University of Glasgow

Policy for Assessed Group Work

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Rationale
Group working is increasingly common in courses within the University and we believe that all students should have an equal opportunity to participate in, and learn from, the opportunities that group working can provide. It is therefore essential that there is transparency around the processes of group working and associated assessment of that process and any outcome.

Aim
The aim of the Group Work Policy is to provide clarity and guidance to staff and students around the use of group work in learning. It provides guidance to staff in setting and assessing group work tasks and support to students who must ensure they meet the learning outcomes of their courses. The policy is written with summatively assessed group work in mind; however, the principles of the policy also apply if group work is used formatively.

Scope
The Group Work Policy applies to all members of the University community i.e.:
- All students, including visiting and placement students.
- All members of staff holding a contract of employment, and staff from other institutions on placement at, or visiting the University.
- Individuals with honorary or affiliate status.

Definitions:
For the purposes of this policy, group work is defined as any activity in which a group of two, or more, students are assessed on one of more of:
   a. the production of a jointly produced piece of work
   b. the production of individual work resulting from working within a group
   c. their performance whilst working as part of a group of students

The Policy for Assessed Group Work:
1. The task and the way in which the group is expected to work must be explained to students in advance of beginning the work. In particular, it must be clear:
   a. why the work is being carried out in a group
   b. how the individual and group aspects are delineated; this should reassure students that group work, within the guidelines they receive, is not collusion
   c. how members of the group are selected and their roles (if any) assigned
   d. how members of the group are expected to behave within the group
   e. what procedures should be followed if difficulties arise within the group
   f. how personal extenuating circumstances will be managed
   g. how the group-work meets the intended learning outcomes and/or supports the development of graduate attributes
2. The timetable must allow time for all students in a group to meet within normal teaching hours (usually 8:30am to 6:00pm, Monday to Friday, excluding Wednesday afternoon, after 12:00 noon) so that all students are able to participate.
3. The assessment design should include consideration of opportunities for reassessment of group work; however where this is not practicable, 16.9 of the Code of Assessment will apply and students must be advised that there is one opportunity only and the first mark will count.
4. Where the process and/or product of the group work is summatively assessed:
   a. A clear assessment scheme must be provided, in advance, to enable students to understand how marks will be allocated and therefore how grades will be awarded.

b. Differentiated grades should be provided for each student unless a clear rationale is provided for why this will not be the case.
c. The requirements for the award of credit must be set out clearly so students understand the consequences of non-participation, and in particular that no further attempt at the work is available as a matter of right.

Other guiding principles:

1. Guidance on interpersonal aspects of working in teams should be provided in advance of beginning group work, and students should be reminded that they are required to observe the Dignity at Work and Study Policy as they work as part of a group.
2. Regular supervision should be provided throughout the project in order to support the group and address potential difficulties/disputes early in the process.
3. Students should be provided with a named member of staff who is available to help them to resolve difficulties/disputes they are unable to resolve as a group.
4. The aims and expected outcomes of group work should be realistic and should be made clear to students from the start.
5. Group projects must allow scope for both teamwork and individual work at a sufficiently challenging level
6. Group members should, where possible, be enabled to rotate their role within the group to gain wider experience.
7. Students may need instruction on good record keeping so that they can share their results effectively.
8. Where appropriate, training on presentation and project planning (e.g. Gantt charts) should be provided and integrated into the project.
9. If an electronic collaboration area is required, set up group forums in Moodle (or other centrally supported technology e.g. Yammer) and require students to use this so that no student is disadvantaged by not having a particular social media account.
10. Some form of peer assessment is encouraged, with moderation by staff as appropriate (Aropä or WebPA might be useful here).
11. As with any form of assessment, group work should be introduced in light of the assessment profile across a programme.
12. The design of the group-work task must link clearly to the intended learning outcomes of the course.
13. Where a student is engaged in individual work within a research team the group-work policy is not applicable. In this instance, collaboration is of course encouraged but the project itself must be a substantial independent piece of assessed work.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for implementing the Group Work Policy falls to:

- Academic/Course Convenors
- Students
- School Boards of Studies

Implementing the Policy

The Assessed Group Work Policy must be implemented from the start of the academic session 2018/19 and must be consulted during course design or redesign. Feedback on the policy will be sought through Periodic Subject Review outcomes and from the Student Representative Council.

