

Guidelines for Writing Team Contract¹

ECE 211/212 are courses based on projects performed by teams of students. Teamwork, like most other things, is best learned through repeated practice. Developing Team Contract should help your team function more smoothly and effectively.

Rationale

As discussed in [2] check this, there are five stages of team development: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. During the forming stage, teams tend to communicate in indirect polite ways rather than more directly. The storming stage, characterized by conflict, can be often be productive, but may consume excessive amount of time and energy. In this stage it is important to listen for differing expectations. Next, during the norming stage, teams formulate roles and standards, increasing trust and communication. This norming stage is characterized by agreement on procedures, reduction in role ambiguity, and increased unity of the team. These developments generally are precursors to the performing stage, during which teams achieve their goals, are highly task oriented, and focus on performance and production. When the task has been completed, the team adjourns.

To accelerate a team's development, a team contract is generated to establish procedures and roles in order to move the team more quickly into the performing stage. This process of generating a team contract can help jump-start a group's collaborative efforts by immediately focusing the team members on a definite task. 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 team performance depends on personal individual accountability. In a team environment, individuals are usually effectively motivated to maximize their own rewards and minimize their own costs. However, conflicts can arise when individualistic motives or behaviors disrupt team-oriented goals. For example, conflict can stem from an unequal division of resources. When team members believe they are receiving too little for what they are giving, they sometimes reduce their effort and turn in work of lower quality. Such "social loafing" 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 team members may take on extra responsibilities while other team members may reduce their own efforts or withdraw from the team completely. These behaviors may engender anger, frustration, or isolation—resulting in a dysfunctional team and poor quality of work. However, with a well-formulated team contract, such obstacles can usually be recognized and avoided.

¹ Adapted from [1].

Team Contract Assignment

Your team contract template is divided into three major sections:

1. establishing team procedures
2. identifying expectations
3. specifying the consequences for failing to follow these procedures and fulfill these expectations

Since the basic purpose of this team contract is to accelerate your team's development, to increase individual accountability for team tasks, and to reduce the possibility for team conflict, make your contract **as specific as possible** by specifying:

- a) each task as detailed as possible,
- b) each step in a procedure or process as detailed as possible,
- c) the exact person(s) responsible for each specific task, and
- d) the exact time and exact place for completion or submission of each task.

The more specifically you describe your team expectations, roles, and procedures, the greater chance you have for a successful team experience.

Once your team contract has been developed, your team is ready to begin work on collaborative assignments. However, you may soon find that your team is not working as well as you had hoped. This is normal but needs to be attended to immediately. Perhaps your team is simply not following the established contract procedures or roles as strictly as you should be, or perhaps you need to change some of the procedures or roles as outlined in your contract. Call a team meeting immediately to discuss and resolve the challenges your team is facing; do not delay. Seek guidance from your instructor, TA, or undergraduate helper to resolve any conflicts so that you will have the most positive team experience possible.

[We will address these when we go through one Sprint and you know more about how Scrum functions. Some specific comments re: Scrum setup:

- defining roles – development team, product owner, scrum master
- define specific expertise for each member (EPL or similar)
- time(s) for sprint retrospectives; what will be the result of those?
- Expectations for daily meetings
- Daily meetings need not be documented but any other meetings, such as sprint retrospectives, should have a more formal set of notes which should be posted on trello.
- Sprint retrospective discussion and conclusions have some mandatory parts that should be included in this contract (we will do this in v2.0).]

Course instructor reserves the right to remove team members that do not show sufficient level of commitment or perform poorly. Consequences of such removal are discussed in course syllabus.

Use the Team Contract template to discuss and finalize your team roles, procedures, and standards. Complete, sign, and submit a scanned copy of your finalized contract on D2L.

TEAM CONTRACT

ECE 211 / 212

Team # _____

Team Members:

- 1) Jesse Vazquez
- 2) Chuck Faber
- 3) Matt Wilson

- 4) Edgar Ortiz
- 5) _____

Team Procedures

1. Day, time, and place for regular **daily Scrum meetings**:

4-5 DAYS A WEEK 8PM THROUGH SKYPE VIDEO

2. Day, time, and place for regular **Sprint retrospective meetings**:

DURING AND AFTER CLASS TWO TIMES A WEEK TUES. AND THURS.
10-15 MIN

3. Preferred method of **communication**, e.g., e-mail, cell phone, wired phone, face-to-face, in a certain class, in order to inform each other of team meetings, announcement, updates, reminders, problems: GROUP TEXT OR E-MAIL

4. **Decision-making policy** (authority, expert, average, authority after discussion, minority, majority, consensus): MAJORITY VOTE

5. Method for setting and following meeting **agendas** (Who will set each agenda? When? How will team members be notified/reminded? Who will be responsible for the team following the agenda during a team meeting? What will be done to keep the team on track during a meeting?): CHUCK WILL BE THE MEETING FACILITATOR
WE WILL ALL CHECK IN AS A GROUP.

