

Team Coordinator Role

Roles of Team Coordinators

A Team Coordinator is

- A friend
- A coach
- A supporter
- A motivator
- An advocate
- A role model
- A listener

A Team Coordinator is not

- A surrogate parent
- Replacement of a teacher or tutor
- A psychologist
- An ATM
- A playmate
- A social worker
- A savior

USE THE MEETING LOG TO DOCUMENT THE TEAM MEETINGS

Boundaries- Key Points

- If you are not sure how to respond to a situation, you have every right to request time to think about it.
- It is best to set boundaries from the start and adjust as necessary.
- If you are unsure about a situation, need help figuring out how to proceed, or need an intervention, seek help and advice from your faculty member, program staff, or the SVMC VISTA fellow.

Tips for getting started

- Be prepared and be on time
- Have an icebreaker to get started or if things get stalled (What's your favorite song right now?, Do you have a pet and what's its name?). It is OK to break away from the work for a bit, as ideas and work will flow easier afterwards.
- Be predictable and consistent
- Establish confidentiality- ie make a safe space for everyone to contribute without judgement or later telling others what silly ideas someone brought forward. All input advances the project even if the input allows ruling out something because it's a bad idea.
- Clarify expectations and ground rules

Establish a consistent meeting day (M-F) and time that works for team members.

Establish a method for the team to connect- Zoom, Webex, WhatsApp, etc.

Determine who will do what tasks/actions and bring the deliverables to the next meeting.

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Teamwork 101:

Dos and Don'ts of Group Work

Dos of Group Work

1. Communicate clearly and regularly

Tips for good communication:

- Create ground rules
- Set hours of availability, maybe not during school hours
- Plan ahead for video chatting
- Decide which platform people are most comfortable using to communicate
 - Think about the project...are you ok with people having your phone #
- For video chatting, use a plain, blurred, or fake background for privacy reasons
- Nuance/sarcasm/humor can be lost easily over text, and can be confusing- use emojis :)
- Respond to messaging in a timely manner

2. Respect everyone's opinions

- Listen actively and consider different perspectives.
- Remember that you do not always know best

3. Divide tasks fairly

- Assign roles and responsibilities based on strengths and availability.

4. Meet deadlines

- Complete your part on time so the group can stay on track.
- Create goals, which could be for a single meeting, week, or month

5. Stay engaged and participate

- Be present during meetings and contribute meaningfully.
- Ask questions, be curious

6. Offer help when needed

- Support group members if they're falling behind or struggling.
- Show empathy

7. Be open to feedback

- Accept constructive criticism and be willing to improve
- Remember that no one is perfect

8. Make room for fun

- Good to discuss life and things other than the project

Don'ts of Group Work

1. **Don't dominate the conversation**
 - Let others speak and avoid taking over discussions.
2. **Don't ignore group decisions**
 - Stick with what the group agreed on instead of going rogue.
3. **Don't procrastinate**
 - Waiting until the last minute affects everyone's work.
4. **Don't blame others**
 - Take responsibility for mistakes and work on solutions.
5. **Don't be inflexible**
 - Be willing to compromise and adjust when necessary.
6. **Don't exclude anyone**
 - Make sure all group members feel included and valued.
7. **Don't let conflicts go unresolved**
 - Address issues calmly and respectfully as they arise.
8. **Don't assume the reasons behind people's actions**

Real Talk Scenarios

Scenario 1: 3 minutes to roleplay

Your group is working on a presentation. One member, Jordan, attends every meeting but rarely speaks up or shares ideas. When assigned tasks, they nod but don't give much feedback. As the deadline nears, the group realizes Jordan hasn't done much.

Discussion:

How would you address this with Jordan? What could have been done earlier to avoid this situation?

Appropriate Responses:

Show respect, teamwork, and proactive communication:

Example:

"Hey Jordan, we've noticed you've been a bit quiet during meetings and we're worried that you're falling behind. Is there anything you need help with? Let's figure out how you can contribute before the deadline."

What could have been done earlier:

Active check-ins:

"We could've asked Jordan more directly how they were doing with their part and encouraged more input earlier on."

Inappropriate Responses:

These show blame, disrespect, or avoidance:

Confrontational/blaming:

"Jordan, you've done nothing this whole time. You better start pulling your weight."

Public shaming:

"Let's call Jordan out in front of the group to make an example."

Passive-aggressive behavior:

"Just ignore Jordan and do the work ourselves. They clearly don't care."

Mistakes made earlier:

Assumed silence meant agreement or understanding:

"We figured since Jordan never said anything, they were fine with the tasks."

Avoided checking in:

"We didn't want to bother Jordan, so we never followed up on their progress."

Ignored the problem:

"We hoped it would work itself out if we didn't bring it up."

