

ESTABLISHING GROUND RULES FOR GROUPS

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Ground rules are important to the success of you and your group in CHEM-342. The following suggestions include some of the issues and starting points from which groups can be encouraged to agree their own set of ground rules.

1. ***Create ownership of the ground rules.*** The various ground rules agendas suggested below should only be regarded as starting points for each group to adopt or adapt and prioritize. It is important that groups feel able to include ground rules that are appropriate for the particular people making up the group.
2. ***Foster a culture of honesty.*** Successful group work relies on truthfulness. It is as dishonest for group members to 'put up with' something they don't agree about, or can't live with, as it is to speak untruthfully. However, remember it is important to temper honesty with tact.
3. ***Remember you don't have to like the people in your group to work with them.*** In group work, as in professional life, people work with the team they are in, and matters of personal conflict need to be managed so they don't get in the way of the progress of the group as a whole.
4. ***Affirm collective responsibility.*** Once issues have been aired, and group decisions have been made as fully as possible, the convention of collective responsibility needs to be applied for successful group processes. This leads towards everyone living with group decisions and refraining from articulating their own personal reservations outside the group.
5. ***Develop and practice good listening skills.*** Every voice deserves to be heard, even if people don't initially agree with the point of view being expressed.
6. ***Successful groups need full participation by group members.*** Group work relies on multiple perspectives. Do not hold back from putting forward your view. Work to value the opinion of others as well as your own.
7. ***Everyone needs to take a fair share of the group work.*** This does not mean that everyone has to do the same thing. It is best when the members of the group have agreed how the tasks will be allocated among themselves. Be prepared to contribute by building on the ideas of others and validating the experiences of others.
8. ***Working to strengths of individual members can benefit your group.*** The work of a group can be achieved efficiently when tasks are allocated according to the experience and expertise of each member of the group.

9. ***However, groups offer a chance to develop strengths outside your comfort zone.*** Activities in groups can be developmental in purpose, so task allocation may be an ideal opportunity to allow you to build on areas of weakness or inexperience.
10. ***Keep good records.*** There needs to be an output to look back upon. This can take the form of planning notes, minutes or other kinds of evidence of the progress of the work of the group. Rotate the responsibility for summing up the position of the group regarding the tasks in hand and recording this.
11. ***Group deadlines are sacrosanct.*** The principle, 'You can let yourself down, but it's not OK to let the group down' underpins successful group work.
12. ***Cultivate philanthropy.*** Group work sometimes requires you to make personal needs and wishes subordinate to the goal of the group. This is all the more valuable when other group members recognize that this is happening.
13. ***Help people to value creativity and off-the-wall ideas.*** Don't allow these to be quelled out of a desire to keep the group on task, and strike a fair balance between progress and creativity.
14. ***Enable systematic working patterns.*** Establishing a regular program of meetings, task report backs and task allocation is likely to lead to effective and productive group performance.
15. ***Group ground rules can be modified.*** It can be productive to review and renegotiate the ground rules from time to time, creating new ones as solutions to unanticipated problems that might have arisen. It is important, however, not to forget or abandon those ground rules that proved useful in practice, but which were not consciously applied.
16. ***Consequences for violating group ground rules are important.*** A group needs to recognize when it is not functioning and be able to take corrective action. Therefore, it is important that consequences for violating group ground rules be established from the start and that all group members agree and sign off on them.
17. ***Certain group ground rules are strongly suggested.*** Based on many years of experience with groups, there are certain behaviors that frequently create problems for groups and are addressed on the form that follows. The form on should be printed out, discussed, modified as needed, signed by each group member, and returned to Dr. White.

CHEM-342 - Introduction to Biochemistry Ground Rules for Group Consideration

Each group should plan a fun social activity agreeable to all members in the first two weeks of the semester. One of the activities at that event should be to discuss seriously the ground rules for the group for the semester. Before the event, please read the online information relating to the factors that contribute to good PBL group function. < <http://www.udel.edu/pbl/working-in-groups/>>

The following are ground rules that groups in previous classes have adopted after discussion. They are meant to be suggestions for your consideration that can be modified within reason, if the group wishes to. They also may be revisited during the semester. If there are any difficulties with your group, these guidelines will be consulted. That is why it is particularly important that you consider consequences for group members who violate the ground rules and that everyone in the group agrees to them. Please sign and return this page to Dr. White when you are done.

- **Attendance and Promptness:** Come *on time* for *every* class.
- **Preparation:** Be prepared for *every* class.
- **Participation and Respect:** Solicit and value contributions from every group member.
- **Attitude:** Deal with issues constructively.
- **Notification:** Notify other group members and your tutor in advance (when possible), if you must miss a class or need assistance with an assignment.
- **Trust and Sharing:** Freely share the information you gather outside of class with other group members.
- **Focus:** Stay on task. Use class time wisely.
- Other ground rules for the group as needed.
- **Consequences:** Group members who disrupt the group's function by ignoring the group's guidelines can be confronted by the other members of the group and suffer the following consequences: (do not leave this blank)

We individually and collectively have agreed to the above ground rules and consequences.

_____ Date _____

_____ Group Tutor-Facilitator