Relevant Documents

The Group Work Policy should be read alongside:

- Group Work Good Practice Guide (see below)
- Any reasonable adjustment requirements for any student taking the course in which group work is required.
- Absence Reporting and Good Cause Policy: http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_424718_en.pdf
- Academic Appeals Guidance: https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/senateoffice/studentcodes/staff/academicappealsstaff/
- Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy (2016): https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/senateoffice/policies/studentsupport/ailp/
- Assessment Policy: http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_192549_en.pdf
- Complaints procedure: https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/senateoffice/policies/calendar/calendar2017-18/feesandgeneral/complaints/reg29/
- Course and Programme Design and Approval: http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/qea/progdesignapproval/
- Dignity at Work and Study Policy: https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/humanresources/equalitydiversity/policy/dignityatwork/

Review

The Assessment and Feedback Working Group, and the University Learning and Teaching Committee will review the Group Work Policy three years after implementation.

Group Work Good Practice Guide

Where group work is used within a course, the following good practice guidance and examples *may* be of use.

1. Where possible, it is useful to assess the <u>process</u> of group work in some way, particularly if *ONLY* an individual output from the work is produced.
2. Problem-based-learning (PBL) as used in the School of Medicine is a particular form of group work and local guidelines should be followed for this.
3. Appropriate group size is essential to ensure a positive and constructive learning experience for students.
   a. Where the group size is less than the number of roles (assigned or otherwise) required to complete the group task, this should be taken into account when considering the timescale in which the group work takes place. Groups may need more time to complete the work than would be the case if there was one student per role.
   b. Where there are more students than the anticipated number of roles, this experience is likely to be unengaging for those students without a role and might well lead to tensions within the group. In this instance it is advised that group sizes are reduced to reflect the number of anticipated roles in any group task.
4. Where students have not previously worked in a group, formative opportunities for practice at working in groups, and/or formative feedback should be provided to all group members particularly before any summative assessment of group work or product. This feedback may be individual or may be to the group as a whole and the appropriateness of this will depend upon the task the groups are being asked to undertake.
5. It is important to be clear with students about plagiarism and/or collusion and how to avoid this in group work whilst still working together. This will allay the fears of those who are concerned about it and ensure that all students are aware of the University's policy and how it applies to group work. There is information for students about plagiarism on the LEADS website here: https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/leads/students/plagiarism/
6. Two Sways have been created for students, by LEADS, about working in groups that might be useful for starting discussions with students prior to beginning group work. The first is on effective group work and the second on good academic practice in group work (i.e. avoiding collusion whilst working together). The Sways are available at: https://sway.com/DKRmEKknJLgp3fAZ and: https://sway.com/xZvSNoShZNsdBTO0

For short case studies of good practice in group work, please see the examples on the following pages.

Examples of good practice
Group database project (Introduction to Computing for Historians (Hons)) [History]
This project gives students experience of designing, creating and analysing a source-based database. There are three reasons for using groups:
1. Students learn about how to address the challenges of modelling complex data through discussion with one another.
2. Students develop the graduate attribute of working collaboratively.
3. Students gain a database, by merging their work, which is large enough to analyse without each having to do large amounts of data entry.

These reasons support two course ILOs:
1) Design, create and document databases from historical sources, directed to specific research questions;
2) Work productively as a member of a small team.

The course includes a workshop with short lecture on managing computing projects, followed by group planning. The students are encouraged to meet outside class, and two class sessions (including one in the computing lab) are set aside for group work. Students are not assigned groups or roles. They decide which group to join (using Moodle Choice), so long as all groups have 3-6 people, and allocate roles among themselves.

Students submit their group database collectively and each writes an individual report, and they receive separate marks for each of these (10% each). The group database is assessed on the technical and subject expertise demonstrated by their database and by their work as group; all members of the group receive the same mark. The individual report includes information about how the group operated, important contributions by individuals, explanation of key decisions, and analysis of one research question. The individual mark is based on the expertise demonstrated by the individual and their insights into how they might have improved the database. Comments about significant work by individuals from all reports in a group are also considered in assigning each individual's grade, to ensure that more and less valuable contributions are appropriately recognised.

Group workshops (Saints and Sinners (Hons)) [History]
The course includes five 'active and collaborative' learning sessions, in which they discuss an historical topic in groups. For example, they may analyse an historical source in one group, and then share their results in another group. The students do not produce a collaborative product, but each individual writes a learning journal (2000 words, 20%) on which they are assessed, with one entry per workshop. In the journal, the students reflect on the topic and on what they learned through the group discussion.

