

Tips for Successful Collaboration

Successful researchers find that the opportunity to engage, debate and explore ideas with other colleagues enriches and expands their research potential. It also increases the likelihood of wide dissemination of any research products.

Evidence of collaborative capacity is recognised as one form of peer esteem: it demonstrates that other researchers value the opportunity to work with you to produce research of a high calibre.

1. Aim for a range of collaborations.

Develop collaborative partnerships that reflect your particular interests, intellectual and social concerns.

2. Look for people you like and who are passionate about research can increase your energy, motivation and creativity.

Potential collaborators may be people you identify at conferences, through journal articles, through recommendation from others, or who are known to you personally.

3. Take the time to evaluate potential collaborators before getting in too deep.

People who find it hard to work with others, meet deadlines or share their ideas or insights will potentially cause you more trouble than they are worth. Undertake due diligence before committing.

4. Understand the requirements of inter-institutional collaboration.

The collaborative process can require considerable negotiation, particularly at the time of start-up. There may be complex legal considerations and the delicate nuances relating to intellectual property must be addressed before you start producing scholarly works.

5. Develop a mutual understanding of expectations and key principles.

Once you have identified potential collaborators consider what the partnership will offer and the outcomes you hope to generate. There should be good benefit for all concerned parties.

The following questions offer you some useful tips that might assist in ensuring your collaboration is set up for success.

- How much time and effort can we each commit?
- How do our methods / language / goals and working styles differ? Will this impact on our research framing and design?
- What are some of the potential challenges we might need to manage? (For example, these might relate to regular communication, assigning of leadership roles, funds management.)
- If we have conflict, how will we manage this in a collegial way?
- If one of our team members is not performing how will we address this?
- What are the protocols for publishing and how will we ascribe authorship?

6. Try to meet face to face on a regular basis.

You will find it useful to arrange a face-to-face meeting to get the collaboration moving. It is helpful to seek further opportunities to work together in this way. A conference setting provides a great forum to set up associated meetings.

7. Be prepared to take the lead if required.

If you have initiated the collaboration you may also assume considerably more leadership responsibilities. Keep track of how frequently the group connects and communicates. You may find it necessary to act as a strong motivator to ensure each member engages and maintains their connection despite other pressing demands.

8. Regularly review the collaboration and its effectiveness.

Take the time to collectively review the effectiveness of the collaboration. Is it generating the desired outcomes? Are the interactions enjoyable and productive? Are there new projects emerging? Is it multiplying the potential of each individual?

Want to learn more?

20 Benefits of Collaboration as a Researcher You Can't Afford to Ignore. Available at: <http://www.assembledchaos.com/20-benefits-of-collaboration-as-a-researcher-you-cannot-afford-to-ignore/>

This website is hosted by a science consulting firm and explores research collaboration.

Debowski, S. (2012). [*The New Academic: A Strategic Handbook*](#). Open University Press.

[Developing as a Researcher](#). Available at: <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/spotlight/developing-as-a-researcher/developing-as-a-researcher>

The UK organisation Vitae offers practical guidance on research matters. You can register as a user to access their resources.