MS Teams: Using channels as breakout rooms

MS Teams does not yet have the integrated functionality of breakout rooms, but this is on Microsoft’s roadmap for development. In the meantime, MS Teams users have found ways to create their own Breakout Rooms hosting concurrent meetings in their Team channels.

Prepare your Channels and Meetings

This method is for a meeting within a Team/Channel and for the members of that Team/Channel only.

1. Create a new Team, or use an existing Team that has the membership you want. See our quick guide. This Team automatically has a General channel.

2. Create a separate channel for each Breakout Room, e.g. Breakout Room 1, 2, etc.

   - The channel type you choose depends on how you want to work with the Breakout Rooms. Choose **private** channels if you want to allocate people to specific rooms and only allow them to see the rooms they have permission for. Choose **standard** channels if you want all team members to see all rooms and then give instruction as part of the session as to who should go into which room (more flexible).

3. Create a meeting in each channel:
   - Create a meeting in your Teams calendar for the relevant day/time and specifying the channel to be used, e.g. **Your Team – General**
   - Create another meeting in the same way for the same day/time but this time specifying the channel to be used as the first Breakout Room, e.g. **Breakout Room 1**
4. Upload any **documents** you want to discuss into the relevant channels.

5. Make people aware of what you have organised! To do this:
   - Post a message in the **General** channel using @mention, i.e. @Teamname.
   - As part of the message, ask team members to click on the meeting to **Add** it to their calendar.
   - All members of the team will then be notified.

 **Tip:** If you want your message to stand out, you can make it an **Announcement**. See Microsoft’s guidance on creating an announcement.

You can then choose to post the Announcement to the Breakout Room channels too.

   - To post the announcement across Breakout Room channels, click **Post in multiple channels** in the top menu then **Select channels**. Tick to select the other Breakout Rooms, then click **Update** and **Post**.

6. It is probably a good idea to also send participants an email with more information such as the agenda and how you want the meeting to run.

7. You are now ready for your meeting.

**Hold and organise the meeting**

1. 10 mins before the meeting is due to start go to your Team and start the meeting in the **General** channel.

2. Start the **meetings** in the **Breakout Room** channels.

   **Remember:** If you did not set up any scheduled meetings you can use **Meet Now** in each channel.

3. At the meeting start time meet the **whole group** in the **General** channel meeting. Discuss the meeting agenda and give instruction about how to join the meetings in the Breakout Room channels.

4. **Allocate** people to Breakout Rooms:
   - verbally if breakout rooms can be seen by all members
   - to the only room they can see if the channels were set up as private

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1 **Note:** Use Meet Now from the desktop/web app. This option is not available in a channel in the mobile apps.
Warn participants that if there is a lot of conversation happening in the Breakout Room channel, they may have to scroll up to find the link to join the meeting.

5. In each Breakout Room channel, members can **collaborate** on the documents they have been allocated and discuss and create new documents. It is a good idea to allocate a **facilitator** to each room.

6. As organiser you can go into each Breakout Room meeting and ask participants to come back together into the General channel.

7. You can also copy documents from each of the Breakout Room channels over to the General channel for a plenary discussion.

8. You can end meetings in the Breakout Room channels – although it is best to give some warning before doing so and instruction of what participants should do next.

**Working between multiple meetings**

Multiple meetings can be open at the same time and you can move between them, but you can only be **active** in one at any one time; in the others, you will be on hold.

- You do not need to **Leave** a meeting before moving to another! However, the meeting you move **from** will display **On hold**.

- When you want to return to the meeting you have left, click **Resume**.

- For example, if you begin in the General channel meeting, then join the Breakout Room 1 meeting, the General channel meeting will place you **On hold**. To return to the General channel meeting, click **Resume** at the top of the meeting window.

![Screen shot of Breakout Room meeting](image)

If a participant accidentally leaves a meeting, they should be able to rejoin as long as the organiser has not ended that meeting.

**Online tutorial**

- Virtual Breakout Rooms in Microsoft Teams

**Further help and support**

See **Guides and Links** in our MS Teams resource on Toolkit or contact the IT Service Desk: [https://myit.abdn.ac.uk](https://myit.abdn.ac.uk)