

Team Contract and Confidentiality

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

TEAM CONTRACT

To prepare you for your EL experience, you will go through the exercise of creating a team contract.

Rationale

According to concepts from Organizational Behavior, there are five stages of team development: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. During the forming stage, teams tend to communicate in indirect polite ways rather than more directly. The storming stage, characterized by conflict, can be often be productive, but may consume excessive amounts of time and energy. In this stage it is important to listen well for differing expectations. Next, during the norming stage, teams formulate roles and standards, increasing trust and communication. This norming stage is characterized by agreement on procedures, reduction in role ambiguity, and increased “we-ness” or unity. These developments generally are precursors to the performing stage, during which teams achieve their goals, are highly task oriented, and focus on performance and production. When the task has been completed, the team adjourns.

To accelerate a team’s development, a team contract is generated 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. The group members must communicate and negotiate in order to identify the quality of work they all wish to achieve, and the level of group participation and individual accountability they 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 resources. 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. establishing team procedures
2. identifying expectations
3. specifying the consequences for failing to follow these procedures and fulfill these expectations

Since the basic purpose of this team contract is to accelerate your team's development, to increase individual accountability for team tasks, and to reduce the possibility for team conflict, make your contract as specific as possible: (a) specify each task as detailed as possible, (b) specify each step in a procedure or process as detailed as possible, (c) specify the exact person(s) responsible for each specific task, and (d) specify the exact time and exact place for completion or submission of each task. The more specifically you describe your team expectations, roles, and procedures, 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 copy of your finalized contract to *[insert submission details]*.

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. If necessary, seek guidance from *[insert contact information]*.

Team Contract Template

Course _____, Section # _____

Instructor _____

Team Members:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

Roles & Responsibilities

Use this checklist to assign team members to specific roles for the duration of your project. This tool will help to keep you on track and remind you of who is leading which task. Feel free to make changes to the table as it relates to your project.

Responsibilities		Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5
Communication	Set up Meetings					
	Take Notes					
	Time/Objectives Tracking					
Project Creation	Create an Outline					
	Conduct Research					
	Draft the written report					
	Create handouts/slides/visual aids					
Project Implementation	Opening and introduction					
	Section A					
	Section B					
	Closing and Q&A					
Post Implementation Reflection	Take Notes on Feedback					

Team Expectations

Work Quality

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

Team Participation

Strategies to ensure cooperation and equal distribution of tasks:

Preferences for leadership (informal, formal, individual, shared):

Personal Accountability

Expected individual attendance, punctuality, and participation at all team meetings:

Expected level of communication with other team members (include method of communication that works for all team members)

Consequences for Failing to Follow Procedures and Fulfill Expectations

Describe, as a group, you would handle **infractions** of any of the obligations of this team contract:

Describe what your team will do **if the infractions continue**:

Confidentiality Agreement Template

I agree to keep confidential all information, all matters that come to my attention as a volunteer at _____ (agency name). This includes material from and about clients and accounting, matters regarding colleagues and other confidential information regarding the organization. I will respect the privacy of the individuals whom I serve and confer appropriately with my supervisors. I will use in a responsible manner any information gained in the course of my service with _____ (agency name).

Any misuse of information concerning individuals shall be considered a breach of confidentiality and may be cause for termination of the arrangement. Any breach of confidentiality shall be immediately reported to Administration and disciplinary actions may be taken following confirmation of a recorded incident.

Statement of Understanding Template

I have read and reviewed _____ (agency name's) policy on confidentiality.

- 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 as stated in this contract.*
- d) *I understand the terms and conditions of the confidentiality agreement.*

1) _____ date _____

2) _____ date _____

3) _____ date _____

4) _____ date _____

5) _____ date _____