

## Team Policies<sup>†</sup>

Your team will have a number of responsibilities as it completes problem and project assignments.

- *Designate a coordinator, recorder and checker for each assignment. Add a monitor for 4-person teams. Rotate these roles for every assignment.*
- *Agree on a common meeting time and what each member should have done before the meeting (readings, taking the first cut at some or all of the assigned work, etc.)*
- *Do the required individual preparation.*
- *Coordinator checks with other team members before the meeting to remind them of when and where they will meet and what they are supposed to do.*
- *Meet and work. **Coordinator** keeps everyone on task and makes sure everyone is involved, **recorder** prepares the final solution to be turned in, **monitor** checks to make sure everyone understands both the solution and the strategy used to get it, and **checker** double-checks it before it is handed in. Agree on next meeting time and roles for next assignment. For teams of three, the same person should cover the monitor and checker roles.*
- *Checker turns in the assignment, with the names on it of every team member who participated actively in completing it. If the checker anticipates a problem getting to class on time on the due date of the assignment, it is his/her responsibility to make sure someone turns it in.*
- *Review returned assignments. Make sure everyone understands why points were lost and how to correct errors.*
- *Consult with your instructor if a conflict arises that can't be worked through by the team.*
- *Dealing with non-cooperative team members. If a team member refuses to cooperate on an assignment, his/her name should not be included on the completed work. If the problem persists, the team should meet with the instructor so that the problem can be resolved, if possible. If the problem still continues, the cooperating team members may notify the uncooperative member in writing that he/she is in danger of being fired, sending a copy of the memo to the instructor. If there is no subsequent improvement, they should notify the individual in writing (copy to the instructor) that he/she is no longer with the team. The fired student should meet with his/her instructor to discuss options. Similarly, students who are consistently doing all the work for their team may issue a warning memo that they will quit unless they start getting cooperation, and a second memo quitting the team if the cooperation is not forthcoming. Students who get fired or quit must either find another team willing to add them as a member or get zeroes for the remaining assignments.*

As you will find out, group work isn't always easy—team members sometimes cannot prepare for or attend group sessions because of other responsibilities, and conflicts often result from differing skill levels and work ethics. When teams work and communicate well, however, the benefits more than compensate for the difficulties. One way to improve the chances that a team will work well is to agree beforehand on what everyone on the team expects from everyone else. Reaching this understanding is the goal of the assignment on the *Team Expectations Agreement* handout.

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<sup>†</sup>Adapted from R. M. Felder & R. Brent, *Effective Teaching*, North Carolina State University, 2000.