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# A guide to mastering Microsoft Teams meetings

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# Creating better
# Microsoft Teams meetings

In April 2021, Microsoft reportedly saw its daily active users almost double from the previous year. The role and relevance of Microsoft's collaborative tool known as Teams is now more significant than ever in our personal and professional lives. And just like any tech product on the market, Teams' functionalities are updated and improved all the time – to help you collaborate, remain productive and streamline workflows.

But with its growing popularity, how well does your business understand and use Teams? Even in its most basic form, Teams can unlock collaborative opportunities for work groups  spread across the globe. Going further, you might even ask what this app can offer you that others can't.

In this guide to Microsoft Teams, ramsac's experts have gathered helpful information so that you can unlock more of what this application can offer your business. From initial basics to video conferencing advice, features, and top functionalities, we can help you master Teams.

## What's inside:

### Part 1:
Teams basics

### Part 2:
Spotlight in Teams

## Teams basics

## How to have effective Teams Meetings

Microsoft created its Teams software to act as a real-time workspace in which teams can communicate and work together easily. It has been designed to replace Microsoft's Skype for Business, which was discontinued in July 2021.

Microsoft Teams has a number of functionalities that are beneficial to businesses, from ease of collaboration to the ability to back-up and protect documents and communications.

# Microsoft Teams main features

Designed primarily as a communication aid, Microsoft Teams is built with many different functions that allow colleagues to work together whether on the go or in the office. Some of its most popular features include:

### Teams & Channels

Colleagues can be grouped together in teams, and each team can have within it multiple channels, perhaps for different projects or clients.

### Live messaging

Microsoft Teams offers a space for informal, instant messaging that can be used to get quick answers or give instructions.

### External conference calls

It's also possible to invite external individuals to calls, by sharing a dial-in phone number.

### Video calls

Members can hold video calls with individuals or with entire teams, which is useful particularly if some team members are working remotely.

### Document storage

All documents will automatically be saved to SharePoint, which can be accessed at any time. It's possible to put password protection in place for added security.

### Screen sharing

Within video and conference calls, it's possible for individuals to share their screen with those on the call, as a helpful visual aid.

### Shared documents

It's possible to upload or create documents within teams, which can instantly be shared with colleagues to work on at the same time.

### Other Office 365 features

As part of the Office 365 package, other 365 features such as Planner, OneDrive, and OneNote can all be combined and used with Microsoft Teams.

# Benefits of using Microsoft Teams effectively

Businesses and their departments that use Microsoft Teams effectively will find that its functions allow for improved teamwork and increased work efficiency. This is because it offers:

- One central hub for communication and document storage

- The ability to customise groups according to departments/ clients/ projects

- Easy integration with other Office 365 functions

The ability for multiple members to work on files at the same time means that discussion can be stimulated and ideas can be shared quickly. This essentially means that work could be completed more promptly than if traditional communication methods were used, such as scheduled meetings, phone calls, and emails

# How to use Microsoft Teams to the benefit of your business

Microsoft Teams is known for being extremely user-friendly and has many capabilities that can be used alone or in conjunction.



## Creating a Team in Microsoft Teams

After opening the program, hover over the 'Teams' button to see a list of all the Teams that you, the user, are a member of. Some can be added to 'Favourites' for a quicker view if preferred. To create a new team:

1. Click on the 'Join or Create a Team' button at the bottom

2. Give the Team a name

3. Put privacy settings in place. This can be private, meaning you own it and can dictate who uses it, or public, so that it's open to anyone in your organisation

4. Click 'Next'.

5. Select team members to add to the Team. You can make some members additional 'owners' if you have made the Team private.

6. Click 'Close'.

## Creating Channels within a Team on Microsoft Teams

It can be helpful to create Channels within a Team for the purpose of separating communication according to different needs. This might be especially useful in large teams with members working on various projects. To create a Channel:

1. Look at your list of Teams, click on the three dots next to the Team for which you want to create a Channel.

2. Click 'Add Channel'.

3. Give the Channel a name and click 'Add'.

4. The Channel(s) will then appear below the team name in your navigation bar.

## Starting a conversation on Microsoft Teams

One of Microsoft Teams' primary uses is as a method of quick conversation. Whether used formally or informally, the function allows team members to see and ask for information quickly. All chat history builds up over time and can be accessed at a later date. To start a conversation:

**1** Within a Team or Channel, the option to 'Start a new conversation' appears at the bottom of the screen.

**2** Simply type a message to address the whole team, or use @ to mention a specific individual.

**3** When using @, that person will receive a desktop notification or email alert to make them aware of the message.

**4** Using Control 'F' within the search bar at the top, you can find and filter certain keywords or phrases in the conversation history.

## Hosting a video call or meeting on Microsoft Teams

A valuable feature of Microsoft Teams is the ability to host a video meeting as and when it's needed. As these happen within a Team or Channel, it's possible to send a message out to all the members to inform them that a video call is required.

