

## RESOLVING CONFLICT

The process for resolving conflict within teams requires teams to apply their learning, and make every reasonable effort to resolve team issues within the team. However, at all stages as an individual or as a team, you may seek support from the Team Coach, your Instructor(s) and Program Administration.

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
- Poor attendance/participation in class or in team meetings
- Missed external deadlines
- Poor quality of academic work

Examples of behavioural issues may include:

- Poor intra-group communication
- Late or lack of responses to team communication
- Missed internal deadlines
- Interpersonal conflict
- Poor process participation
- Lack of accountability
- Breach of confidentiality

If any member of a team believes that there are factors leading to inefficiency in teamwork they should request the involvement of the Team Coach.

For other factors that can contribute to team dynamics please refer to the Learning in Teams document provided at the beginning of your program ([Link here](#)).

**Try to resolve the issue within the team**

Students are encouraged to work as a team and follow the steps below to promptly address and proactively resolve 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 added, 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 and share with all members of your team.

**URGENT CONCERNS: Request support from the Team Coach**

If the team has not been able to resolve the issue, or the issue is more **urgent** in nature, students are encouraged to contact the Team Coach and provide documentation of the concern. There are also times when the Team Coach has identified a significant issue or is asked by the student team, Faculty, or Program Administration to intervene. When notified of a concern, the Team Coach will work to identify and resolve issues affecting the team's ability to function.

The Team Coach will follow-up with next steps that include:

- Coaching individuals who are encountering difficulties
- Engaging in conference. Skype, google hangouts, Wechat video, collaborate calls
- Meeting with whole teams
- Facilitating discussion about specific concerns
- Guidance and recommendations to support proper process for resolution

If the issue remains unresolved after working with the Team Coach, the Team Coach in collaboration with the Program Administration and Instructor, may follow any or all of the below steps:

- Contact Instructors to discuss the situation;
- Report concerns to the Program Administration;
- Meet with the full team for a facilitated team discussion;
- Guide teams to develop a clear **Note of Concern (see process below)**;
- Recommend member(s) of the team receive a different grade on team assignment(s);

- Refer team members to additional RRU support services as required
- Guide the development of a **Letter of Warning (see process below)** in collaboration with the Program Head and/or dismissal from the program as directed by the Dean.

Team Coaches make every effort to maintain transparent and openly discuss this process with all members of the team.

The Team Coach works to restore teams to a point where members can work together. In the event this restorative work is unsuccessful, then the team coach will support and guide your team as described above. The Team Coach's preference is to restore teams to function rather than turning to these punitive measures. In all cases, teams should maintain a record of their work, including agreements, planning, communication, and meetings. These records are the documentary evidence for resolving disagreements and conflicts.

### **Issues that require immediate attention of the Program Manager and/or Instructor**

- Evidence of plagiarism or cheating: link here to the policy on [Academic Integrity](#) (contact the Instructor directly with a copy to the Program Manager).
- 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](#)

## NOTE OF CONCERN

The following describes the process for teams to use if the restorative process above has been unsuccessful. For an action related to this process to take place, 50% + 1 members of the team must support the action (e.g. on a team of four or five members, three members must support the action, on a team of six the number would be four). If there is no consensus on the team regarding the drafting of the **Note of Concern**, consult with your Team Coach and she/he will facilitate a discussion on your next steps as a team.

1. If a member(s) of a team is not meeting performance and or behavioural expectations, the team can send a **Note of Concern** via their university email to all members of the team:
  - a. The specific problem (e.g. meetings missed or work not done/done late – describe the facts).
  - b. A timeline for correcting the problem.
  - c. A description of the expectations the learner must meet to satisfy the team.
2. The **Note of Concern** must be cc'd to your Team Coach who will forward to the program office and instructor as required depending on the nature of the conflict.
3. Once a **Note of Concern** is sent, the Team Coach will discuss the issue with both the recipient of the **Note of Concern** and the team members. Depending on the nature of the concern, the Team Coach may ask to meet with the team together or individually. The Team Coach will ensure that conflict resolution and communication is being used appropriately by the team, will work to support successful resolution, and ensure accountability to program requirements.
4. If a recipient of a **Note of Concern** does not correct the problem within the agreed upon time frame (and documentation has been provided), the team may, with input from the team coach, request that the learner receive a differential grade for the assignment. The request should be made directly to the instructor. The Team Coach can support the team's request by providing supporting documentation and facilitating communications between the team and the instructor. Only instructors have the authority to grade assignments differentially.
5. Member(s) who receives a differential grade must write a **letter of commitment** to the team and copied to the team coach, outlining how they will address the issue(s) in subsequent assignments (if this is NOT the last assignment for this team) and the

commitments they will meet. This letter can be an action step that is the result of a facilitated team discussion by the Team Coach regarding strategies moving forward.

6. If at any time during the remaining time that the team is together, the learner fails to meet the commitments outlined in the **letter of commitment** and/or as outlined in the Team Agreement, the team may request that additional differential grades be assigned for the ongoing assignments. Furthermore, the Program Head may issue a **Letter of Warning** (see process below) to the team member(s) which may ultimately lead to the member being withdrawn from the course (must be initiated by the Dean of the program).
7. If the awarding of a differential grade takes place at the end of a team's term, the requirement to meet performance and behavioral expectations carries over to the new team. Failure to meet those documented expectations can result in further differential grades and the learner may be required to withdraw from the course, or from the program.
8. If a member receives two warnings over two terms, they may be required to withdraw from the course or the program if those issues are not successfully addressed.

#### If in Doubt

Contact the Team Coach at any time.

## Formal Letter of Warning

In the event the team issue(s) are not resolved through the above guidelines, then an instructor or a team coach can recommend that a formal **Letter of Warning** be delivered to the student(s) in question.

1. The **Letter of Warning** is issued by the Program Head.
2. It summarizes the main issues/behaviours, lays out behavioural / performance expectations moving forward, and sets a timeline for meeting those expectations.
3. The Team Coach, Instructors, and Program Administration will be part of the process.
4. Failure to comply with the **Letter of Warning** can result in the student's removal from the course, or even the program, as granted under RRU's Academic Regulations : Section 2: Student Status, Required to Withdraw

#### Timelines, Communication, and Privacy

## **Learning in Teams at RRU**

Staff, faculty, and coaches endeavor to resolve team issues in a timely manner. Nevertheless, all team issues take time to communicate, document, and resolve. Out of respect for everyone's privacy and dignity, not every action or step in this process will be communicated back to the team. RRU takes team issues very seriously and works hard to resolve them. Team Coaches will stay in touch and let you know we are working in the background. Depending on the specifics of a situation justice processes can take several weeks to work through.