

## Guidelines for Group Study

### Benefits

- Beating procrastination—you are more likely to keep an appointment to study with a group than to study by yourself.
- Group support—groups can be a source of encouragement, strength, perspective, and new ideas.

### Forming a group

- Try to work with people who have similar academic goals. If the group's common interests are pizza, beer, and partying, it's likely that the studying will not be monumentally successful.
- Limit groups to five or six for optimal participation and growth, not to mention the logistics of meeting planning.
- Test a group with a single session. If the chemistry is good and the session feels productive, go for a longer commitment.

### Working in a group

- Consider questions of leadership. If there is no leadership force, you run the risk of nothing getting done.
- Set an agenda, even a vague one, for each meeting, making sure that each group member is aware of his/her responsibilities for preparation.
- Practice problem solving techniques. When stuck on a problem, see how far you are able to get, explaining your reasoning at each step, and then ask for an explanation of what to do next. If no one knows, brainstorm and try possibilities.
- Test each other by asking questions and brainstorming possible exam questions.
- Practice teaching one another. Explaining something to someone else helps to reinforce it in your own mind, and also requires you to see the material from a different perspective. It will also help you pinpoint areas where you are weak.
- Compare notes from class to fill in missed points, clarify any confusion, raise questions, and pinpoint areas of special focus likely to show up on exams.
- When preparing for essay exams, open-ended discussion on possible exam questions can help you to learn the material by requiring you to defend your position, while also providing you with alternative perspectives and new insights.

### Getting along

- Be aware that not all people have the same learning style. Some see the big picture; some are detail people; some will get flashes or intuitive understanding; some have to see it written out concretely; some have to look at all the angles and applications; some have to talk it through. Allow for variety, remembering that everyone has something to contribute.