

# What is Teams, and Why Use It?

Teams functions as a chatroom for students in the PhD program. I will moderate the site, and Dr. Zippay has membership as well. . It is a computer application that was created by Microsoft as a way for participants to communicate both as a group and in personal one-on-one discussions. You can communicate as a group through channels or privately via “direct messaging.”

The following information is excerpted from the TEAMS Microsoft website (<https://products.office.com/en-us/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software>):

## **You can use the chat window in Teams to have quick conversations with your colleagues.**

- Need to share a file, syllabus, or PDF? Just attach it in the chat. Then simply call or video call your colleague to discuss the file straight from the window. Or schedule a meeting without leaving the chat. Chat’s integration with other Microsoft products like [OneNote](#) and [Office](#) means no more switching between apps throughout your conversation. It’s all right there in chat.

## **Improved Collaboration and Communication**

- Because of the tight integration with Office 365, you don’t need to switch apps when you need to collaborate on a document for class. You can create the Word, Excel or PowerPoint document in Teams, immediately share it with your classmates and then co-author within a blink of an eye.
- No more sending out different versions through email and the resulting version confusion. You can add comments and to-dos, and chat with your coworkers to discuss the document right there.

## **Increased Transparency**

- With Teams, you post your message in the relevant channel, @-mention the people you want to get notified and leave it for everyone else to read if they want, and by having meetings visible to everyone in the channel you increase transparency by enabling everyone in the channel to “pop-in”.

## **Stay connected, anytime, anywhere**

- With the Teams phone app, you have immediate access to all your apps and documents. You can easily respond to chat and conversations, join meetings with one click and continue to collaborate. So even on the move, you are kept completely in the loop.

## When Should You Email?

- **Long messages.** There are a few instances when it's best to avoid Teams. Email is more formal than Teams, and more appropriate when discussing something you consider professional.
- **When you want more privacy.** Ultimately, email is best when trying to maintain the most privacy. Though information feels like it is protected when using chat like interfaces that may not be the case. Again, all Teams members and administrators have access to whatever people are sending on a platform.
- **PhD program announcements:** All announcements pertaining to PhD program events, courses, procedures, etc. will continue to be sent to you via email; additional forms and information and the PhD Handbook are also posted on the PhD website.

## When Is Best For Teams?

- **Quick questions.** Teams is best used for quick questions that need a fast answer.
- **Group brainstorm.** Teams helps eliminate inbox clutter. If you're working on a brainstorm, the chatroom environment is perfect for spit balling ideas. Conversely, when working with a large group of people, there is nothing worse than a reply-all avalanche.