

COLLABORATIVE WORK CONTRACT

SPRING 2021

The following is borrowed from MIT's CS-179 team contract.

Successful teams do not have to like each other, but they need to have a shared vision and they need to have processes for working effectively. A team contract is one of the most massively useful tools for improving the quality of your team experience. Sit down as a team and create a 1 page written team contract, in which you outline how you are going to operate as a team. This important exercise should take around 15-30 minutes.

Suggested questions for constructing a team contract:

1. What do you want to get out of working on this project?
2. What is your team name?
3. How are you going to communicate when not in person? (phone? SMS? email? FB?)
4. What are your expectations regarding the timeliness of responses?
5. When and where will you meet? (All assignments will require some work that needs to be done together. Things will vary from week to week, but in general, when and where do you expect to meet?)
6. What should team members do prior to the team meeting? (In general, what do you expect team members to do prior to the first team meeting for each assignment? Read the assignment? Prepare initial ideas?)
7. How are you going to structure your work? (Do you expect to do most of the work together or alone? What process will you use to assign the responsibilities?)
8. How will the assignments get submitted? (Will you work on the final write up together, or will individuals take that responsibility each week? Can that individual just submit the work when they are done, or do you expect all members of the team to have a chance to vet it and edit it before it gets submitted? If the latter, when should the write up be ready for everyone to see?)
9. How will you deal with surprises? (You may run into situations where an individual discovers that they have a hard time delivering on something they promised to do either because it proved harder than expected or because of an unexpected life event. What should the individual do in such situations? How will the team respond?)
10. How will you manage turn-taking? (On many teams, there are people who start speaking half a second before the previous person finished, and there are some who need five seconds of silence before they are comfortable contributing. Is that true of your team? How will you ensure that all people contribute to the conversations?)
11. How will you handle conflict? (If any member on the team feels that something is not going right on the team, how should they signal it? How will the team respond?)
12. Anything else you think will be important for your team.

In the following page, is a template you can use. Feel free to make one your own.

Team Contract for:

Dated:

Clause	Agreement
Goals	
Communication mode	
Response timeliness	
Meeting location	
Meeting times	
Meeting preparation	
Work structure	
Submission	
Dealing with surprises	
Turn-taking	
Conflict resolution	
Other	
