One of the most common concerns for students when working in groups is inequity of contribution. Students often complain that some group members contribute too much (dominating the discussion to the detriment of the group) or too little (shy students or those who do not pull their weight). Often, too, they don’t feel comfortable raising issues associated with group contributions, instead finding it easier to just take on the extra workload.

Despite the fact that inequity of contribution can have a significant impact on the groups’ overall experience and the final products of group work, problems of this nature are often only discussed at the completion of the group task or project. It's much better to address them early.

The following exercise can help students deal with dominant group members or those not doing their share of the work. You might suggest that all groups review student contributions once or more throughout their project (depending on its duration), or give the task to those groups who have identified inequity of contribution as an issue for their group (i.e. through their checklist responses—see the Checklist for identifying issues in groups.)

Student exercise

**Reviewing the contributions of group members**

**Step 1**
As a group, spend 10 minutes discussing the following questions:

1. Do all of the members of our group contribute equally and appropriately?
2. How do current levels of contribution help our group reach its goals?
3. How do current levels of contribution make it difficult for our group to reach its goals?

**Step 2**
Based on the discussion, try to answer the following questions individually, then share your answers with the group:

1. What can I do to make my level of contribution more appropriate?
2. What can others do to help me make my level of contribution more appropriate? (e.g. “Please let me know when I start to dominate the discussion. I often don’t realise that I’m doing it.” Or, “Can we please use the technique of speaking in rounds more often? I feel more comfortable contributing that way.”)

You can also ask students to fill out a form that requires them to give each member of their group a mark for participation and list the key areas of contribution and areas for improvement. This can also motivate students to
contribute equally within their group.