Top Tips for Group Projects

- **Communicate throughout:** Set up a group chat such as WhatsApp. Create a space where everyone can upload and view each other's work such as Google Drive.

- Everyone must have a **clear role**

- Agreement on group **deadlines**

- **Plan together** before you even start working. Even though everyone may have their own section or task, break down what each person should include in their section, everyone give suggestions. This will make sure you are all on the same page before you start.

- Have regular **check-ins** to make sure everyone is on track

- **Final review:** Review of everyone's work, everyone gives suggestions, Gives the chance to see if anything important is missing, tie up loose ends, view the project as a whole and see if there is any overlap in people's work

Tips for Group Projects

Group projects can be challenging especially when you cannot physically meet up with each other.

Stages in Group Work

To ensure a successful group outcome, you will find it helpful to divide your activities into a series of stages:

1. Familiarisation;

2. Planning and preparation;

3. Implementation;

4. Completion.

Managing each of these stages effectively will greatly enhance your group performance.

Stage One - Familiarisation

This is the stage when the individual members of the group get to know each other and begin to understand the task they need to undertake. Time spent at this stage discussing your individual areas of interest and skills will be invaluable in helping your group develop a sense of its own identity (including its strengths and weaknesses).

Make sure everyone understands what it is they will need to achieve. Think about:

1. The product: i.e. a report, oral presentation or poster? What guidelines have been set by your department to govern this work?

2. The time scale: i.e. date of final presentation or submission. What things need to be done before you hand in your work? How much time should you spend on the group project in relation to your other commitments?

3. The assessment: i.e. the way your activity or output will be marked. Do you know the assessment criteria? Will you be assessed as a group or as individuals?

If your group needs clarification of any of these issues then consult your course tutor.

Stage Two - Planning and Preparation

This is the stage when your group should plan exactly what needs to be done, how it needs to be done, and who should do what. Pay attention to the following:

1. Agree the different elements of the task (e.g. a poster might involve background research, written text, an overall design, graphs and images, final assembly and so on);

2. Agree the best way of achieving these tasks by dividing areas of responsibility amongst the group, making sure that roles and time commitments are as evenly balanced as possible;

3. Make the most of your different areas of expertise by dividing tasks up according to the skills of different group members;

4. Make an action plan of what needs to be done by when, working towards the final deadline.

Stage Three - Implementation

Whilst your group carries out its tasks you will need to preserve your group's sense of purpose. Effective communication is vital, particularly when your group activity extends over time. Here are some tips to promote good communication.

1. If possible, set up an email distribution list for rapid communication so that issues or problems can be flagged up as and when they arise.

2. Establish regular meetings of the whole group to check on progress and review action plans. Take notes at these meetings to help record complex discussions.

Stage Four - Completion

The final stage of your project is often the most difficult and may require a different management approach. It will be vital to ensure that you pay close attention to detail, tie up loose ends and review the whole product rather than your discrete part of it. It is important to regroup at this stage to agree a new action plan for the final burst of activity.