

Group Work and Group Assessment

UTDC Guidelines



Improving Teaching and Learning

Group Work and Group Assessment

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University Teaching Development Centre
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GROUP WORK AND GROUP ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

Introduction

For many years, groups have been used in higher education as a teaching/learning strategy. However, the widespread assessment of group work is a more recent phenomenon. Both group work and its assessment (including self and peer assessment) has been the subject of considerable research and discussion in the higher education literature (e.g., Boud et al., 1999; Nightingale et al., 1996)

There are a wide variety of teaching contexts where group work has been shown to enhance student learning. These guidelines are designed to assist teachers to use group work in an educationally appropriate way that also meets the requirements of VUW Assessment Handbook. (see Appendix A for the VUW policy and relevant extract from the Assessment Handbook)

These guidelines are divided into three sections. The first identifies strategies that can be used to ensure that group work is appropriate, well planned and managed. The second section deals with the assessment of group work. The final section of the guidelines provides some suggestions for evaluating the effectiveness of group work.

SECTION 1

Working effectively with groups

What is group work?

Group work can be used to achieve a range of teaching and learning goals (related to process and product). While terminology varies, the literature identifies three types of group work: informal learning groups, formal learning groups, and study groups (Davis, 1993).

Informal groups are composed of ad hoc clusters of students who work in class to discuss an issue or test understanding.

Formal groups are established to complete a specific task in one class session or over many weeks, e.g. a laboratory experiment, musical performance or the compilation of an environmental impact report. The work of a formal group may or may not be assessed.

Study teams are formed to provide support for members; usually for the duration of a course.

These guidelines deal with the establishment, management and support of formal learning groups and associated assessment matters.

Why use groups?

A clear rationale for assigning group work is to be found in Webb (1994), who provides a scholarly review of the wide range of educational theories drawn on by proponents of group work. In more concrete terms, regardless of the content area, compared with other instructional formats, research shows that [well-designed and conducted] group work leads to greater retention and understanding of what is taught (Boud et al. 1999; Millis and Cottell, 1998). To ensure that group work is both well-designed and conducted, a number

of universities have developed detailed policies and guidelines (e.g. Auckland University of Technology; Monash University Murdoch University, University of Queensland, University of Technology Sydney).

According to a recent survey by VUW's Career Development and Employment, Service (2000), New Zealand employers seek multi-skilled graduates with strong interpersonal communication skills. Other highly valued attributes include problem solving, self-direction, and teamwork. These qualities are increasingly recognised (at VUW and elsewhere) in graduate attribute lists and course objectives. Carefully planned group work provides an opportunity for students to develop these (and other) qualities.

The literature documents a range of academic and social benefits of group work. These include:

- The development of co-operation and planning skills;
- Opportunities for leadership and shared leadership;
- Increased active participation and involvement in the course;
- Improved student performance;
- Opportunities for students to work on large and/or complex projects;
- The promotion of student autonomy by transferring some of the responsibility for teaching and learning to students.

The opportunity to critique personal understanding and receive peer feedback, fostering students' ability to think critically about their learning and to determine what criteria should be used in judging their work in future learning are also cited as valuable outcomes of group work by the Murdoch University guidelines.

In the distance education/part time context, group work, although difficult, does help to involve students who would otherwise feel isolated.

When to use group work

Group work should be considered when one or more of the following criteria are met:

- some goals of the course are best achieved through students working in groups
- the task can only be carried out by a group (e.g. where students work as a management team, or are required to assign roles to group members)
- the task is too large or complex for one person
- resource limitations require group work (limited equipment, limited number of 'real' clients).

The Coordinator/lecturer's role

The role that the lecturer takes is *critical* to the success of group work and this too can be a source of challenge. During the group work the lecturer is likely to become group creator, mediator, organiser, coach, mentor and adviser in resolving internal group problems. He/she is also responsible for dealing with issues of inequity, allocating and moderating grades and providing useful feedback to individuals and groups.

The UTDC runs workshops designed to assist lecturers to organise and run group work effectively. Individuals/teams can also gain individual advice on any aspect of group work.

The co-ordinator/lecturer should ensure that adequate class time is devoted to group formation, negotiation of expectations, roles, times and frequencies of meetings. Icebreakers that encourage students to identify each others' strengths or other characteristics are useful to assist this process. (refer the UTDC Small Group Handbook, part 3 for examples of such activities)

Co-ordinators should consider allocating time during the course to build and reinforce rapport and group identity within groups. Activities can be content focussed or concerned with discussing what they are trying to achieve and how effective they are working as a group. The questions in Appendix B can be used to assess group effectiveness during the process).

Why assess group work?

(see section 2 for details on assessing group work).

Group work can provide students with a valuable learning experience whether or not it is associated with formal assessment.

The decision about whether and how to assess aspects of group work should be based on the purpose of the activity and the significance it plays in assisting students to achieve key objectives. Where group work contributes significantly to the achievement of programme/course objectives, its assessment should be included in the overall assessment plan. In addition, recognition (via grades) acknowledges the time and effort students must commit to work effectively in groups.

