

# Work(place) Evolution

*Hybrid Work & Communication Toolkit*

**Team Norms Discussion**



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
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# Conducting a Team Norms Discussion

## How to approach the Team Norms Discussion

As with all the other materials in this toolkit, there is no right or wrong way to host a Team Norms Discussion.

This document contains a menu of activities and discussion questions you can choose from to tailor for your team's specific needs, the amount of time you have for the discussion, and the format you are planning to use (fully virtual, hybrid, in-person). A downloadable and editable PowerPoint slide template is available for you to adapt to your needs. All you have to do is go through this document and identify the questions/exercises you want to use, and then customize the slides to suit your preferences and approach.

### Consider the following factors when customizing the Team Norms Discussion for your team:

- What's your team's communication and decision-making style?
- How much have you already discussed hybrid work styles as a team?
- How quickly would you like to decide on your team norms?

### Preparing for the Team Norms Discussion:

- Communicate the purpose of the Team Norms Discussion and your desired results.
- Include the Agenda in your calendar invitation so attendees know what to expect.
- Set clear roles for note taking, warm-ups, and who will take on the synthesis.
- Who will facilitate? As the manager, you can set the tone and expectations, but the overall facilitation is a potential opportunity for other members of the team to act as leaders.
- Set Ground Rules (e.g. honour confidentiality; share real examples; be present).

### During the Team Norms Discussion:

- If you have chosen a hybrid approach, make sure you are paying equal attention to virtual attendees and in-person attendees.
- For a fully virtual discussion, consider enabling closed captions and recording the meeting.

### After the Team Norms Discussion:

- If you run out of time, you can repackage some exercises as 'homework' or a follow-up exercise.
- If you decide on check-in times to revisit the decisions you made, be sure to book them in.
- Are there any next steps? When will they happen?

If you have questions, concerns, or feedback about this Toolkit or about any of the information and materials we have provided, please contact [FoM.OrgDev@ubc.ca](mailto:FoM.OrgDev@ubc.ca).

# Conducting a Team Norms Discussion

## How to approach the Team Norms Discussion

*Define, Communicate, and Evolve*

The 'menu' of activities suggested for the core content for the Team Norms Discussion are outlined in this document in [three categories of actions](#). These categories are aligned with the categories of considerations we provided in the Guide.

### 1. Define

*Hybrid work succeeds when teams **define** how to work and communicate.*

*Establish a shared understanding of how your team will interact and engage with others.*

*Think of **what** you will do.*

- What does your team value about being onsite, and how can you prioritize that?
- What does your team dislike when onsite, and how can you minimize or mitigate that?
- What hybrid work practices does your team engage in that you want to continue or stop doing?
- What kinds of work and activities will you prioritize when you are all together?
- What days will your team be required to be on site?

### 2. Communicate

*Hybrid work succeeds when teams **communicate** their needs and preferences.*

*Proactively communicate needs, expectations, and limitations with your team.*

*Think of **how** you will do it.*

- How will your team connect to build rapport, culture, and collaborative relationships?
- How will you use different technology and tools to support effective communication and collaboration within your team and beyond?

### 3. Evolve

*Hybrid work succeeds when teams **evolve** how they work over time.*

*Enable experimentation and establish a clear understanding of what stays and what goes.*

*Identify how and when you will **reevaluate** your decisions.*

- How will you invite feedback on your team norms and approaches?
- How will you stay open to new ideas and approaches to try out as a team?
- When will you formally revisit the Team Norms Discussion and/or Checklist as a team?
- When will you check-in more informally to see how things are going and whether you need to make any adjustments to the norms and practices you've established?

# Conducting a Team Norms Discussion

*Hybrid work succeeds when teams define how to work and communicate.*

*Establish a shared understanding of how your team will interact and engage with others.*

## **Agenda template (Slide 3)**

Customize this agenda to tailor it to your team's specific needs and the amount of time you have for the Team Norms Discussion.