To host one:

**1** From within the conversation, select the camera icon at the bottom.

**2** Give the meeting a subject/ description.

**3** Schedule the meeting to happen at a later time or date, or select 'Meet Now' to begin the meeting instantly.

**4** When the meeting has begun, suggestions for participants from within your team or channel will appear.

**5** Click on those who you want to be part of the meeting.

It's also possible to record the meeting by clicking on the three dots that appear on the main screen and selecting 'Start recording'. The recording will be accessible to everyone in the team so that anyone who was not able to attend can hear it later.

## Additional add-ons in Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams gives users the option to combine a number of other Microsoft tools, as well as third-party applications, with their Teams account. To explore this, from within a Team or Channel, click on '+' to add a tab. Here you can add a number of add-ons such as:

- Excel
- Word
- OneNote
- Planner
- PDFs
- Power BI
- Third-party applications
- Links to separate websites

This is where the Office 365 package shines because it's possible for users to access the whole range of applications in the software from this one central hub.

As remote working is now mainstream, it's never been more important to facilitate collaboration among employees. Microsoft Teams, combined with the rest of the Office 365 package, offers an excellent way to achieve this.

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Teams is always evolving, adding new features

Features
in Teams

## Breakout rooms

Microsoft Teams is constantly evolving, as Microsoft develops new features to improve its collaboration capabilities. A significant feature allows users to set up 'breakout rooms' during meetings.

## What are Teams breakout rooms and why should we use them?

A bit like during in-person training, it's sometimes great to be able to break down a large group into smaller discussion groups. With so many meetings and training events now happening online, Microsoft have added the ability to split your meeting participants into up to 50 separate virtual breakout rooms. The meeting organiser can easily move between whole group and break outs, without attendees having to use different meeting links.

Large Teams meetings are great for town hall style briefings, but they don't lend themselves to constructive discussions. The breakout room feature means you can split your team into small groups, and as the meeting host you can move between virtual rooms. Files created or worked on in the breakout rooms can be shared in the main meeting and meeting chat so that everyone can access them.

## How to enable breakout rooms in Teams

Before creating breakout rooms in Teams, the 'new meeting experience' will need to be enabled. To do this, you should ensure that you are using the latest teams update and then follow the steps below:

Click on your profile (or initials) and choose 'Manage account' to configure any settings, including managing 'devices' before you host a call.
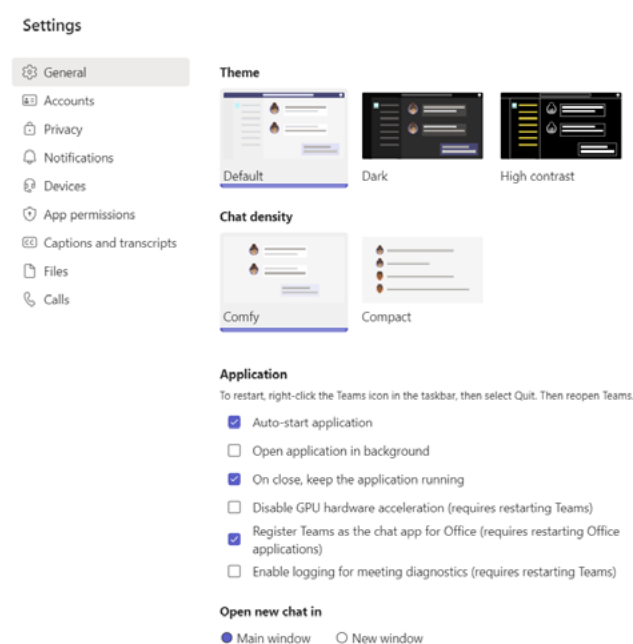
## How to use breakout rooms in Teams

There are some basic guidelines and points worth noting when using breakout rooms in Teams:

Only the meeting organiser can create, rename and delete breakout rooms, it is not possible to transfer or share organiser capabilities.

The organiser must be using the Teams desktop client to create and manage breakout rooms and participants.

Meeting attendees and presenters will not have visibility of the breakout rooms option.

Breakout rooms cannot be set up before a meeting they must be created after the meeting has started.
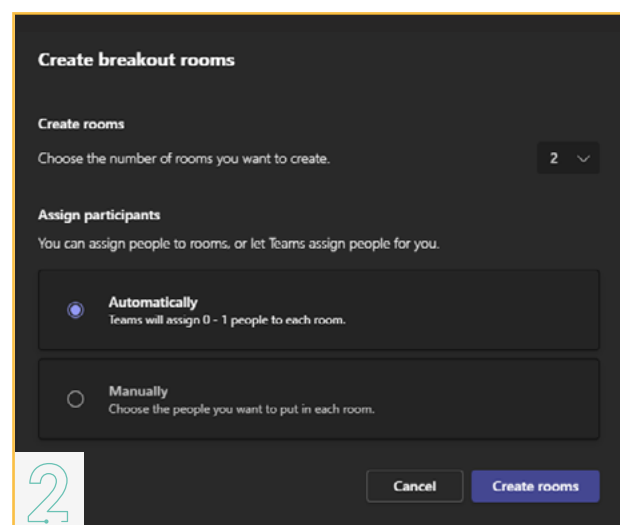
The organiser can join breakout sessions, send announcements to breakout rooms and move participants between breakout rooms or back to the main meeting as needed.