Possible problems and pitfalls associated with group work (and its assessment)

As with any form of teaching, there are a number of potential problems that may arise. Appropriate use of group work, careful planning, support and monitoring will reduce the likelihood of these problems adversely affecting student learning.

Staff and students at the University of Technology Sydney identified the following concerns, typical of the difficulties encountered with group work.

- Poor internal group dynamics
- Exclusion or marginalisation of individual group members
- Inappropriate tasks or assessment criteria for the subject or the range of students
- Less than desired levels of academic support or intervention
- Assessment of group work where there is no acknowledgement of differences in individual contributions
- Excessive amounts of group work where compared with individual work in a course or programme.

Extending these last two points, if students believe they are in competition for good grades (particularly where assessment is normative), student collaboration may be undermined. Where all members receive an identical grade regardless of contribution, the emotional climate in the group is likely to be affected by the knowledge that an individual's grade depends on the performance of others in the group, or the group as whole.

The overall *balance* between group and individual work is important to students and should reflect the objectives of the course and wider programme. For example, at UTS, Graduates' Course Experience Questionnaire responses showed that too great an emphasis on group work, particularly in assessment, drew criticism despite the fact that many graduates commented that they had learned important teamwork skills. It was concluded that it is desirable to map students' experience of different kinds of learning activities and assessment across each semester of a programme and the programme as a whole to check the balance and placement of group work (UTS, p3).

Planning for group work

Course objectives

Group work must clearly assist students to achieve key course learning objectives. It can

- provide an opportunity for students to discuss/reflect before preparing an individual assignment;
- assist students to learn the skills associated with effective group work (communication, planning, negotiation);
- enable students to produce a high quality product.

The purpose(s) of the group will impact on the processes adopted by the group and the approach students are likely to take to assessment (Webb, 1994) as the following examples demonstrate.

- If the purpose is to develop team skills, overemphasis on the production of the result
- may undermine the group's ability to work on the process.
- Where the product is the goal, attention is likely to focus on getting the job done in as quick and efficient way as possible. In this situation, discussion of group working skills will not be given priority by group members.

Therefore, consider the extent to which students are required to learn and practice new skills or identify existing strengths and work to those.

Task development

Students can feel frustrated by the nature of the group tasks. This occurs when the task can be done effectively (or more effectively) by an individual (e.g. creative writing may be inappropriate as a group task), or when the task is seen to rely heavily on the resources of some students while others are marginalised. Tasks that clearly require co-operation for successful completion are more likely to be successful.

Tasks should be designed to enable all students to contribute effectively, perhaps through undertaking different roles or subtasks (e.g. group manager, team leader, quality control, record keeping). Students need to perceive that they CAN contribute. Allowing class time for groups to explore and define their team and task skills can assist in this.

Care must be taken to ensure that each group is given an equivalent task. This can become an issue when individual

groups are required to work on different projects (e.g., where projects are defined by 'real' clients). The course co-ordinator must ensure that tasks are equivalent in terms of size and difficulty.

Please refer to Appendix C for an example of a group task and associated marking guide (oral presentation and written report).

Time constraints

A task completed as group work will take more time than the same task completed individually because the group has to establish effective group processes before the task can be tackled. In addition, getting the group assembled outside class time may present logistical problems.

On the other hand, time may be saved when individuals undertake parts of a large complex task simultaneously.

Workload calculations should take account of these points. Students should be encouraged to develop (and stick to) a work programme and schedule meetings in advance.

Dealing with diversity

Some students may find it difficult to participate in a group for a variety of reasons (e.g. cultural constraints, disability). If a group task is to be used consideration will need to be given as to how to accommodate such students. Staff should familiarise themselves with VUW's Reasonable Accommodations Guide and the services and support provided by Disability Support Services. Issues include keeping in the same group all semester for someone with a mental health condition so that they are not constantly having to bond with new people, thinking of time flexibility for a Deaf student who will also have to book a sign language interpreter and will need to find times when the interpreter is

also available to meet, group size for a hearing impaired person.

Equity of opportunity issues can be addressed by being clear on what 'equity' means for the particular group task. Possible meanings include:

- That all groups are equally helpful to their members.
- That no student has more help from 'their' group than any other member of the same group.
- That all students must perform the same tasks.
- That each student must be able to select a task or role that lets them show their achievements in the best possible light.

Co-ordinators could discuss these with the class and consider developing a group work code of practice for the whole class or individual groups.

When self or peer assessment forms part of the assessment requirements for a course, the course co-ordinators should ensure the outcomes are equitable and credible. For example, there may be differences, associated with culture and gender, in the extent to which students are prepared to promote themselves.

Establishing groups

A critical phase of group work management is group formation. Course co-ordinators/lecturers should consider size and composition.