Agenda (X mins)

### **INTROS & WARM-UP (X mins)**

Introductions and warm-up activities

### **HYBRID TEAM NORM GENERATION (X mins)**

Discussion questions

### **BREAK (X mins)**

### **HYBRID NORMS CHECKLIST (X mins)**

Complete Team Norms Checklist

### **WRAP-UP / NEXT STEPS (X mins)**

Decide on next steps

# Conducting a Team Norms Discussion

## Agenda example 1

Agenda (90 mins)

### **INTROS & WARM-UP (15 mins)**

Warm-up question

Establish and Review meeting etiquette/agreements

Share workshop purpose & goals

### **HYBRID TEAM NORM GENERATION (65 mins with 5 min break)**

UBC Hybrid Work Guidelines Overview

Guide for Hybrid Work and Communication Overview

Key Questions about our Hybrid Work Values

### **WRAP-UP (5 mins)**

Set date for next Team Norms check-in and where to share feedback

## Agenda example 2

Agenda (90 mins)

### **INTROS & WARM-UP (10 mins)**

Warm-up question

Discussion etiquette/agreements

Discussion purpose & goals

### **HYBRID TEAM NORM GENERATION (35 mins)**

UBC Hybrid Work Guidelines Overview

Workshop Overview

Key Team Decisions set by Team Leader

Key Questions about our Hybrid Work Values

### **BREAK (5 mins)**

### **HYBRID NORMS CHECKLIST (35 mins)**

Complete Team Norms Checklist

### **WRAP-UP (5 mins)**

Set date to revisit our Checklist and Team Norms

# Conducting a Team Norms Discussion

## Introductions & Warm-up

Based on how well-established your team is, consider some of the following activities to help bring your group together, get to know each other, and get folks warmed up for the discussion.

Depending on how your team is gathering for the discussion, there are different ways you can approach these exercises:

- If you are in-person, consider using sticky notes or a white board or a flip chart with a volunteer taking notes to capture your ideas. Print out any activity tools ahead of time.
- If you've chosen a hybrid or virtual meeting, consider using a shared screen to jot down ideas, or use a collaborative tool such as the Zoom Whiteboard, Slido, Miro, and others to allow people to enter their own contributions.
- You could also just have a free-form discussion with someone tasked with taking notes for reference, or not note-taking at all.

### Introductions (Slide 4-7):

*If your team has new members or you work in a tiered team structure where not everyone knows each other or works closely together, consider doing brief introductions. Here are some possible activities you could consider. Feel free to be creative if none of these work for your team.*

- Ask each person to state their name, their role on the team, and what they're most looking forward to in this discussion.
- Have each person anonymously write down a fact about themselves, and then try to match each fact with the person who wrote it. If you are having a hybrid or virtual meeting, consider using a collaborative tool such as Zoom Whiteboard, Slido, Miro, or others.
- Play a quick round of get to know you [Bingo](#). If you are meeting in-person, print off a bingo sheet for each of the people on your team. If you are having a hybrid or virtual meeting, send out the bingo sheets ahead of time.

### Warm-up questions (Slide 8-10):

*It can be hard to launch into a big discussion cold, so consider getting the group to brainstorm together on lower stakes ideas before jumping into the discussion. Here are some possible activities you could consider. Feel free to be creative if none of these work for your team.*

- Ask each person to identify strengths of the team and the strengths they bring to the team.
- Ask each person to identify what they enjoy most about working on the team.
- Brainstorm some of your team's collective accomplishments from the past year.

# Conducting a Team Norms Discussion

## Introductions & Warm-up

### Meeting Etiquette / Agreements (Slide 11)

Based on your team dynamics consider the following 'ground rules' to help guide your discussion:

- Honour confidentiality
- Assume positive intent
- Seek to understand
- Be curious
- Be present & engaged (no multi-tasking)
- Be honest & speak your mind – this is a safe space
- Use real examples to root observations in reality
- Be open to a final outcome we might not have anticipated
- Ask for any other suggestions folks in the room may have

### Meeting Goals (Slide 12)

Based on your goal for the outcome of the Team Norms Discussion, consider outlining what you want your team to get out of the Team Norms Discussion. Your goals could include some of the suggestions below or you can create your own:

- Identify what we value and what we do not enjoy about being in the office. Identify ways to prioritize what we enjoy and find ways to mitigate the challenges.
- Identify which days we will be on campus, and what activities we will prioritize when we are all together.
- Identify activities we can do as a group, both virtually and in-person, to support team building and relationship building.
- Identify when and how we will use different communication tools for different purposes (email, Teams direct messages, phone, text).
- Identify the hybrid practices we have organically evolved in the last 3 years that are working well, and those that are not working well that we can consider abandoning.
- Identify a date when we will check in to see how things are going.



