

MS Teams Chat Retention – Guidance

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Following recommendation and endorsement by the Information Governance Committee, Digital and Information Services are currently reviewing how long we keep selected Microsoft Teams conversations for. This is in line with data protection legislation; ensuring that we do not keep data for longer than is necessary.

The retention period for the following conversations will be **1 year**.



This will be effective from 13 March 2024 and will be retrospective from this date.

- Teams 1:1 chat - Chat messages, posts, and attachments shared in a Teams conversation between two people. Team's 1:1 chats are also called conversations. Files shared in a 1:1 chat are stored in the OneDrive for Business account of the person who shared the file.
- Teams Group chats - Chat messages, posts and attachments shared in a Teams conversation between three or more people. Also called 1: N chats or group conversations. Files shared in group chats are stored in the OneDrive for Business account of the person who shared the file.
- Teams Meeting chats – Chat messages, posts and attachments shared in a meeting not taking place within a Channel or within a Team.

The copy of the file within the chat will be deleted and not the original within the owner's OneDrive for Business account.

The changes will not affect the following conversations:

- Teams channels, private channels and shared channels chats.

The 1-year retention period will be reviewed with the intention to potentially reduce this in future to 3 months.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why are we changing the retention dates of selected Microsoft Teams Conversations?

The University of Aberdeen has a responsibility to ensure that systems are included within Microsoft Teams chat, which currently is held for almost three years, since the widespread roll-out during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The retention of data, including personal data, in perpetuity can become a habit which leads to poor records management practices, as well as increased institutional risk. Ultimately this leads to individuals finding it increasingly difficult to form good records management practices by deleting data appropriately.

Further, Teams chat is not the correct place to store University business records. It is important that records are held in the most appropriate location and staff are encouraged to utilise the correct location, such as SharePoint or Network Shared Drives.

Finally, in the absence of automated retention, there is currently no mechanism by which staff could proactively delete large volumes of their historic Team chat manually, staff would only be able to delete individual messages or entire chat conversations regardless of the date created.

2. What conversations has the one-year retention been applied to?

The retention period for the following conversations is 1 year.

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The changes will not affect the following conversations: Teams channels, private channels and shared channels chats.

3. What are the benefits of applying a retention period to Microsoft Chat conversations?

- Reduced risk of data protection breaches
- Reduction in volume of data being stored
- Quicker identification of data that may be required to answer a Freedom of Information or Data Subject Access Request
- Reduced risk of losing business-critical records

4. Where should I store Teams messages?

It is important that records are held in the most appropriate location and staff are encouraged to utilise the correct location, such as SharePoint or Network Shared Drives.

5. How do I save Teams Messages and associated files?

A full guide on how to save Teams Messages and Files can be found here: [MS Teams: Copying Chats and Associated Files to Shared Drive](#).

Help and Support

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