Scenario 2: 3 minutes to roleplay

During meetings, Syd always jumps in first with ideas and often talks over others. They tend to dismiss suggestions they disagree with and push the group toward their vision of the project. Some group members have stopped contributing because they feel unheard.

Discussion:

What would you do if you were in this group? How can the team create space for everyone to participate?

Appropriate Responses:

Promote respectful communication, teamwork, and inclusion:

Address the behavior calmly and directly:

"Syd, I appreciate your enthusiasm, but sometimes it feels like others don't get a chance to share. Maybe we can make sure everyone has time to speak before jumping in?"

Use group agreements or norms:

"Can we agree to a rule where everyone gets a chance to share ideas before we decide on a direction?"

Support quieter members:

"I'd like to hear what Alex or Jordan thinks too—we haven't heard much from them yet."

Model balanced participation:

"I'll share one idea, and then let's go around and hear from everyone else before we move forward."

How can the team create space for everyone to participate?

Establish ground rules:

"Let's agree to take turns, avoid interrupting, and listen fully before responding."

Use structured turn-taking:

"We could go around in a circle so everyone gets a chance to talk."

Assign a facilitator:

"Maybe someone can guide the conversation and make sure all voices are heard."

Foster a culture of respect:

"Remind the group that all ideas are welcome and criticism should be constructive, not dismissive."

Inappropriate Responses:

Avoid conflict, create tension:

Stay silent and resentful:

"I'll just let Syd run the show. There's no point in speaking up."

Call out Syd harshly or publicly:

"Syd, you're a control freak and you need to stop dominating everything."

How *not* to create space for everyone:

Ignore the issue:

"This is just Syd's personality—we can't change that."

Rely on informal venting:

"Let's just complain about Syd in a group chat after meetings."

Allow one person to always lead:

"It's easier to let Syd decide everything and avoid conflict."

Scenario 3: 3 minutes to roleplay

Your team is submitting a group assignment tomorrow. Everything seemed on track, but one member, Alex, just emailed saying they won't be able to finish their section because of a personal emergency. Their part is crucial to the final product.

Discussion:

What steps would you take as a team right now?

Appropriate Responses:

Problem-solving, compassion, and teamwork under pressure.

Stay calm and assess the situation:

"Let's figure out exactly what still needs to be done and how much time we have."

Redistribute the work fairly:

"We'll divide Alex's part among us based on who has the time or skills to complete it quickly."

Support Alex with understanding:

"We hope Alex is okay. Emergencies happen—let's just focus on finishing this together."

Communicate with the instructor if needed:

"If the missing part can't be done in time or affects the quality significantly, maybe we should let the instructor know about Alex's situation."

Work collaboratively and efficiently:

"Let's meet immediately to prioritize and knock out the most critical parts first."

Inappropriate Responses:

Show blame, panic, or a lack of teamwork or empathy.

Blame or shame Alex:

"Alex totally screwed us over—this is so irresponsible!"

Refuse to help:

"Not my problem. I did my part already."

Panic without action:

"We're doomed. There's no way we can finish now."

Ignore the issue or hope it resolves itself:

"Maybe Alex will finish it anyway. Let's just wait and see."

Submit an incomplete or poorly done assignment without trying:

"Let's just turn it in as is and take the hit."

Scenario 4: 3 minutes to roleplay

Sam hasn't shown up to any meetings and hasn't responded to emails or messages.

The rest of the team is unsure whether to keep reaching out or to move on without them.

Discussion:

How long should a group try to include someone who is unresponsive? What would you do in this case?

Appropriate Responses:

Balance responsibility, fairness, and empathy.

Set a reasonable timeframe:

"We should give a clear deadline—like 48 hours—for Sam to respond before moving forward without them."

Document communication attempts:

"Let's keep track of how and when we reached out. That way, if we need to explain the situation to an instructor, we have a record."

Make expectations clear:

"In our final message, we should say: 'We'll assume you're not participating if we don't hear back by [date].'"

What would you do in this case?

Send one final, respectful message:

"Hi Sam, we've been trying to reach you. We hope everything's okay. If we don't hear from you by [specific time], we'll need to move forward without your input."

Redistribute the work:

"If we don't hear back, let's figure out how to split up Sam's tasks so we're still on track."

Loop in the instructor if needed:

"If the silence continues, we may need to inform the instructor so it doesn't affect the whole group's grade."

Inappropriate Responses:

Poor communication, a lack of accountability, or unnecessary hostility.

Ghosting the issue:

"Let's just ignore it and hope Sam magically shows up."

Reacting with hostility:

"Forget Sam. They obviously don't care and don't deserve to be part of this project."

Doing nothing at all:

"Maybe we just won't include them and not tell anyone."

Publicly calling them out or badmouthing:

"Let's post in the group chat how Sam's been useless so everyone knows."

Letting it stall progress indefinitely:

"We should keep waiting for Sam, even if it means we miss the deadline."