# Hybrid Team Norms Generation

*Hybrid work succeeds when teams define how to work and communicate.*

*Establish a shared understanding of how your team will interact and engage with others.*

## Define

### Context (Slide 14)

- Explain the UBC requirements for hybrid work:
  - 100% remote work arrangements will not be considered at this time.
  - At minimum, all UBC employees are required to be on campus 20% of the time. This could be 1 day per week, 1 week per month, or another schedule that suits operational needs.

### UBC Hybrid Work Guidelines Overview (Slide 15-16):

- Review the [UBC Hybrid Work Guidelines](#) with your team to make sure they are aware of and understand them.

### How our team will approach hybrid work (Slide 17):

- Communicate any other decisions you have made for your team on how you'll approach hybrid working that you are not open to discussion on.
  - Highlight the specific UBC Hybrid Work Guidelines that are important to you
  - Are there specific days you want your team to be in the office?
  - Will you be requiring more than the minimum 20% onsite presence?
  - Will new members of your team be asked to come in more often to start?
  - Will you require all members of your team to come in more often when you are onboarding a new member to the team?
  - Be sure to share **why** these decisions were made and **how** they will benefit work and collaboration.

If applicable, also mention the key decisions, like new norms, that you'll determine as a group in the Team Norms Discussion. This will balance the top-town decisions with an opportunity for collaboration and consensus-building.

# Hybrid Team Norms Generation

## Define

Choose as many of the activities from slides 18-24, depending on what works for your team and the amount of time you have. If your Team Norms Discussion is being held in person, you ask people to write their ideas on sticky notes and paste them on a wall for discussion. Or you can have a free-form brainstorming session with a designated 'scribe' capturing your discussion. If your Team Norms Discussion is hybrid or fully remote, ask someone to be the 'scribe' and use the slides to capture ideas.

### **What makes coming into the office meaningful? (Slide 18)**

- Brainstorm a list of activities / reasons your team enjoys and values onsite work.

### **What makes coming into the office less meaningful? (Slide 19)**

- Brainstorm a list of activities and/or reasons your team enjoys and values onsite work.

### **Rose, Buds, Thorns (Slide 20-21)**

- Brainstorm a list of activities, reasons, practices, etc. your team has found are working well, those that offer a promising opportunity, or those that are a challenge about hybrid work. Use the ideas generated to consider what activities your team may want to keep doing, start doing, or stop doing to make hybrid work more effective and meaningful.

### **What activities do we want to prioritize when we are onsite versus when we are working from home? (Slide 22)**

- Brainstorm the activities your team wants to prioritize when they are in the office, either alone or as a team, and the activities that would be most effective if done when working remotely. Keep in mind that each team member may have a different remote work set-up or other constraints on their in-office or remote work time that affects their preferences.

### **What format will we choose for different kinds of meetings? (Slide 23)**

- Think through the different kinds of meetings your team has internally and with colleagues, and think through what format would be most effective for that kind of meeting. The main activity(s) of the meeting (e.g. brainstorming, team building, formal conversations, etc.) can signal whether a meeting would be most effective if it is in-person, hybrid, or remote.

### **What communication channels do we want to use for what purposes? (Slide 24)**

- Think through the different reasons your team needs to communicate and what channel is the most effective for each type of communication. Consider what response time is required and how you can minimize unnecessary distractions for each other.

# Hybrid Team Norms Generation

*Hybrid work succeeds when teams communicate their needs and preferences.  
Proactively communicate needs, expectations, and limitations with your team.*

## Communicate

Choose as many of the activities from slides 26-30, depending on what works for your team and the amount of time you have. If your Team Norms Discussion is being held in person, you ask people to write their ideas on sticky notes and paste them on a wall for discussion. Or you can have a free-form brainstorming session with a designated 'scribe' capturing your discussion. If your Team Norms Discussion is hybrid or fully remote, ask someone to be the 'scribe' and use the slides to capture ideas.

