



Assessing group work

What is it?

Group work is not produced by one person, but a team. Assessment of group work can include both the output (the Product – see the UCL Student Assessment Criteria for Taught Programmes) and also how the team worked together (the Process – see the Assessment and Feedback Quick Guide on Peer Assessment).

Why do it?

Assessed group work encourages student participation and peer learning through discussion and interaction with peers. Students can develop a sense of team spirit and participate fully. Group work can also help to build skills relevant to employment, such as team-working, collaboration, organisational and personal time management. Peer assessment and other student-based assessments can help to manage the problem of students not doing their fair share, and enable greater student involvement in the assessment process.

Assessment & feedback quick guides

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Resources

UCL Student Assessment Criteria for Taught Programmes. An Illustrative Guide. http://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/pdfs/UCL_Assessment_Criteria_Guide.pdf

UCL Centre for Advancing Learning and Teaching (CALT). Quick Study Guide 8. Peer Assessment.

Getting the most from Groupwork Assessment. ASKe 1,2,3 leaflets. Oxford Brookes University. <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/resources/index.html> Last accessed 27 February 2016.

University of New South Wales (2015). Assessment Toolkit. Assessing by Group Work. <https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/printpdf/539> Last accessed 27 February 2016.

How to do it

1. Communicate clear learning outcomes and assessment criteria related to the the Product and/ or Process. Make sure students understand what counts as evidence of participation as well as contribution.
2. Determine group membership size and formation process. Include consideration of how to support students who end up working individually or in smaller groups if the groups break up e.g. through illness.
3. Develop context-specific strategies for dealing with group breakdowns, clear guides on the process to be followed and the point at which the lecturer will intervene.
4. Determine and make clear who will apply the assessment criteria: students, lecturer or both.
5. Tell students how the marks will be distributed (e.g. shared group mark, group average, marks for individual component parts).
6. Plan mechanisms to gather evidence for the group assessment (e.g. minutes of meetings, individual journals or reflections, on-line forum activity).
7. Specify media which best meet the learning outcomes for both group and any related individual components (e.g. written report, presentation, video and other audio-visual media).
8. If peer assessment (marking) is used:
 - a. Inform students whether assessment is formative (e.g. peer review) or summative (peer marking).
 - b. Students need to be briefed and trained on how to undertake peer assessment.
 - c. Criteria for assessing performance in the team must be linked to behaviour (e.g. attendance at meetings) in a way that can be linked to evidence.
 - d. Where practical, involve students in the development of peer assessment criteria.
 - e. See also the Assessment and Feedback Quick Guide on Peer Assessment for additional good practice guides.