

Group Work Statement

Group work can provide a meaningful learning experience in many courses. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has introduced some complications with respect to requiring students to work in groups. This past fall semester, some students reported that they were pressured by their peers to show up in person to work on team deliverables. Because there is often a peer grade component to this sort of group work, these students felt pressured to meet in person despite concerns about their own health needs. This is especially relevant where the group work has a “hands-on” component.

Students reported that physical distancing was not always maintained in group meetings, masks were not worn, and students with compromised health conditions showed up because they feared retaliation at the point of the peer grade. Given that student health and well-being are of the utmost importance, instructors should be encouraged to find other ways for students who are not able to perform group work in person to accomplish course learning objectives or find ways for students to complete group work remotely in courses requiring group work. In those instances where remote participation is not an option, all public health protocols need to be strictly enforced through either supervision or the establishment of a Team Charter outlining group public health protocols that all members sign, and students are expected to report to the instructor when there are breaches. Additionally, instructors should continually communicate these expectations to maintain student health and equity throughout the semester and let students know that they can immediately contact the instructor if any concerns arise during the semester.

Here are some links that instructors may find helpful:

<https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/course-design-ideas/peer-assessment-that-improves-performance-in-groups/>

<https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/educational-assessment/making-peer-assessment-work-for-you/>