### **How will we share our team norms with new members? When will we revisit this discussion? (Slide 26)**

- Think through how you will socialize your team norms with new members of your team. For example, how can you embed this into onboarding processes?

### **How will we communicate our working hours? How will we protect focus time? (Slide 27)**

- Think through when it might be necessary to formally conduct another Team Norms Discussion with your team.

### **What meeting 'hygiene' practices do we want to adopt to make our meetings more effective and more engaging? (Slide 28)**

- Consider how you can make your meetings more effective and engaging. Consider wellness and meeting fatigue: is there enough time between meetings to use the washroom or get something to eat? Do you have a lot of back-to-back meetings?

### **How do we want to invest in team culture, team building activities, and informal ways to connect as a team? (Slide 29)**

- Think through how you can come together as a team to invest in team culture, engage in team-building activities, and connect informally as a team.

### **What do we need to make adoption of these hybrid work norms easier? (Slide 30)**

- Allow your team to share questions or barriers they perceive to a full or complete adoption of hybrid work norms. Use the discussion to identify what supports you need to provide to make the adoption of these norms easier.

# Hybrid Team Norms Generation

*Hybrid work succeeds when teams evolve how they work over time.*

*Enable experimentation and establish a clear understanding of what stays and what goes.*

## **Evolve**

If your Team Norms Discussion is being held in person, you ask people to write their ideas on sticky notes and paste them on a wall for discussion. Or you can have a free-form brainstorming session with a designated 'scribe' capturing your discussion. If your Team Norms Discussion is hybrid or fully remote, ask someone to be the 'scribe' and use the slides to capture ideas.

## **How will we ensure we are evolving our team norms and adapting to changes in context and new ideas? (Slide 31)**

- Invite your team to share ideas about when and how you will revisit your team norms. How will you know if they are not working? How will you invite feedback?

# Completing the Team Norms Checklist

*Hybrid work succeeds when teams evolve how they work over time.*

*Enable experimentation and establish a clear understanding of what stays and what goes.*

## **Team Norms Checklist (Slide 33-35)**

As with all the other materials in this toolkit, there is no right or wrong way to approach the Team Norms Checklist. The Checklist document contains different options to choose from: a blank checklist, a checklist with pre-populated examples, and an ‘ideas bank’ of other items your team might want to consider. Feel free to be creative and structure your approach to the Checklist in ways that make sense for your unique team needs.

### **As part of the Team Norms Discussion:**

- You can end your Team Norms Discussion by completing the Checklist as a group.
- Look back at the notes you took and the ideas you generated as a team during the Team Norms Discussion.
- Take those ideas and group them into categories (e.g. Meeting hygiene, Activities when onsite, Activities when working remotely, etc.) and build your own Team Norms Checklist using the ideas you generated.
- You can draw on the ‘ideas bank’ to see if there are any other considerations that did not come up in your Team Norms Discussion that you want to add.

### **Consolidate and revisit after the Team Norms Discussion:**

- You, or a designated volunteer from your team, can take away the notes you captured during your Team Norms Discussion and synthesize them into a Checklist they feel captures the team’s preferences.
- Schedule time in your next team meeting or a specific block of time to review the Checklist that was created and make any changes that may be necessary.
- You can draw on the ‘ideas bank’ to see if there are any other considerations that did not come up in your Team Norms Discussion that you want to add.

### **Individual homework:**

- Ask each person from your team to take the Checklist away to complete on their own as ‘homework’.
- Schedule time during your next team meeting or a specific block of time to compare each of your Checklists to come up with a single Checklist for your whole team.
- You can draw on the ‘ideas bank’ to see if there are any other considerations that did not come up in your Team Norms Discussion that you want to add.

# Completing the Team Norms Checklist

## Next Steps (Slide 36-37)

Wrap up your Team Norms Discussion. What are your next steps as a team to follow-up on the decisions you have made during the Discussion?

- If you have asked your team to complete the Team Norms Checklist as 'homework', tell them when you want their responses back and when you will meet to discuss them.
- Where will you store your Team Norms Checklist?
- When will you meet again to check-in on how things are going?
- Will you be following up formally or informally to gather feedback directly from the people on your team?
- Are there any calendar invitations you need to send out based on decisions you made during the discussion?
  - Monthly casual coffee hour
  - In-person lunches
  - Annual team retreat