Running a Meeting

Learning how to run a professional meeting is a skill. Students will learn and apply this skill to each meeting with the faculty advisor (and mentor, for sponsored projects).

Agenda

The agenda provides a "roadmap" for the topics that are to be discussed at the meeting.

Everyone on the team should meet to prepare the agenda.

A bulleted list is fine.

Typical agenda items include:

- Summary of accomplishments the previous week
- Discussion items
- Summary of plans for subsequent week

Tip: assign a name next to each agenda item. This is the person that is responsible for leading the discussion about that item.

Roles

Every meeting will have a leader and a note-taker.

Leader - The leader is responsible for working through the agenda. While conversation can go to topics not on the agenda, the leader should make sure the meeting focus gets back to any items that are important in the allotted time (usually 30 or 60 minutes).

Scribe - The scribe is responsible for taking notes during the meeting.

Everyone in the group should talk, not just the leader.

The roles can be fixed for the duration of the term/project, but early on, students should rotate through the roles so that everyone has a chance to be leader and scribe.

Notes

The outcome of the meeting is in the form of notes, taken by the scribe. Detailed minutes recording exactly what is said are not required, but instead, notes should capture important issues/questions/conclusions.

The scribe should share notes with the student team after the meeting, revising based on team feedback. The suggestion is for the student team to explicitly discuss the notes at their next meeting.

When the team has agreed upon the notes, the scribe should archive the notes in a repository shared by the team (e.g., Google docs).

Action Items

Make sure to end the meeting with a wrap-up of the action items - what is to happen next, tasks, who is doing what, etc.