

Guidelines for Writing Team Contract

Modified from: https://cns.utexas.edu/images/CNS/TIDES/teaching-portal/Team_Contract.doc

To accelerate a team's development, we will use a team contract to establish procedures and roles in order to move the team more quickly into the performing stage. This process of generating a team contract can actually help jump-start a group's collaborative efforts by immediately focusing the team members on a definite task. You must communicate and negotiate with one another in order to identify the quality of work you all wish to achieve, and the level of group participation and individual accountability you all feel comfortable with.

Successful team performance depends on personal individual accountability. In a team environment, individuals are usually effectively motivated to maximize their own rewards and minimize their own costs. However, conflicts can arise when individualistic motives or behaviors disrupt team-oriented goals. For example, conflict can stem from an unequal division of labor. When team members believe they are receiving too little for what they are giving, they sometimes reduce their effort and turn in work of lower quality. Such "free riding" occurs most frequently when individual contributions are combined into a single product or performance, and individual effort is perceived as unequal. At this point, some individual team members may take on extra responsibilities while other team members may reduce their own efforts or withdraw from the team completely. These behaviors may engender anger, frustration, or isolation—resulting in a dysfunctional team and poor quality of work. However, with a well-formulated team contract, such obstacles can usually be avoided.

Team Contract Assignment

Your team contract template is divided into three major sections:

1. identifying constructive and destructive behaviors and establishing a protocol for how your teammates can help get you back on track when displaying a destructive behavior
2. identifying expectations and establishing team procedures
3. specifying the consequences for failing to follow these procedures and fulfill these expectations

You must make your contract **as specific as possible**. The more specifically you describe your team expectations, roles, procedures, and individual strengths and weaknesses, the greater chance you have for a successful team experience.

Use the Team Contract template to discuss and finalize your team roles, procedures, and standards. Complete, sign, and submit a **digital copy** of your finalized contract to your instructor and share a copy with each other in your team's shared google drive space.

Once your team contract has been developed, your team is ready to begin work on collaborative assignments. However, you may soon find that your team is not working as well as you had hoped. This is normal but needs to be attended to immediately. Perhaps your team is simply not following the established contract procedures or roles as strictly as you should be, or perhaps you need to change some of the procedures or roles as outlined in your contract. Call a team meeting immediately to discuss and resolve the challenges your team is facing; do not delay. Seek guidance from your instructor to resolve any conflicts so that you will have the most positive team experience possible.

TEAM CONTRACT

Team Name (optional): _____

Team Member	email	phone	other contact info

Constructive and Destructive Behaviors

Pick 1-2 that best describe you from each category and fill in the table on page 4:

CONSTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR	DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR
<p>Cooperating: Is interested in the views and perspectives of the other group members and is willing to adapt for the good of the group.</p> <p>Clarifying: Makes issues clear for the group by listening, summarizing and focusing discussions.</p> <p>Inspiring: Enlivens the group, encourages participation and progress.</p> <p>Harmonizing: Encourages group cohesion and collaboration. For example, uses humor as a relief after a particularly difficult discussion.</p> <p>Risk Taking: Is willing to risk possible personal loss or embarrassment for the group or project success.</p> <p>Process Checking: Questions the group on process issues such as agenda, time frames, discussion topics, decision methods, use of information, etc.</p>	<p>Dominating: Takes much of meeting time expressing self views and opinions. Tries to take control by use of power, time, etc.</p> <p>Rushing: Encourages the group to move on before task is complete. Gets “tired” of listening to others and working as a group.</p> <p>Withdrawing: Removes self from discussions or decision making. Refuses to participate.</p> <p>Discounting: Disregards or minimizes group or individual ideas or suggestions. Severe discounting behavior includes insults, which are often in the form of jokes.</p> <p>Digressing: Rambles, tells stories, and takes group away from primary purpose.</p> <p>Blocking: Impedes group progress by obstructing all ideas and suggestions. “That will never work because...”</p>

Brunt (1993). Facilitation Skills for Quality Improvement. *Quality Enhancement Strategies*. 1008 Fish Hatchery Road. Madison. WI 53715

Team Member Name: 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ 4) _____	Primary Constructive Behavior(s): 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ 4) _____
Team Member Name: 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ 4) _____	Primary Destructive Behavior(s): 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ 4) _____

	Protocol for getting team members back on track when exhibiting destructive behavior:
1	
2	
3	
4	

Team Expectations

Work Quality

1. **Project standards** (What is a realistic level of quality for team presentations, collaborative writing, research, preparation of drafts, etc.):

Strategies to meet standards:

Team Participation

1. How will you organize team assignments (presentations)?

2. What if a teammate is absent? What should they do? How should they make up for missed work?

3. What roles will each of you take on to complete the presentation on time and of the quality indicated above?

4. If you need to **meet outside of class**, how will you coordinate this?

5. How will you divide assignments so each group member is **contributing equally**?

6. What is a **reasonable timeframe** for completing work? What will the team do if someone isn't meeting deadlines?

General:

1. Strategies to ensure cooperation and equal distribution of tasks:
2. Strategies for encouraging/including ideas from all team members (team maintenance):
3. Strategies for keeping on task (task maintenance):
4. Preferences for leadership (informal, formal, individual, shared):

Consequences for Failing to Follow Procedures and Fulfill Expectations

1. Describe, as a group, how you would handle **infractions** of any of the obligations of this team contract:
2. Describe what your team will do **if the infractions continue** (*Note* We will use a contribution index on team assignments to determine the level of contributions from each team member. This index will be used as a multiplier on the team assignments):

Personal Accountability

I agree that:

- 1. I will be present at and punctual to all classes and team meetings.
- 2. I will do my part to fulfill team assignments and reach all deadlines.
- 3. I will clearly and regularly communicate with my team members.
- 4. I will commit myself to all team decisions and tasks.

If I fail to do the above, I accept the consequences of the team as outlined in this contract.

- a) *I participated in formulating the standards, roles, and procedures as stated in this contract.*
- b) *I understand that I am obligated to abide by these terms and conditions.*
- c) *I understand that if I do not abide by these terms and conditions, I will suffer the consequences.*
- d) *To sign this contract digitally, fill in your information in the table below.*

Team Member Name	Date (mm/dd/yyyy)