6. Method of **record keeping** (Who will be responsible for recording & disseminating minutes? How & when will the minutes be disseminated? Where will all agendas & minutes be kept? Note: some will be done on Trello):

EDGAR WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING NOTES/MINUTES

7. How will collaboration on writing the final report be handled? (tools used? Distribution of tasks?) *GOOGLE DOC. EACH TEAM MEMBER WILL CONTRIBUTE AN OUTLINE. THEN THE FINAL WILL BE WRITTEN USING ALL THE OUTLINES.*

Team Expectations

Work Quality

1. Project standards (What is a realistic level of quality for team presentations, collaborative writing, individual research, preparation of drafts, peer reviews, etc.?):

REALISTIC LEVEL OF QUALITY FOR OUR TEAM IS AVERAGE / ABOVE AVE.

2. Strategies to fulfill these standards:

WE AGREE ON TIMES AND DATES FOR MEETINGS

Team Participation

1. Strategies to ensure cooperation and equal distribution of tasks:

*COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TEAM MEMBERS.
WE ALL AGREE TO KEEP IN TOUCH AND WORK
WITH EACH OTHERS SCHEDULE*

2. Strategies for encouraging/including ideas from all team members:

*AS THE MEETING FACILITATOR CHUCK ASSUMES
THE RESPONSIBILITY OF KEEPING THE TEAM MEMBERS
ON TASK AND INCLUDED IN THE DECISION MAKING
PROCESS*

3. Strategies for keeping on task:

*- KEEPING GOOD TIME MANAGEMENT
- MEETING FACILITATOR WILL KEEP TEAM ON TASK*

4. Preferences for leadership (informal, formal, individual, shared):

INFORMAL / SHARED

Personal Accountability

1. Expected individual attendance, punctuality, and participation at all team meetings:

*WE ALL AGREE TO MEET AT A TIME THAT WORKS FOR THE GROUP.
IF WE NEED TO MISS A MEETING, WE WILL KEEP THE TEAM INFORMED
AND RESCHEDULE.*

2. Expected level of responsibility for fulfilling team assignments, timelines, and deadlines:

*AS A TEAM WE ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY OF FULFILING TIME LINES.
WE WILL MANAGE OURSELVES AND KEEP EACH OTHER ON TRACK.*

3. Expected level of communication with other team members:

WE EXPECT TO KEEP HIGH LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION
WITH EACH OTHER, WE HAVE WORKED OUT A SCHEDULE
THAT WORKS WELL FOR THE TEAM AS A WHOLE

Consequences for Failing to Follow Procedures and Fulfill Expectations

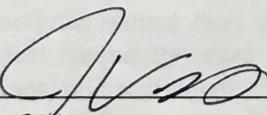
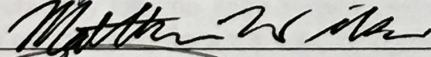
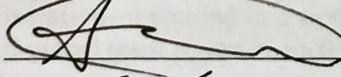
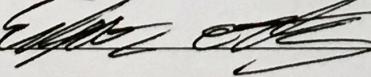
1. Describe, as a group, you would handle **infractions** of any of the obligations of this team contract:

IN THE CASE OF INFRACTIONS, WE WILL TREAT OUR TEAM
AS A DEMOCRACY. WE WILL TALK AS A GROUP AND DISCUSS
ANY FURTHER ACTIONS AS A GROUP

2. Describe what your team will do if the infractions continue:

WE WILL CONTACT THE SCRUM MASTER
FOR IDEAS OF HOW TO RESOLVE THE INFRACTION
IF INFRACTION CONTINUES WE WILL CONSULT
DR. BRAND - WITH REMOVAL FROM TEAM AS FINAL RESORT

- a) I participated in formulating the standards, roles, and procedures as stated in this contract.
- b) I understand that I am obligated to abide by these terms and conditions.
- c) I understand that if I do not abide by these terms and conditions, I will suffer the consequences as stated in this contract.

- 1)  date 10-2-18
- 2)  date 10/2/18
- 3)  date 10/2/18
- 4)  date 10/2/18
- 5) _____ date _____

[1] Adapted from https://cns.utexas.edu/images/CNS/TIDES/teaching-portal/Team_Contract.doc

[2] Ford and Coulston, Design for Electrical and Computer Engineers, McGraw-Hill, 2008