signature of Agreement