Group size

The best **size** for the group depends on the nature of the students as well as the nature of the task. Groups of 2-3 may be better for less experienced students and shorter tasks, whereas groups of 4-6 may be appropriate for more experienced students and longer, larger tasks (Davis, 1993). A further advantage of small groups is that this reduces the chance of freeloading and conflict between group members.

Group composition

Group composition may have an effect on learning and the quality of any assessable product. Two questions arise:

1. who should determine group membership? Teachers, students or some combination of the two?
2. Should group members be of similar or varied ability? If the latter, should grouping be random, systematic, haphazard or student selected and what criteria will be applied?

The answer to these questions is largely determined by the purpose of the group work and the context in which it takes place. The following points may be considered.

If the *educational aim* is to see how much a group can achieve in tackling a problem, a top ability group will set a benchmark, BUT low ability groups will also be formed and probably do less well.

If the *educational aim* is to have students *on average* achieve, as much as possible, varied ability grouping is feasible. “It seems likely that the most effective mixed ability groups will be those with a moderate rather than large ability range. ... If the range is too great, then neither the ‘better’ nor the ‘less good’ students are likely to benefit” (Slavin, 1990)

Systematic grouping may result in student complaints (being held back, being deprived of input from more able students etc). Complaints can be partially pre-empted when staff explain *at the time of group formation* why a particular grouping is being used and how students can maximise their chance of a good mark (collaboration and mutual assistance).

There are conflicting views regarding the advisability self selected groups. For example, guidelines produced by the University of Oregon point to the possibility of friendship sub-groups forming within the large group and destabilising the group process. Furthermore, some students will not be invited to meet any group and are unable to form their own.

In reality the practicalities of logistics may override other grouping considerations: where meetings and presentations occur in class time, grouping with a tutorial is expedient; where groups meet outside class time, location of homes determines ease of meeting.

Whatever method of grouping students is used, academic staff should provide advice and assistance to students about the formation and conduct of groups, and, in consultations with students, should establish ground rules for creation and maintenance of the group (including feedback stages and assessment).

Scheduling group work

While some group work can be done out of class, there are a number of advantages associated with scheduling some

group meetings in class time. This allows the lecturer to monitor the work and to intervene if the teams are focusing their efforts unproductively. In-class group work can be used to assess student understanding of the task/assignment and to diagnose areas of difficulty with course content etc.

In the wider context of meshing study and other activities, group work may impose unexpected stresses on students with, for example, overcrowded home and work schedules, or a long journey to and from the University. In its group work guidelines Murdoch University stresses that some students are also parents (sometimes single parents) and work either full or part time as well as having other commitments, all of which make it difficult to attend University outside of scheduled class hours. The Blackboard course management system does provide some specific tools (virtual class, discussion board, shared file area) which facilitate group work for groups that find it difficult (or impossible) to meet physically.

Training and guidance

Training in group work

Students arriving at university may not possess the skills needed to work effectively in a small group. Or, the group work skills they *do* have may not transfer to new settings. Thus, students may require practice to develop skills in active and tolerant listening, giving and receiving constructive feedback, and negotiation and managing conflict.

Training in assessment

Regardless of who is assessing work, it is important that students understand the basis on which they are being assessed. Students may need some education in how to satisfy and to apply the assessment criteria. Practice may be needed where assessment methods (criteria) are unfamiliar.

Managing the group process

**"It is NOT acceptable to leave the group to 'work it out'."
(UTS p7)**

Monitoring progress

Most groups work quite well with little intervention if clear roles and criteria have been established. Problems may arise if a group member becomes ill or has other personal problems, stops communicating with others, does not contribute equitably or if political alliances arise.

The lecturer should assist the group in reviewing how they think the group is functioning and redefining the group objectives and task criteria. Assist them to identify whether the group has a clear understanding of the relationship between product and process and to review individual tasks or roles (see Appendix B).

Requiring each group to develop an action plan, delegation of tasks/roles with associated time frame, can increase effective use of limited time. This can be used to monitor progress and/or as the basis for initial assessment.

Regularly check progress through meetings, progress reports and/or drafts.

Identifying problems

Many of the problems with "difficult groups" or students can be reduced if detected and discussed early on. However, students may be reluctant to reveal problems and should be provided with opportunities to raise concerns in confidence. There needs to be a clear procedure concerning who can help if there is a group problem and what students should do. Scheduling group consultation times in addition to class time can be of assistance as can the provision of confidential email

access to the lecturer. However, these do need to be made clear in course documentation and reinforced in class time.

Assigning class time to group work provides opportunities for staff to identify any group that is, or is in danger of becoming, dysfunctional.

Where problems are detected students can be asked to respond in writing to the following questions:

- What is the main problem in this group?
- What could be done about it?
- What is your most immediate concern?
- What messages would you like to send to the group?

Lecturers should discuss the results with the group and negotiate a way of working to achieve the groups' learning goals. If a member leaves the group, those remaining may need assistance in negotiating an acceptable task alternative.

