

Setting Group Expectations

WHY SET GROUP EXPECTATIONS

Setting expectations can help start a group off right. Standards that are agreed upon let us know what is expected of others and of ourselves. As an individual, you may have a very different concept than the rest of your group regarding what “communication” or what “decision-making” looks like. Setting expectations allows the group to be in accord. Not only is it inconvenient when we do not have clear expectations, it is also unfair and can set others and us up to not meet expectations that have not been articulated.

HOW TO SET GROUP EXPECTATIONS

As a group, designate a time when you will discuss and set group expectations. Ideally, this should be toward the beginning of your work together, but you can still establish expectations even after you have been working together. This discussion does not have to be long; oftentimes a group can set clear, mutual expectations in a 10-15 minute conversation.

Have one person write down the agreed upon expectations. Some ideas may be suggested but through discussion, the group may change or reject the suggestion. Be as clear and specific as possible with expectations.

When concluding the conversation, check for understanding and ask everyone to affirm verbally or otherwise their commitment to the group expectations. Make a copy of the agreed upon expectations available to the entire group either physically or digitally.

IDEAS TO CONSIDER WHEN SETTING EXPECTATIONS

- How, when, and how often will our group communicate?
 - Within what timeframe do we expect responses to email and phone communication?
- How will we make decisions?
- What values will we prioritize?
- How will we all contribute to the end goals?
- How will we give and receive feedback?
- How will we respond if someone is not upholding these shared expectations?