

Example Group Work and Peer Feedback Policy

The purpose of the peer review adjustment process is to encourage student teams to develop good team management practices and to have team members' contributions to team deliverables reflected in their marks for that work. Experience with group work has shown that most troubles arise because: a) individuals do not respect the group process, and/or b) there is lack of proper communication among group members.

For teams, an initial group meeting should happen as early as possible so that parameters are set right away (e.g., when the group will meet virtually, what collaborative tools they will use, what are the expected standards of work, when are the milestones, when are the internal deadlines, and how will preliminary assignment of individual tasks be determined). Students' first step should be the development of an online group calendar that can block off individual commitments and highlight dates and times that are free for all group members so that coordination of meetings is seamless. The worst thing a student can do is surprise their group with a long-standing commitment at the last minute. This is what typically starts group work off on the wrong foot.

To assist teams in coming to terms with group members who may not be performing up to standards, students are encouraged to complete an interim draft version of the peer evaluation form (located in each Avenue to Learn course shell) and use it to guide discussion within their team. Everyone on the team deserves feedback and it is important that you provide it early (around the 50% of work done mark). *If you feel there has been a discrepancy in the contributions of your group members, peer reviews should be submitted on Avenue within 48 hours after the deadline of each group assignment.*

If problems persist during the term, it is imperative that they are raised and documented to the instructor and TA as early as possible. A certain level of group disharmony is typically present in every group project. Students' ability to manage through the conflict and leverage the talents of everyone is an important skill. It will serve them well in their workplace, where collaborative work is ever present.

Instructors will arrange and administer formal peer review processes to adjust students' marks to reflect their contributions to team deliverables. Instructors will explain the details of how they will manage peer review adjustments for a class early in the semester. The instructor's mark adjustment may reduce the final mark on a group assignment for a student by up to 25%. In other words, if a group receives a grade of 85% for an assignment, an instructor may choose to adjust that final grade down to as far as 60% if the peer review adjustment form indicates that an individual did not complete his/her fair share. Please note, the downward adjustment of up to 25% is the maximum adjustment that can be assigned. An instructor may choose NOT to apply an adjustment and may choose to assign a penalty that is only a fraction of what his/her peers recommended.