From the outset, it should be clear how group conflict will be treated, giving the roles of lecturer/tutor, faculty members and students. The stress should be on conflict as a breakdown in the system or process rather than the attachment of blame to individuals.

Avoid breaking up dysfunctional groups even when students request it. Adding these people to other existing groups may disrupt group process and the individuals themselves will not learn how to cope with their unproductive interactions.

Dealing with non contributors

Non contributors benefit from the efforts of the group but do not contribute appropriately to group achievement. Sometimes mixed ability group members may misconstrue the less successful efforts of less able members as deliberate non contribution. It is therefore necessary to distinguish

between “deliberate”, “accidental” and “situational” non contribution or ‘freeloading’.

For mixed ability groups, especially, members may need an indication of the expectations of teaching staff of the input of group members, (e.g. is the focus on effort, achievement or a mix of the two?)

While internal group sanctions may address ‘freeloading’ issues, groups may need training or coaching in conflict management and decision making to enable them to deal with these problems.

It is useful to require students to complete (anonymously) an assessment of group member participation. Where it is clear that someone has not made sufficient contribution, consider deducting marks. Students should be informed of this practice at the start of the course and asked to review participation half way through. This will assist those perceived freeloaders to increase their contribution. Other methods include:

- Keeping groups to two or three members. This makes shirking more difficult.
- Make it clear that it is the group’s responsibility (in the first instance at least) to ensure everyone is equally productive.
- Ensure that the task is designed to ensure that all must contribute equally to produce a satisfactory result.

SECTION 2

Assessing group work

Assessment requirements often become the student’s focus in a course (Ramsden, 1992) and require careful preparation if the group learning context is to work well.

There are a number of methods available for assessing aspects of group work, including allocating a shared group mark or individual marks based on product alone, or on a combination of product, group process and individual effort. In addition, assessment may involve peer and/or self-assessment as well as assessment by teaching staff.

However, each option (as with any teaching approach or method of assessment) has associated advantages and disadvantages. This section of the guidelines deals with issues associated with assessing aspects of group work and provides strategies to avoid common pitfalls.

Issues in assessing group work

There are a number critical questions that co-ordinators should answer before finalising an assessment programme. These include:

- Should you give students all the same mark or a mark based on each person's contribution to the group performance?
- If you assess each student's contribution, how will you know what each person has contributed?
- What proportion of a student's course mark should be allocated to group work?
- Consider whether it is appropriate to include an 'opt-out' clause for students who do not want to work in this way?
- What do you do if a group member leaves, thus leaving the group with a gap in the allocation of duties to members?
- What do you do if a group falls apart? Or if a member fails to do their share?

A fundamental principle that should inform all assessment decisions is that marks should be allocated in a way that is consistent with achieving the learning objectives of the course. Assessment choices will have a major impact on

student approaches to the group work as the following paragraphs illustrate.

University education is based on an assumption that final grades reflect individual student achievement. This clearly presents difficulties when the process and/or product of group work are attributed collectively to group members.

In an effort to operate group work within a system of individually allocated marks one response has been to encourage students to enhance their learning through collaboration and assess students on the basis of individual assignments. The Otago University guidelines conclude that while this method of assessment 'preserves the individual character of final grades, [it] tends to undermine motivation for collaboration. Students who believe they are among the more capable in the course may perceive collaboration as undermining their advantage on the subsequent individual assessments, especially if they think the grading is substantially norm-referenced' (p 13-14).

An alternative approach is to allocate 'group marks' which count equally to individual student's grades. The Otago guidelines comment that 'this approach can lead to concern, from teacher or students, that some students are getting good marks based largely on the work of other members of the team, or that capable students would have gained better marks if they had not been handicapped by their weaker partners'.

A word of caution is expressed in the University of Queensland guidelines. These suggest that where a task is intensely collaborative, giving different marks to each member of the group is not only difficult, it sends a message to students, which is in conflict with the collaborative message of the task itself. Uniform marks encourage

collaboration by removing any rationale for competition. However, individual marks allow outstanding performance to be rewarded and freeloading to be penalised. No competition need be introduced provided marks are allocated based on the standard reached by each student rather than comparative performance of groups.

Some group tasks allow for students to identify an aspect for which they can be responsible and on which they will receive an individual mark BUT in designing such tasks one must pay attention to the task of co-ordinating/integrating the parts and who is responsible for this (hidden) aspect. (University of Queensland).

A third approach is increasingly used in an attempt to resolve these difficulties. Students work collaboratively and complete the required group task. However, the allocation of individual grades takes account of the contribution of each member. Information on contribution can be provided in a variety of ways (e.g. use of oral tests, individual summaries of contribution and achievements, the use of peer assessment to evaluate the contribution of self and other members). Information gained in this way can be used by the co-ordinator to moderate a student's final mark.

