



Recordkeeping Directive – University use of MS Teams Chat

Purpose

- (1) This directive ensures the appropriate use of Chat within Microsoft Teams (Teams) to support appropriate recordkeeping practices and the proper documentation of work decisions.

Scope

- (2) This directive applies to all staff.

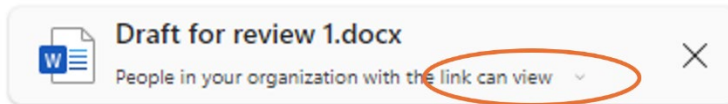
Policy, procedures and guidelines

- (3) This directive supports University policies, procedures and guidelines:

- a [Code of Conduct](#)
- b [Information Security Guidelines](#)
- c [Information Technology Procedure - Acceptable Use and Access](#)
- d [Legal Procedure – Legal Records](#)
- e [Records Management Policy](#) and [Procedure](#)

Appropriate use of Chat

- (4) The Chat function in Teams facilitates simple and effective communication and collaboration. However, its simplicity makes it easy to forget or breach important University records and information obligations, and so the following best practice guidelines must be followed:
- a Chat should only be used for brief, informal or impromptu conversations between small numbers of people, more like a phone call or a virtual hallway conversation than a meeting.
 - b Confidential, private or highly sensitive information must not be communicated via Chat.
 - c Chat should not be used for formal business advice or approvals. Use email or a Teams channel post instead.
 - d If an informal or impromptu conversation becomes more business focused, move the discussion to a more appropriate channel.
 - e If sharing documents or files through Chat, these must be copies only. The official or source record must not be stored in Chat. (This is different to documents shared through Teams channels – see below).
 - f All shared documents should have their share scope limited to “People currently in this chat”. This can be changed in the menu when dropping a document in the Chat



- g Only delete Chat messages if they meet the normal administrative practice criteria in the [Records Management Procedure](#).
- h Information shared through Chat in Teams meetings should be captured in the meeting minutes or other meeting records, if necessary. This applies particularly to Teams meetings with external parties, as the meeting may be hosted by the other party's system and inaccessible afterwards.

(5) Notwithstanding the above requirements, Chats may be accessed under various legislation and University policies (e.g. for GIPA requests, subpoenas, misconduct investigations). Chats should be professional and consistent with obligations under the Code of Conduct and must not be destroyed if an access request has been received or a disposal alert or suspension directive is in place.

Preferred business communication methods

(6) Email or a Teams channel post is a more appropriate method for asynchronous business communications for the following reasons:

a For email:

- i. All responses and discussions for a topic can be captured in a single, uninterrupted email thread, allowing for easier reference, follow up and recordkeeping.
- ii. Shared email boxes ensure the information is accessible to multiple staff when needed.
- iii. Emails can be copied (via cc) or forwarded to other staff who need the information. They are not restricted to the original participants.
- iv. Outlook provides better options for sorting, classifying, searching for and retrieving emails.
- v. Exchange Online retains emails for the periods specified in the Records Management Procedure, reducing the risk of losing important University information.

b For Teams channels:

- i. Information is accessible to everyone in the channel
- ii. It is easy to share links to a Teams channel post, or to forward an entire post conversation to email.
- iii. Documents and files shared in the Teams channel are captured in SharePoint and can be accessed by other Teams channel members.

(7) However, neither Exchange Online nor Teams channels are a suitable, long term, records management system. Records and information in an email or Teams channel should be recorded or saved in accordance with the appropriate security and retention requirements.

