

Address the Challenge Sheet - Working in groups

This sheet offers practical ways to address a challenge identified by international students and enhance the teaching and learning experience for all students.

Three challenges identified by international students

International students generally like the idea of group work, especially as a place for learning exchange and getting to know fellow students, however they often find the reality challenging.

1. I would prefer it if the teacher arranged the groups or if there were criteria for having diverse groups. Otherwise, home students will tend to form their own groups, leaving out international students.
2. I would like to be more aware of ways to manage difficult group situations e.g. when all group members do not fulfil tasks.
3. I find it challenging to navigate group work exams, especially when I think grades are unfairly affected by students who do not fulfil requirements.

Ways to address group work challenges

- A. Teachers could manage group composition for all 1st and 2nd semester courses on international study programmes, including Masters programmes, ensuring that groups include local and international students. It is a good idea to explain the rationale for having diverse international groups. Inclusive criteria for group composition can be provided for the other semesters.
- B. Check out if your faculty already offers students support with group work. In addition, SDU CTL has developed 'Group Work Dynamics' an online resource (MS Sway) for students on international study programmes where they will be working in diverse groups. The resource has already been tailored to meet the needs of study programmes in different faculties and it can be edited to meet the needs of any study programme. SDU CTL has also provided interactive workshops for students on working in groups, which draws on the resources in the Sway. Contact SDU CTL to see the Sway and discuss accessing it for your study programme and to see if other group work support for students is available.
- C. Ensure group work support is easily accessible through its learning and that all teachers on the study programme know about it and recommend it.
- D. SDU CTL offers teachers an online course on [Managing Group Work](#), starting on 09.09.26. The course includes effective design of group work tasks; inclusive and intercultural group work practices; managing different expectations; assessed group work and individual grading.

- E. International students may be unfamiliar with group exams and have questions about how their final grade is decided. Provide clear guidance about the assessment, including how individual grades are decided, on itslearning and check that exam information is consistent.

Working as a group for a group exam requires inter-personal and intercultural competencies. The Sway resource noted above, could include specific guidance on how to navigate group work exams. Students appreciate hearing other students' experiences and having the opportunity for Q&A. It would be useful for all students to have a Q&A session with students who successfully completed the group exam.