A version of this approach is based on the allocation of a collective mark to the group. The group can then decide whether to divide this evenly or unevenly between them. The lecturer should still moderate the final mark based on their professional judgement.

It is also possible for the group to submit one assessment item. A proportion of the mark is allocated to this combined assessment item, and equally shared by the group members, and a proportion of the mark is also allocated for an individual's group planning courses or an individual course analysing the group process.

Guidelines for group assessment

All forms of student assessment should conform to principles of good practice. The following guidelines apply specifically to the assessment of group work.

- 1) Co-ordinators should clearly identify the purpose and function of the group project including why it is appropriate for the assignment to be completed in groups and how the process and content of the project will help to achieve the stated learning objectives in the course. This information should be communicated to students from the outset.
- 2) Ensure that the marking practices encourage and reinforce effective group work.
- 3) Give students in writing a full explanation of the requirements for the assignment. Include the usual assessment information (weighting, due date, penalties etc.); also include full details of procedures relating to:
 - the task to be undertaken
 - the basis for group membership
 - rules that cover the operation of the group
 - task allocation within the group
 - the criteria for assessing the group report/performance including how marks will be allocated between the collaborative process (i.e the way individuals collaborated during the project) and the assignment content in the final group document and/or presentation.
 - the procedure for assessing individual contribution, if such contribution is to be assessed.
 - who will carry out the assessment (e.g., individual lecturers, panel of expert instrumentalists)

- the fall-back position if a group loses a member or in some way falls apart
 - the conduct of group meetings — expectations regarding frequency and timing and group contact outside of scheduled class times;
 - feedback stages during the assignment period to report group progress and final outcomes; and
 - how the contribution of each member to the group project will be assessed (e.g. using individual process diaries, peer/external assessment of collaborative process and assignment content).
- 4) If group process skills¹ are to be developed during task completion, both task and group process learning objectives need to be clearly defined together with the assessment criteria. Clear instructions for the group work task and expected division of sub-tasks should also be given.
 - 5) A combination of teacher and student developed criteria is often appropriate to a group work environment. The individual and the group are the best placed to comment on the contribution of each individual, and the inclusion of self and peer assessment of contributions to the group and the task can be used.
 - 6) Use tutorials or workshops as a basis for further clarifying requirements. These should be circulated in writing to all students.
 - 7) Give students practice in tutorials or workshops in the skills of group work (see footnote 1 for examples).

¹ These may include communication skills such as clarifying questions, asking open questions, including all members (turn-taking, sharing talk time), consensus building, giving encouragement/praise/positive motivation to members, giving and receiving feedback, summarising discussions and decisions reached, goal setting, planning, evaluating progress, dealing with conflict.

- 8) Develop a process for providing the group with detailed feedback to assist the ongoing work of the group and provide specific feedback on all aspects of the activity and its outcome upon completion. A high standard of timely feedback on assessment tasks is critical to students' development of understanding the relationship between the quality of their work and the assessment criteria. On longer group projects interim feedback points are useful – brief presentations, one page outlines of group progress or plans or submission of different task components in stages can all be useful.
- 9) Graded group project marks should not be assigned to all members of the group without some moderation – whether by the inclusion of an individual component used to moderate the collective component of by a rating of the contribution of individuals to the collective.

Plagiarism, group work and legitimate co-operation

Course co-ordinators should ensure that students understand the difference between plagiarism and legitimate co-operation through group work. For example the University of Sydney provides clear distinctions between plagiarism, group work and legitimate co-operation. The latter can be defined as “any constructive educational and intellectual practice that aims to facilitate optimal learning outcomes through interaction between students. Typical examples may include the researching and writing of joint projects/essays/tutorial courses, discussion of general themes and concepts, interpretation of assessment criteria, informal study/discussion groups, strengthening and development of academic writing skills through peer assistance.” (p2)

A part of the monitoring process co-ordinators should provide students with feedback where they believe

plagiarism is occurring. A further strategy is to require students to sign a plagiarism sheet (see Appendix E which addresses the issue of reproducing work from other courses).

Ensuring fairness - some suggestions

- make the assessment criteria as clear and explicit as possible. It is helpful if students are involved in developing the criteria because of the greater depth of understanding this is likely to bring.
- require students to keep a log of the activities, which they understood as part of a group project. These lists of tasks can form the basis for a group discussion on how marks for a project might be divided.
- set an additional piece of written work in which students analyse how their group worked, what they contributed to it and how its effectiveness might have been increased.
- ask group members to evaluate their own and others' contributions to the group effort. These should include task, ideas and group management functions. The combined evaluation of each individual's performance can be used to moderate the mark for the project, if desired.
- consider using other forms of assessment to support the group product (e.g. interviews, individual logs, tests).

