

## Creating Team Contracts

Having student groups form team contracts before starting on a project helps to ensure they stay accountable to each other and deliver what is expected of them both individually and as a group.

Your directions may include

- asking students to create the contract in a videoconference call;
- providing students with a contract template and asking them to negotiate the terms;
- requiring students to sign the contract, each keep a copy, and submit a copy to you; and/or
- scheduling progress reviews of the assignment and group adherence to the team contract.

### Contract Terms

The contract may include the following terms:

- What are the roles and/or responsibilities of each person on the team?
- When and how will the group meet?
  - For example, the group will meet via videoconference, conference call, or chat room and daily, weekly, or bimonthly.
- What criteria will be peer reviewed?
  - For example, each member might evaluate the other group members' level of input upon completion or group members might pair up and review each other's work.
- What is expected as responsible and respectful behavior within the group?
- How will the team manage conflict or disagreement?
- What will happen if someone is not fulfilling their responsibilities for the group activity or is failing to honor the agreed-upon terms of the team contract?
  - It may be helpful to inform students of your expectations regarding their group processes for ensuring all team members appropriately contribute to the project, before you would be willing to step in to manage a situation where a group member is not fulfilling their responsibilities. It may be helpful to share how gaining these skills will likely benefit them in a future career or community project.

### Sample Team Contract

The template below is a sample contract that you can provide to students as you assign the task of negotiating contract terms.

Team Contract	
<p><i>Instructions: Hold a videoconference call for your first meeting and use that time to negotiate the terms of this contract. Once you have agreed upon all of these terms, each team member should sign this contract and keep a copy. A signed copy should also be submitted to me. Note that you will be asked to complete a progress review of these terms at the end of each week as you work toward completion of this project.</i></p>	
A.	List the specific roles or responsibilities assigned to each team member.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

<p>B. What criteria will you use to evaluate one another upon completion of this assignment? Examples include level of professionalism, leadership, timeliness of attending meetings and submitted work, and willingness to collaborate.</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p> <p>5.</p>
<p>C. What is considered appropriate behavior in terms of being respectful of one another? Examples include providing feedback without criticizing, being on time and prepared, honoring the terms of this contract, and listening to each other.</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p>
<p>D. How will the team manage conflict or disagreement?</p>
<p>E. What will happen if someone fails to honor the terms of this agreement?</p>
<p>F. By signing below, you agree to the terms of this contract.</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>NAME SIGNATURE DATE</p>
<p>2. _____</p> <p>NAME SIGNATURE DATE</p>
<p>3. _____</p> <p>NAME SIGNATURE DATE</p>
<p>4. _____</p> <p>NAME SIGNATURE DATE</p>

### Progress Review

Ask each group to conduct a progress review of the group's progress and adherence to the terms of their contract. Schedule the dates of these reviews ahead of time and in intervals that make sense with the timeline of the assignment. It is helpful to schedule enough time for you to intervene if any of the groups encounter significant problems.

The progress review can be as simple as having students email you responses to the following questions:

1. Is the team making satisfactory progress toward completion of this assignment in a timely manner?
2. Is every member of the team honoring the terms agreed to in the team contract?
3. Are there any issues or conflicts the team is working to resolve?
4. Do you need to conference with me on any issues?

**Sources**

Darby, F., & Lang, J. M. (2019). *Small teaching online: Applying learning science in online classes*. Jossey-Bass.

Nilson, L. B., & Goodson, L. A. (2018). *Online teaching at its best: Merging instructional design with teaching and learning research*. Jossey-Bass.