

Developing Ground Rules for Departmental Meetings

These activities can help engage all community members in envisioning and identifying respectful interactions. Plus, research demonstrates numerous benefits of respectful workplaces, including greater job satisfaction, cooperation, creativity, and better performance.

PRE-MEETING

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- 1 Request a template at go.rutgers.edu/mtg-template.**
Use it to gather anonymous feedback from colleagues about community values, critical ground rules, and accountability.
- 2 Dedicate a departmental meeting to developing community rules.**
If the department/unit does not regularly create agendas, make sure to announce prior to the meeting. Make sure to include all staff and part-time employees.
- 3 Establish the following roles:**
 - **Facilitator** (the person who will guide the conversation ensuring all members can participate).
 - **Recorder** (someone who will document each suggestion).

PLEASE NOTE

Women, BIPOC, and staff are often relegated to these roles (and may volunteer for these roles because of social pressure to adhere to gendered and racialized norms).

Be mindful about these power dynamics and **consider assigning the role to someone with greater influence who can listen actively.**



DURING THE MEETING

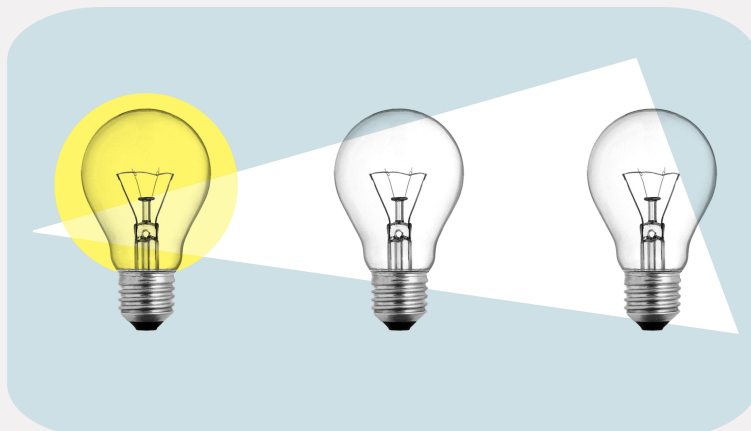
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- 1 Share the feedback gathered through the feedback form.**
Ask for additional suggestions and clarify ideas shared as you move towards consensus.
- 2 The facilitator should remind folks that the focus is on behavioral ground rules** (rather than procedural ones, like silencing phones).
- 3 Need more time to build consensus?**
Arrange to revisit the topic at the next meeting.

AFTER THE MEETING

3

- 1 Continue to collect feedback.**
Especially from colleagues who weren't at the brainstorming meeting! Bring suggestions back to the group.
- 2 Once established, make the ground rules accessible.**
Greater community rules visibility demonstrates commitment and supports accountability.
- 3 Revisit the ground rules.**
Do this at each subsequent meeting until folks are comfortable using them.
- 4 Review the rules annually.**
Make adjustments accordingly.



TIPS

- **No more than 10 ground rules** (so folks can remember them).
- **Consider reviewing the community rules before difficult topics are discussed**, such as meetings where individuals are being evaluated and meetings on new policies/processes.
- Remind colleagues that **everyone is responsible** for helping each other use the ground rules, not just the chair/program director/dean.

GROUND RULES EXAMPLES

- One person speaks at a time.**
Some additional strategies to consider include opening the floor to colleagues who have less power/authority first.
- Avoid interrupting others and monitor your level of participation.**
Try balancing speaking and listening.
- Expressing disagreement is expected.**
Phrase your remarks so that it is clear you are challenging the view, not the person.
- Limit your own assumptions.**
Ask clarifying questions as needed.
- Jointly design next steps.**
This ensures team commitment.