Peer and self assessment

(for further information see section 5 of the UTDC Guidelines 'The Mechanics of Assessment')

SECTION 3

Evaluation and review- reflecting on the quality of the group work

Assessment processes for group work are significantly different from more traditional, individual forms of assessment. To ensure that effective and consistent approaches are adopted, the creation of opportunities for staff in a School or disciplinary area to discuss aspects of group work can provide valuable support. Opportunities to formally and informally evaluate the use of group work and discuss emerging issues and concerns with students should also be included in the design of a course.

Upon completion of the course you should review the process. The following issues provide a possible focus for this review.

Consider the following in terms of your original plan and reality. What improvements can be made?

- The nature and quality of the task
- The social setting of the collaborative activity and the behaviour of students during the execution of the task
- The teacher's behaviour during the execution of the task
- The teacher's role in group composition and management
- The nature and quality of the reports made by each group
- The teacher's performance as synthesiser and as representative of the academic learning community
- The relation of the collaborative activity to the design of the course
- Student satisfaction with the group work in your course

APPENDIX A

Recommendations from Group Work and Peer Assessment Working Party report and relevant section from the 2002 Assessment Handbook.

Working Party Recommendations

1. That the UTDC prepare a set of guidelines on group work and its assessment and offer regular workshops on the topic. These will cater for the needs of new and experienced staff.
2. The intention to include the assessment of group work should be included in new course proposals (to be included in teaching delivery methods section of application). After the first year of teaching the use of group work be scrutinised and a report made to the Head of School or nominee. In addition, prospectus entries should refer to the use of assessed group work.
3. That Faculties take account of the balance of group and individual work across a major or programme as appropriate. The working party recognises that this task will be more difficult where students undertake a wide range of courses within a programme.
4. That Co-ordinators intending to use group work should, when designing tasks and establishing groups, consider prior and expected levels of student group work experience as early as possible in the course of the course.
5. That Co-ordinators should consult with students and provide the necessary level of group process support.

6. That Student Learning Support Services provide training and support for students who are required to work in groups.
7. The Working Party recommends that where group work will contribute to a student's final grade the following conditions should be met:
 - Group work is only to be used when its benefits are clearly linked to the course objectives.
 - Any lecturer intending to use group work becomes familiar with the group work guidelines (to be published on the VUW website) and attends a UTDC workshop on group work and its assessment.
 - Students have access to support in the development of effective group skills.
 - Students are clearly informed in prospectuses and course prescriptions that group work is part of the assessment.
 - Instructions in the course outline should state clearly the assessment criteria, how the assessment will be calculated and what contributions will be required from each student.
 - Safeguards must be put in place by the course co-ordinator to protect students from non-contribution or withdrawal of another group member, and in situations where the group is dysfunctional.
 - Some group work should be scheduled in class time and supervised to detect group problems as they arise while allowing academic staff to monitor conceptual understanding.
 - Where marks deriving from group work (i.e. any learning activity, the completion of which could not be achieved by an individual alone) count towards more than 30% of an individual student's mark for that course approval must first be gained from the Associate Dean (Students). This approval will be based on pedagogical considerations. The UTDC

will provide advice to Associate Deans (Students) on any applications received.

- Peer and/or self assessment must not contribute more than 10% of the student's final grade for a course unless the Associate Dean (Students) has approved otherwise. The UTDC will provide advice to Associate Deans (Students) on any applications received.
- Faculty Academic Committees or Faculty Boards may set their own upper limit for group work and/or peer assessment.
- Where peer assessment is used, final grades should reflect student and lecturer judgement (see UTDC guidelines for suggestions on procedures). Moderation of marks must be conducted by the course co-ordinator.

VUW Assessment Handbook 2002

5. GROUP WORK AND GROUP ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The University recognises that group work², when used appropriately, can be a valuable teaching strategy that contributes to students' learning and the development of their communication and team work skills.
- 5.2 Proposals to introduce new programmes and courses must indicate whether group work is to be a component of the teaching and assessment and establish the link between the group work and the learning objectives. The course co-ordinator is required to submit a report on the group work to the Head of School or nominee after the first offering of the course. Students must be advised in the prospectus and the course outline that group work is a component of the course and given an indication of the time commitment that will be required beyond scheduled class time.
- 5.3 Assessed group work must not contribute more than 30% of a student's final grade unless the Associate Dean (Students) has approved otherwise. Faculty Academic Committees or Faculty Boards may set their own upper limit for group work and /or peer assessment. Students must be advised in the course outline whether or not the assessment of the group work contributes to their final grade and if it does, whether the assessment results in an individual grade or a group grade. The course outline must clearly

² *Group work* refers to learning activities on which students' work together to produce a report or complete a specific task.

specify the assessment criteria for the group work, how the assessment will be calculated and the contributions that are expected from each student. The course co-ordinator must take final responsibility for the assessment and grade, irrespective of the form of group work assessment and whether or not it contributes to the final grade for the course.

