

FAF.PCAIT21.1 Fall 2023

Free-rider Protocol

Handed out: November 1, 2023

Who is a Free-rider?

Working in a team can sometimes be hard. It can come with great advantages, like building rockets and such. Specializing in a task and building upon the work of others can get us quite far. Alas, teamwork can come with some disadvantages. Much attention needs to be addressed to meetings, task distribution and efficient communication.

A free-rider is a person who, in the team's opinion, does not chronically do enough tasks (or do them well enough) by which pulling down the productivity / output of the team.

How to handle Free-riders

In handling a free-rider situation in your team, follow the simple three step process:

1. Talk with the person;
2. Notify the mentor;
3. Write a formal request.

Talk with the person Not everyone who is under-performing is a free-rider. There might be reasons for a person's behaviour and these need to be understood. Let them know that their performance bothers the team. Ask the person whether there is something stopping them from performing their tasks well and explain why they need to do better.

Notify the mentor If the person constantly under-performs without any serious / motivated causes, it is time to notify your mentor. Let the mentor know about the situation and what you talked about with the person in question. Provide evidence of the person's activities (or lack thereof), best served in the form of Meeting Notes. The mentor will seek to talk with the person in question.

Write a formal request If, after a talk with the mentor, the person continues to exhibit their bad behaviour, the team is entitled to remove them from the team. The only official way to do so is via a "request for removal" addressed to the PBL responsible. The request needs to be signed by all team-members (except the free-rider) and by the team mentor. The PBL responsible is the only person that can approve such changes. As a result, the free-rider will continue the project in a separate team. A template can be found below, in the Appendix section.

Appendix

Request for team modification

Dear *responsible_mentor_name_surname*,

We, members of Team *team_number*, signed below, kindly request to remove *free-rider_name_surname* from our team, basing this on the following:

- *The person was absent from x out of y meetings;*
- *The person did not perform x of their tasks;*
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<i>date</i>	<i>team_member1_name_surname (member1_signature)</i>
	<i>team_member2_name_surname (member2_signature)</i>
	<i>team_member3_name_surname (member3_signature)</i>
	<i>team_member4_name_surname (member4_signature)</i>

Team Mentor	<i>mentor_name_surname (mentor_signature)</i>
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