Group work

Group work is beneficial when it produces better outcomes than an individual would achieve on their own. For example, some tasks might be so large it would be near impossible for an individual to complete, or some may have a tight deadlines so the group must pull together to succeed, and others might be complex so would benefit from the mix of ideas and skills.

Working in groups is not always straightforward.

People argue, don’t listen, vie for the ‘best’ jobs, don’t participate and so on. However, this is perfectly normal and therefore predictable. To avoid disagreements:

- Keep communication professional, not personal.
- Listen and ensure each person is given time to contribute their thoughts.
- Achieve agreement when finalising decisions.
- Do not assume that others will agree with your ideas and working methods.

Everyone is equal

People have different experiences, expertise, and knowledge to you. They see things from a different point of view. Their view may be different to yours, but that doesn’t make it invalid or any less relevant than yours, so listen and so don’t assume that you know best. Be open to all ideas and thoughts. Include everyone, so the resulting decisions will be agreed by all.

Successful group work needs

For group work to be successful:

- Plan the project – break complex tasks into small steps
- Plan the time – have deadlines and manage progress
- Plan meetings and have agreed items to discuss
- Agree and plan allocation of tasks and have clear expectations

Skills needed in group work

Working in groups requires high level skills such as: communicating, problem solving, negotiation, compromise and listening. These are all skills which are valued by employers and individuals alike. They are skills worth constantly improving.