- 5.4 Group work assignments must be carefully planned, specified, supervised and monitored by the course co-ordinator, who is expected to be familiar with the UTDC Guidelines on Group Work and Group Assessment.
- 5.5 In all group work by students, safeguards must be put in place by the course co-ordinator to ensure that the withdrawal or lack of contribution of a group member does not disadvantage the rest of the group. The course co-ordinator must ensure that if a group becomes dysfunctional he/she assists group members to resolve their conflicts. A fallback assessment plan must be devised by the course co-ordinator to protect any students whose group fails to complete its work.

6. PEER AND SELF ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The University recognises that peer assessment³ and self assessment⁴, when used appropriately, can be valuable teaching strategies that contribute to students' learning and the development of skills in communication and giving constructive feedback. Informal peer or self-assessment processes are encouraged as teaching and learning techniques. However, the use of peer assessment or self assessment to contribute to a student's final grade for the course must be approached cautiously by course co-ordinators and only after careful consideration of the UTDC Guidelines on Peer Assessment.

³ *Peer assessment* refers to the assessment by a student of the work of another student enrolled in the same course.

⁴ *Self-assessment* refers to the assessment by a student of his or her own work.

- 6.2** Where the peer or self-assessment occurs in the context of group work all of the requirements set out in Sections 5. 2 to 5.5 (above) for Group Work and Group Assessment apply also to the peer and self-assessment. Peer and/or self assessment must not contribute more than 10% of the student's final grade for a course unless the Associate Dean (Students) has approved otherwise. Faculty Academic Committees or Faculty Boards may set their own upper limit for group work and/or peer assessment. Where peer/self assessment is used, this will be included within the 30% limit allocated to group work.

APPENDIX B

Assessing Group Effectiveness (all group members to complete)

(modified version of the Classroom Assessment Technique designed by Walker (cited in Diamond, 1998))

NB: Questions can be modified to be used at the end of the group work

Please answer all questions from your own perspective. If you cannot answer a question please state briefly why the information is unavailable.

1. What specific goals (s) is this group trying to accomplish. Please list the goal (s) in your priority order. Do you think the group basically agrees on the contents of this list?

2. What activities has the group specifically chosen to undertake or assign in order to achieve its goals? Indicate which activities, if any, are particularly effective?

3. Does each group member have specific ---even unique--- responsibilities that help the group attain its goal(s)?

Y/N

List all group members by name and their individual responsibilities.

4. The work of your group is stimulating and worth your time

strongly agree_____strongly disagree

5. How many hours (on average) do you spend working with this group _____

6. This group has the resources (e.g., organisation, communication, leadership, talents, time) to achieve its goals?

strongly agree_____strongly disagree

7. What additional resources are needed for real effectiveness?

APPENDIX C

MMBA XXX

ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT

REVIEW, CRITIQUE AND ASSESSMENT OF AN ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

Since 1993, the consulting firm, Bain and Company, have conducted an annual survey to ascertain which organisational improvement programmes or 'management tools' are being most widely used in the corporate world and which are yielding the most satisfaction. This survey encompasses over 5,600 senior managers from over 20 countries. You should spend some time exploring the web site that contains details of the survey:

www.bain.com/bainweb/about/insights/overview.asp

I have selected 11 of the 25 'management tools' identified as being widely used in the 2000 survey. These have been selected because of their relative popularity and because of their emphasis on improving organisational performance by attempting to better 'manage people in organisations'. They are:

- Balanced Scorecard
- Benchmarking
- Core Competencies
- Corporate Venturing
- Customer Relationship Management
- Growth Strategies
- Knowledge Management
- Mission and Vision Statements
- Outsourcing

- Pay-for-Performance
- Scenario Planning

In the first session you will be broken up into eleven groups of 4-5 people. Each group will be assigned **one** of these tools. Your group's brief will be to research this management tool and present your findings in both (a) oral and (b) written form.

I will provide you with a summary description of the tool plus some references that will act as a useful starting point for your research. Your research should explore how the programme began, by whom, where and when etc.. You should gain a fundamental understanding of what the tool promises to do for the organisation and in which situations and contexts it is particularly well suited. You should also examine the merits and successes of the programme along with its weaknesses and failures. Finally, you should attempt to uncover examples of applications of the tool in specific organisations.

Your groups will be given one hour during Sessions 10 and 11 to meet and work on your projects and to consult with the lecturer.

PURPOSE:

I set this assignment because I want you to do the following:

- I want you to develop your abilities to track down as much information as you can about a particular organizational program
- Make sense and evaluate that information
- Assess the capabilities and applicability of the program
- Communicate what you have found in both oral and written form.

By developing these skills, you will find better ways to keep abreast of current developments in management and sort out which are the ones that are worth pursuing further and which

ones are not. Ultimately you will become a smarter and more discriminating consumer of new management tools and concepts.

A. ORAL PRESENTATION

In Session 12 (i.e. **October 17**) you will make a **ten-minute oral presentation** about the management tool you have researched to the rest of the class. I believe this will be the most efficient and effective way for all of the class to learn about the eleven management tools. It will also give you an opportunity to polish and hone your presentation skills.

