

How to Start a Study Group

Why create a study group? Because it gives you opportunities to learn from peers. In a study group, you'll be called on to explain concepts to others, and the act of explaining will confirm and help you retain what you know while reminding you about what you don't know.

Take the lead create your own study group. Creating an effective group will require coordination, planning, and securing an ongoing commitment from all members of the group to participate fully.

A good way to start is to connect with others enrolled in your class. The "Study Buddies" icon on the Navigate app can be used to let others know you are interested in group study and gives you a way to contact them.

Before meeting

Initially, group members or a group leader, will need to determine:

- where to meet (face-to-face or via technology)
- how often to meet—at minimum once per week
- how long each meeting will last
- group size—ideally, no more than 4-5 people

Then, all that is needed is to make room reservations or create the virtual meeting link, and get the group together.

First meeting

- Set behavior and performance expectations. While it may seem these are obvious, it's a powerful way to set the standard if you openly discuss them. Some points to consider include:
 - Maintaining regular attendance at study group sessions
 - Confirming that each member will do their part if assigned a task and will bring or have access to needed materials
 - Limiting non-class related conversations
- Create and agree on a process for addressing situations when expectations are not met. For example, if a member consistently neglects their tasks and it happens week-to-week, set a number of times that behavior is acceptable before the member voluntarily leaves the group. Figure out ways to get members to hold themselves accountable.
- Identify a member who will send reminders, agendas, etc.
- Look at the syllabus and come up with a tentative calendar of what generally will be covered at each meeting, such as chapters, concepts, or formulas. If the syllabus has a topic calendar, do not get too far behind or too far ahead.
- Check the syllabus for Aggie Honor Code language or language specific to that class regarding working on homework together. You do not want to violate these rules.
- If there are any doubts about if what you or your group are doing violates the Aggie Honor Code, email the professor and seek clarification first. **It is your responsibility to understand when working in a group is acceptable.** Remember that University Rules

(Student Rule 20) specifically prohibit completing assignments in groups unless expressly approved by the faculty member.

Subsequent meetings

- At the start of the meeting, create an agenda and estimate the amount of time to be spent on each part. You can also create one at the end for the next meeting.
- Create opportunities for each group member to discuss, explain, or teach course content to other members.
- If a group member is not keeping up with material or did not complete an assigned task, figure out why without being judgmental and offer reasonable solutions.

Sample Agenda (2-hour study group)

1. Greetings/debrief/sharing thoughts – 10 minutes
2. Reviewing class notes from last week – 20 minutes
3. Discuss topics from chapter 3 – 30 minutes
4. Predicting test questions and “quiz” each other over questions created – 30 minutes
5. Q&A – 15 minutes
6. Plan for next meeting – 15 minutes

Accountability to the Group

Each member has a responsibility to do their part, to stay on task, and to come to each meeting prepared. If you're struggling with meeting those responsibilities, figure out why. Talk through the concerns with the group openly and honestly. Was this the week where there were lots of things happening and it's a one-time situation, or is this becoming a pattern?

If it is a pattern, and the group can't help, make an appointment with a Success Coach in the Academic Success Center. Your coach will help you figure out what is going on and will work with you to create effective study behaviors.

Learn more about [Making an Academic Coaching appointment](#).

Getting Help

If you get stuck on a course concept or problem, be sure to reach out to your faculty member and/or TA during their office hours. If possible, identify more than one group member who can meet with the professor. At the conclusion of the meeting, contact all group members to let them know what you learned.

The Academic Success Center has created a variety of handouts and videos on time management, textbook reading, note-taking, test-taking strategies, preparing for finals, plus others. These resources provide helpful tips and strategies as you work through course content. See <http://asc.tamu.edu/>

The Academic Success Center (ASC) and the [Math Learning Center \(MLC\)](#) provide tutoring and help desk support in a variety of science, math and engineering courses. Additionally, the MLC has a variety of supplemental materials and videos.

The [StudyHUB](#) database will help you find course specific support from the ASC, MLC, plus other offices on campus.

If your group needs additional support, contact the Academic Success Center at successcenter@tamu.edu. Let us know that you are part of a study group and a member of our staff will get back with you.