

Group Dynamics and Expectations of Group Performance: Collaboration Guidelines

Working group collaboration: Before beginning this course, you will be assigned to a (virtual) working group. The working group provides a venue for reviewing the issues and discussing the Group Summary Questions (GSQs) associated with the exercises. (The GSQs are located at the end of each exercise). Your group should set up regular times that are convenient for everyone for this review and discussion. We recommend that you work individually on the exercises and prepare your own answers to the GSQs prior to your scheduled working group sessions. If you are not prepared, it will be difficult for you to participate in the discussion. **Advanced preparation is an obligation both to yourself and to the other members of your working group.**

Working group roles: To best accomplish a working group's goal, we recommend that different individuals in a group assume certain roles within a working group session. These roles should be rotated among members across the different modules.

- ♦ A **group facilitator** will set the agenda and moderate the discussion; during the meeting, s/he will ask for relevant information or opinions and then restate, clarify, and summarize the discussion.
- ♦ The **timekeeper/orienter** will maintain the pace of the discussion and will redirect when the team is getting off target.
- ♦ The **team recorder** will prepare the written document for submission; only one document is submitted per working group.
- ♦ **All members** must be prepared to discuss the issues or questions. If you find that one of these roles is not being met, it would be appropriate for you to assist in that role.

Working group meetings: Group members should establish a meeting schedule and identify the rotating roles of members in advance. Numerous means for group communication and meetings exist. (It might be advisable to use both synchronous and asynchronous communication methods.)

- ♦ **Bulletin Board:** Available in the Communication Center for asynchronous discussion
- ♦ **Chat room:** Available through the LiveTalk area in the Communication Center for synchronous discussion
- ♦ **DED Messenger and My Messenger:** My Messenger (available through my.jhsph.edu) and DED Messenger (available at the course Web site) provide synchronous, albeit one-to-one, communication

Responsibilities: Communicating in a group setting is an important part of professional life. This course's working group exercises require the same skills and the same level of professionalism. We expect group members to "nurture each other and create relationships, and recognize and honor the diversity" (<http://www.seanet.com/~daveg/vrteams.htm>) within each other. Furthermore, we are relying on all group members to fulfill their obligations to the rest of the group, meaning everyone will prepare in advance for working group discussions and participate equally. If a member has not contributed, it is imperative that remaining group members inform the instructors or TAs of the situation before the midterm and final examinations.