Team Policy

As you will find out, group work isn't always easy—team members sometimes cannot prepare for or attend group sessions because of other responsibilities, and conflicts often result from differing skill levels and work ethics. When teams work and communicate well, however, the benefits more than compensate for the difficulties. Your team will have a number of responsibilities as it completes problem and project assignments.

- *Designate clear roles, such as coordinator, scribe, integrator, monitor, and checker for each assignment.* Agree on roles at the beginning of the assignment. Rotate these roles for every assignment.
- *Agree on a common meeting time and what each member should have done before the meeting* (readings, development, writing, taking the first cut at some or all of the assigned work, etc.). The scribe writes a protocol of agreed tasks and deadlines and emails them to everybody. Not objecting to the protocol after that email constitutes acceptance. Furthermore, make agreements visible to every team member in a way that the document's history is transparent; a Github Wiki, Google Doc or other groupware solution should keep a central log.
- *Coordinator checks with other team members before the meeting to remind them of when and where they will meet and what they are supposed to do.* Team members notify the coordinator in advance if they cannot attend a meeting or are in danger of not making a deadline.
- *Do the required individual preparation before the meeting*
- *Meet and work*. Rolls can support the process as follows: Coordinator sets agenda, keeps everyone on task, and makes sure everyone is involved; scribe ensures agreed tasks and deadlines are recorded; integrator is responsible for assembling the final solution and turning it in; monitor checks to makes sure everyone understands both the solution and the strategy used to get it, monitor also watches the time to ensure the meeting stays within the agreed timeslot; and checker double-checks the result before it is handed in. At the end of the meeting agree on next meeting time and roles for next assignment in writing.
- *Checker turns in the assignment, with the names on it of every team member who participated actively in completing it*. If the checker anticipates a problem of turning it in on time, it is his/her responsibility to make sure someone turns it in.
- *Review returned assignments together*. Make sure everyone understands why points were lost and how to correct errors.
- *Dealing with non-cooperative team members and imbalances.*
    - Clearly documenting agreed tasks and deadlines (see scribe role above) in addition to tracking invested time helps identifying issues. Renegotiate agreements when estimated time does not align with actually required time and imbalances arise. Document where agreements were not honored (what and when, and possibly why). Identify a fallback strategy, ideally in agreement with the team member who failed the agreement. In severe cases, identify how other team members can take over those tasks.
    - If a team member does not cooperate or does not contribute to the solution, his/her name should not be included on the completed work. If the problem persists and cannot be solved within the team, the team should meet with the instructor so that the problem can be resolved, if possible. If the problem still continues, the cooperating team members may notify the uncooperative member in writing that he/she is in danger of being fired, sending a copy of the memo to the instructor. If there is no subsequent improvement, they should notify the individual in writing (copy to the instructor) that he/she is no longer with the team. The fired student should meet with the instructors to discuss options, such as finding another team willing to add them as a member, completing the work alone, or getting zeroes for the remaining assignments.
    - *Consult with your instructors if a conflict arises that can't be worked through by the team*.