

Recording information in Outlook and Teams

All staff need to record information on University systems. When communicating with colleagues using Microsoft Outlook and/or Teams, you should consider:

The University is subject to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOI).

- This means that anyone can ask for access to information you have recorded on our systems, including emails, Teams posts and chats.
- If such a request is made, your privacy rights will always be considered, but the information may have to be disclosed if there is a compelling public interest.

The University is also covered by data protection legislation.

- This gives individuals rights over their own personal data.
- The rights extend to all personal data recorded, whether hard copy or electronic and even those held in backup and archive files.
- Opinions about individuals are considered their personal data, as are facts about their background, private and professional lives, performance and behaviour and may have to be provided.



REMINDER: Always be mindful of what you record on University systems. At all times be accurate in your recording, respectful of others, and record only what is necessary.

Here are our hints and tips on best practice:

- Remember that posts on a Teams site may be seen by everyone who is a member of the Team.
- Make sure your Teams site has at least two Owners, that you only add relevant people as Members, and that you set up Member permissions correctly. See the Toolkit guide on [Create a Team: Quick Start](#).
- Private chat in Teams does not mean it is confidential or out of scope for any requests made under FOI or data protection legislation. It just means that it is a chat between specific people.
- When sending any communication via Outlook or Teams, make sure you select the correct recipient(s), to avoid potential data breaches.
- Teams posts, chats and emails are retained permanently unless you take action to delete them.
- Do not use other systems – such as WhatsApp or Zoom – for University activities: the system may not be secure, and you may breach terms and conditions of use.
- Think about who you need to communicate with. Is an email, channel post or a chat conversation the best method? Or would a telephone or audio call be better?
- If you do not want all recipients of a group email to see each other's details, put your own email address in the **To** field and the other recipient addresses in the **Bcc** field.
- When sending messages, try to keep to one topic per message, or when discussing people, limit to discussing one person in each message.
- Is your conversation just a casual chat with a colleague, and not about your work or job role? If so, then it shouldn't be communicated on University systems. Use personal email or your mobile.
- If you are using University systems to process sensitive data, you need to consider whether to undertake a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA).
- If you are using Microsoft Teams to process research data, you may want to consult with the [Digital Research Team](#) as to whether this is the most appropriate method.



If you need guidance on Freedom of Information or Data Protection, contact the Information Governance Team. For technical guidance on using University systems, contact the Service Desk.