The following document provides teamwork guidelines, expectations and processes to support your teamwork.

Working in teams is a vital part of the experience at Royal Roads University. Our commitment to teamwork reflects our belief that one of the important benefits you can take away from your program is the ability to learn more about yourself by working in teams. As organizations increasingly rely on cross-functional project teams and shared leadership models, RRU graduates can enhance the skills required to step into team roles with more success. Skills such as: self-awareness, collaboration, leadership, communication, the ability to inspire, encourage, and provide direction to others.

Employers have identified teamwork skills as being one of the most remarkable characteristics of RRU graduates. Conference Board of Canada Employable Skills 2000+

Video on the importance of Teamwork

RRU learners have pointed to their team experiences as being the most challenging and yet, ultimately, one of the most rewarding aspects of their learning experience.

While individual courses will focus on different aspects of team-based learning outcomes, each student must also demonstrate holistic, overarching success in working in teams throughout their program.

One of the key learning outcomes for many RRU Programs is Working With Others. Over the program, approximately 30% of your final marks are allocated to team deliverables. This document outlines the processes in place for assisting student learning teams to become a high performing learning team.

If you experience any of the following Issues immediately contact the Instructor and Program Head:

- Evidence of plagiarism or cheating: Academic Integrity
- Evidence of harassment or discriminatory language or behaviour: See here for the link Student Rights and Responsibilities and a link to the Student conduct process
- Personal or confidential issues that may impact a learner's ability to participate effectively in the program (e.g., physical or mental illness, change in financial status, family emergencies, work circumstances, etc.). Link here for information about RRU counselling services and Link here for information about RRU Accessibility services.

LIFE.CHANGING

Team Building and Team Support

Team coaching service is available throughout your program to support your team success through team training, facilitation and coaching. Instructors and your Program Office are available for additional assistance. Team building activities, training, and practice will take place throughout the program and described in detail during the start of the program.

Your Team Coach will facilitate:

o Workshops on topics related to emotional development, team development theory, group dynamics, coaching skills, leadership, feedback, adaptability, support, diversity, and resolving conflict;

o Proactive check-ins and team coaching meetings;

o Responsive support for mediation and guidance;

o The development of team agreements.

One of the common team activities the Team Coach will encourage your team to formulate is the development of a Team Agreement. Here are a few templates: link to a team agreement template.

Check out this short video on getting set up: Team Agreements - Short Clip

The Team Agreement explicitly captures shared behavioural norms and rules so that the team has a foundation guiding their teamwork through common goals that support personal aspirations. The Team Agreement process is recommended for use with all your teams and a process for each new team you begin working in. The Team Agreement is meant to be a living document, updated and adapted as needed to ensure a high performing team. As part of your learning community, the university has a few basic expectations for your behaviours that will form a portion of your team agreements. See template here: (needs inserting)

Team Selection

Teams of four to six members are assigned in a variety of different formats across programs at RRU. These formats may include:
1. Selection by your Program Office
2. Random selection
3. Self selection

Often initial teams are created based upon the sole criterion of diversity: diversity of gender, age, professional experience, educational background, culture and/or geographic location. These teams are usually **final**, and a change to the composition of teams is only done in exceptional or urgent circumstances. Teams will be re-assigned at strategic points throughout your program (usually during breaks between courses or quarters). Students can therefore expect to work in multiple teams over the course of their program.

LIFE.CHANGING

Factors Influencing Team Dynamics

In our experience the team portion of the RRU experience is overwhelmingly a very positive one. Majority of team members work well together and many become lifelong friends; however, sometimes challenges may be encountered along the way. Below are a few challenges you may encounter as a team and steps your team can take to work through these challenges.

Withdrawals and Returning Students

Students may need to leave the program for a variety of unforeseen reason, or they are required to repeat a course. This may lead to changes in the team structure and/or cohort.

Action steps to take as a team if you lose or gain a team member:

- Revisit your Team Agreements, it is important to ensure everyone is on board with your foundational agreements.
- Spend time building a trusting environment by focusing on the relationship(s) with your new team member(s).
- Communicate learning styles, values, preferences. Examples of two short assessment tools: personality style assessment and conflict assessment by ITP Metrics are available here.
- Refer to these guidelines for transitioning to a new team.

Writing Skills and/or Reading Comprehension Issues

Team members have various levels of writing and reading comprehension. The team is responsible for ensuring that any issues about diversity in writing/reading is not simply a clash of writing styles or unreasonable expectations. Teams are expected to identify and document any academic issues that may need resolution (*see paragraph below on issues that require immediate attention below*) and to consult with the course instructor. Instructor(s) are responsible for evaluating the quality of academic work.

 If teams encounter issues related to writing and/or comprehension**, take the following steps:**

- The Team Coach can provide guidance for the team to capitalize on the strengths of the various team members.
- Students with weak writing and/or reading comprehension can seek support from the Writing Center and English Language Support Center.
- Consult with the instructor for additional action steps and guidance.

- Contact the Team Coach who can review the information and, if needed, consult with faculty and make referrals to additional supports.

Out of Touch - AWOL (Absent Without Leave) Behaviour

When a team member is AWOL, has not responded to e-mails, phone calls, text messages, or other agreed upon contact forums, **take the following steps:**

- Before contacting the Program Office or Instructor, please ensure that all alternate contact options have been utilized (phone, text, email to RRU and private email, private/work phone, and family members).
- Contact the course instructor and advise them of the missing team member, include the Program Office, your Team Coach, and your team member(s) in this communication.
- Keep documentation of all details regarding repeated attempts to locate the missing team member.
- If the learner remains out of contact for more than 48 hours, contact your Team Coach. The team may want to send a Note of Concern using the process outlined here

Behavioral or performances challenges

There are times when teams encounter difficulties. This is normal for most teams and is part of the developmental cycle. Some teams are unable to resolve these difficulties on their own and seek help from the Team Coach. The Coach will work with teams, and individuals to support guidance with appropriate next steps. It is expected that teams will seek the help of the Team Coach *before* the issue becomes critical and is preventing the team from functioning effectively.

Examples of performance challenges may include

- Writing challenges that the team is not able to support on an ongoing basis
- Repeated mistakes or lapses in understanding course outlines and instructor's guidelines
- Unclear guidelines for team roles and responsibilities
- Attendance/participation in class or out
- Missed external deadlines
- Quality of academic work

Examples of behavioral issues may include:

- Intra-group communication
- Missed internal deadlines
- In group/out group formation
- Trust
- Interpersonal conflict
- Process participation
- Lack of accountability
- Breach of confidentiality

Take the following steps:

Try to resolve the issue within the team

Students are encouraged to follow the steps below to promptly address and proactively resolve non-urgent team issues:

➢ Identify the specific issue and the impact on the team;
➢ Create time and space to address the issue directly and respectfully;
➢ As a team, brainstorm strategies for addressing the concern, applying team development, leadership and conflict resolution skills;
➢ Review Team Agreement to see if anything needs to be altered or revisited;
➢ Develop an agreed upon description and timeline of what needs to happen to satisfy the team's expectations;
➢ Contact your Instructor for clarification on academic and performance concerns;
➢ Document this process.

*At any time if an individual or team of students would like guidance on how to approach an issue or concern within their team, they are encouraged to ***contact their Team Coach*** for advice.

If the team issue is **urgent** please contact your Program Office.