

Legitimate collaboration versus collusion

Working together with your peers outside set group assessment tasks is beneficial to your learning and a desire to help your friends is valued by the Faculty. At the same time it is important you observe the limits of legitimate collaboration in individual assignments. The line between legitimate co-operation and unacceptable co-operation (i.e. collusion) can be difficult to define, particularly when assessment is completed out-of-class.




The key idea is that your assignment should reflect your personal abilities, skills and thoughts, and it should be work resulting from your personal effort. At the same time, students are encouraged to work together discussing the core themes and general assessment criteria to equip everyone to perform at their best in the assignments. The University states the same as follows "Legitimate co-operation is based on the principle that producing the work remains the independent responsibility of the student (or group of students where a joint project is undertaken), while recognising the educational value of interaction between students" (**University of Sydney, 2005; p.4**).


The limits of acceptable collaboration and unacceptable collusion may change from unit to unit. In some cases peer review is used to allow you to benefit from direct feedback from your fellow students and in other cases that may be inappropriate collusion. Therefore it is important that you check your UoS guidelines and if in doubt, discuss the issue with your unit coordinator.

 The following examples highlight the difference between acceptable and unacceptable collaboration:

- You are permitted to discuss individual assessment criteria with other students in the unit.
- You are encouraged to learn in informal groups with other current students or in formal Peer-Assisted Study Sessions (PASS).
- You are encouraged to learn from current and past students by discussing general themes and concepts relevant to your assignment.
- You are NOT permitted to engage in detailed discussions about the written content of another student's assessment task.
- You should NOT use notes, drafts, or completed assessment tasks prepared by another student.
- Volunteering material to be copied by another student is a dishonest activity.

More Resources

 If you want to learn more about how to work effectively together in informal groups, you can start with the following websites:

- [Peer assisted study sessions](#), University of Sydney Faculty of Economics and Business
- [Study groups](#) , University of Illinois interviews.