Groups are used to engage students actively in developing their own learning. The exercise is therefore relevant to most of the course ILOs, but particularly to the following:
1) Critique alternative interpretations of the Protestant Reformation from the early sixteenth to the late seventeenth century.
2) Evaluate relevant sources, which may be used to consider popular religion, and the methodologies based on these sources.
3) Evaluate key concepts, such as puritanism, otherness, radicalism, nonconformity, iconoclasm, and dissent, among others.
4) Work in small groups to analyse evidence and historical arguments.

One of the overall aims of the MSc programme is for students to develop skills that allow them to communicate effectively and co-operatively in a multidisciplinary environment of scientists and clinicians. To this end, our compulsory Hallmarks of Cancer course includes a group task in which groups of students work together over two weeks to prepare a presentation on a given topic in the area of immunotherapy and cancer.

The presentation is graded, and each student gets the same grade (5%). Also, each student grades their fellow group members (peer assessment) based on their contribution the group process, using set criteria (5%). Finally, each student writes a reflective diary on the group task, which encourages them to think about how the group functioned and how things could be improved in the future (5%).

The task addresses the following course ILOs relating to group working and other generic skills:
1) Communicate effectively with peers, scientists and cancer clinicians from different disciplines;
2) Work effectively within groups or teams to deliver a set task;
3) Plan and manage time effectively by prioritising tasks and meeting deadlines;
4) Critically reflect on individual and group performance in a group task;
5) Prepare and deliver effective oral presentations;

In addition, this task is the students' first experience of critically reviewing the literature and preparing an overview. Our cohorts tend to have 50% international students, from both scientific and medical backgrounds, so they do not all have experience of reading the literature and writing essays. The group nature of this task allows them learn from each other as to how to search the literature, find relevant information, and decide what to include in the presentation. This prepares them for the individual critical review that they will do later on in the course. They also learn from each other as to how to present slides in an attractive and appropriate manner, and how to deliver their speaking part in a confident and clear manner.

Group presentation: Therapeutic Drug Monitoring Scenario (Drug Disposition) [Medicine]

This assessment provides students the opportunity to work collaboratively to design a therapeutic drug dosage regimen for optimal therapeutic treatment of an individual patient.

Students are randomly assigned to eight groups with each group allocated one of four Therapeutic Drug Monitoring (TDM) scenarios. Each group must design a dosage regimen for the drug specified to treat the patient in the allocated scenario and present their recommendations as a group. Presentation criteria include an evaluation of the parameters introduced by the scenario and discussion of their influence on both drug pharmacokinetic pathways and clinical treatment of the patient.

An information session, on the marking criteria for group presentations is scheduled in the course timetable. Students submit their group presentations collectively and are required to submit an individual report, with each receiving separate marks. The group presentation is worth 10% and assessed on discussion of drug pharmacokinetic parameters, drug dosage design, and relevant clinical considerations, in addition to presentation delivery, workload distribution and response to audience questions. All members of the group receive the same mark. The individual written report is worth 20% of the final course grade and includes the drug dose regimen designed by the group with the allocated mark based on the individual's application of critical insight to the design and application of their group's TDM regimen.

Groups are used for this summative assessment task to provide students the opportunity enhance their communication and collaborative working skills whilst addressing the challenge of designing an effective treatment regimen for an individual patient. Through working as a multi-disciplinary team to present their ideas and critical judgement, students have the opportunity to develop the following University of Glasgow graduate attributes:

- Independent and critical thinkers
- Effective Communicators
- Confident
- Adaptable
- Experienced collaborators
- Ethically & Socially aware

The group assessment maps to four ILOs for MED5129:
1) Apply fundamental principles to estimate and interpret pharmacokinetic parameters from drug concentration data.
2) Design dosage regimens to achieve optimal therapeutic drug concentrations in individual patients
3) Discuss influence of clinical characteristics on drug disposition
4) Evaluate the importance of different pathways of drug metabolism and the factors that influence these pathways

Groups decide students' roles amongst themselves and are encouraged to meet outside of timetabled sessions with one in-class session provided in the timetable, for group work. All groups deliver their presentation to an audience of their peers and course teaching staff during a timetabled session. Assigning two groups to each scenario, aims to encourage student discussion following each presentation. To ensure an equal distribution of work, groups must include a slide in their presentation stating individual roles. Following the presentations, students are asked to complete a short Moodle questionnaire to provide (anonymous) peer feedback on the collaborative work of each group.