Your group should decide who and how many of the group should actually make the presentation. Try to divide your labour and talents within the group as evenly and fairly as you can between this and the written report. The presentation will be worth **10 per cent** of your final mark for the course. As you will see from the attached marking scheme I will be assessing the structure, information, delivery, impact and timing of the presentation. The order of presentations will be decided in the first class.

B. WRITTEN REPORT

Your group will submit a **written report** of 2,500 words on Wednesday October 24 at 4 p.m.. This report will be worth of **15 per cent** of the total mark for the course. As you will see from the attached marking scheme I will be assessing the course for the depth of research and understanding that you demonstrate as well as the quality of evaluation, examples and written communication.

In your account you should describe the program--explaining how it began, by whom, where and when etc.. You should then examine the merits and successes of the program along with its weaknesses and failures. In your assessment, you should pay particular attention to how well the program addressed the structural, cultural and political facets of the managers and organizations it was purporting to change. At the end of the course you should talk about the possible relevance of the program to you and an organization you are either currently or have been associated with.

Consider your style of presentation. Style and content are both necessary. If the former is poor, it will usually obscure the latter. It may also cause the reader to draw inappropriate conclusions about the capacity of the writer.

- Does it address the brief (topic and length)?
- Is there a clear and logical flow of argument?
- Check for grammar/spelling/typos.
- Reference sources and use a consistent referencing style.
- Have a consistent internal structure and format.
- Have a clean, clear overall presentation.
- Golden Rule: In regard to presentation style, don't hand in anything that you would not want to have seen by the most senior manager in your organisation or a major client.

I hope you find this assignment to be a challenging, relevant insightful and worthwhile. Good luck with your research!

MMBA XXX
ORGANISATIONAL ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT
MARKING SCHEME

A. ORAL PRESENTATION

GROUP: ____ **TOPIC** _____

Key Qualities	Total Marks	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
STRUCTURE – Was the presentation well-organized? Was there an introduction, body and conclusion? Did it flow logically?	/20					
INFORMATION - Did the presentation provide the right amount of information? Was it clearly and imaginatively presented?	/20					
DELIVERY – Did the presenter(s) exhibit effective posture and facial expression; voice tone and modulation; voice timing and articulation?	/20					
IMPACT – To what extent were the presenters) successful in conveying their message to the class? Did they make the audience want to learn more?	/20					
TIME – Was the presentation made within the 10 minute period? Was the time allotted used to optimal effect? To what extent was it rushed?	/20					

TOTAL	/100					
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Comments:

MMBA XXX
ORGANISATIONAL ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT
MARKING SCHEME

B. WRITTEN REPORT

GROUP: ____ TOPIC:

Key Qualities	Total Marks	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Has fully researched the organizational improvement program	/20					
Demonstrated depth of understanding of the program – its origins, key elements and objectives.	/20					
Provided a balanced evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures of the program	/20					
Provides examples of organisations in which this organisational improvement tool has been applied.	/20					
Written communication – organization, structure, flow, clarity, consistency, style, spelling/grammar, references etc.	/20					
TOTAL	/100					

Rating	Description
Excellent	The quality is performed to a very high level of proficiency, i.e. it is at a standard that makes it exceptional for the level of the class concerned.
Very Good	The quality is performed to a high standard. Students

Group Work and Group Assessment Guidelines

	have reached a level which clearly exceeds "competency".
Good/Competent	The quality is clearly demonstrated without being exceptional in any way. Students can be thought of as competent in respect of this quality.
Satisfactory	The quality is demonstrated to a minimally acceptable level. There may be flaws but these are not serious enough to "fail" the student on this quality.
Unsatisfactory	The quality is absent or performed to a very low level, or the performance is seriously flawed in this respect.

APPENDIX D

GROUP MEMBER CONTRIBUTION

Your Name _____

Group members Names (including your own) in Alphabetical Order

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____ etc

Evaluation of group member participation involves peer and self assessment. This information will be used by the course co-ordinator to moderate individual student marks.

Scale: 1=minimal contribution; 2=minor contribution; 3=satisfactory contribution; 4=substantial contribution; 5=very substantial contribution

Group Member	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contribution at meetings (do they attend, participate and share ideas)							
Commitment to common goal (do they keep on task and show concern for doing things right)							
Skill input (do they show an understanding of ideas and apply them)							

Group Work and Group Assessment Guidelines

Reliable completion of tasks (do they show a responsibility to the group and the tasks they have to do)							
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APPENDIX E

Plagiarism statement (adapted from AUT Group work handbook)

COURSE _____

DESCRIPTION OF GROUP PROJECT _____

GROUP MEMBER NAMES _____

_____ etc

COURSE CO-
ORDINATOR _____

Plagiarism statement: Except where indicated, the information and work submitted has been collected for the purposes of this project and has not been submitted for assessment in another course.

Signed on behalf of the group: _____

Attach this form to the written report

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Notes