# Setting up breakout rooms
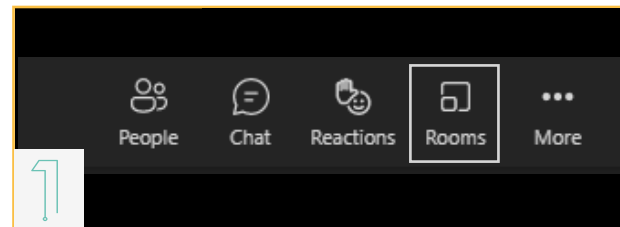


**1** Start the meeting in the Teams desktop client and click on the breakout room icon.



**2** Select the number of breakout rooms required and how you would like to assign participants.
- Automatically – means that Teams will randomly assign the participants across the number of breakout rooms you select.
- Manually – gives you the ability to determine who works with who.
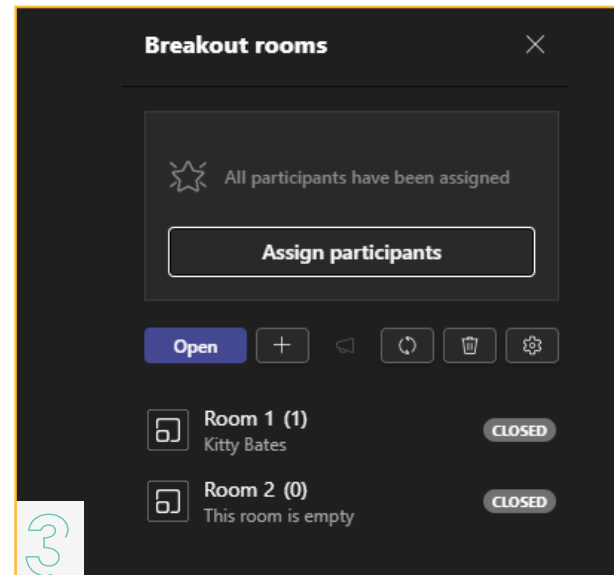


**3** Click 'create rooms'. A window will appear on the right-hand side where you can manage the rooms, including renaming rooms, changing the status of rooms (open or closed) and assigning participants to rooms.
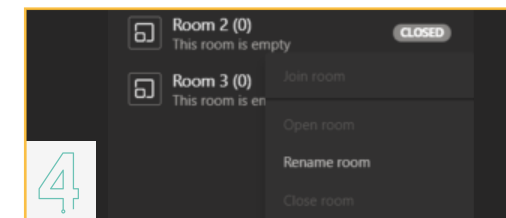


**4** If you hover over the word 'closed', 3 dots appear, allowing you to join, open, rename or close a room.
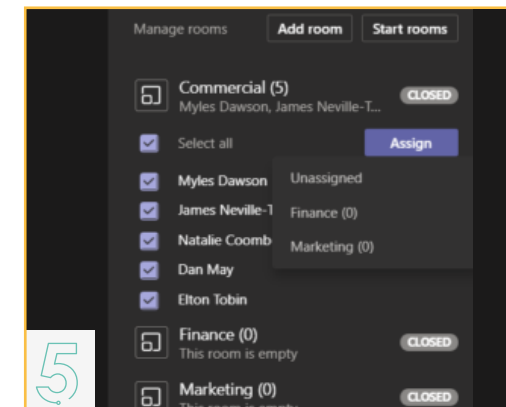


**5** Once you have added participants, you can manually move/assign participants to a room by clicking on the box next to the name of the participant you want to move, select 'Assign' and choose any room you want to place them in. Participants who have not yet been assigned to a room will appear under the 'Assign participants' section. (If a room is deleted, any assigned participants will be moved to the list of unassigned participants.)
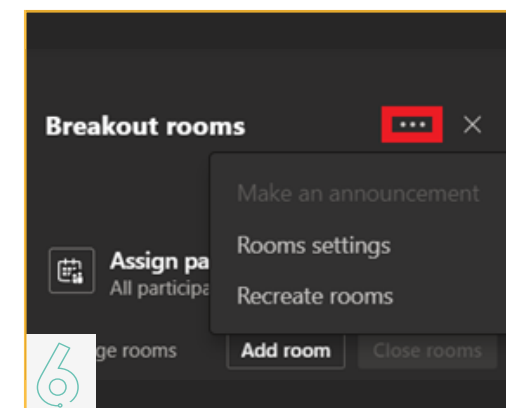


**6** Additional room settings are available by clicking on the 3 dots next at the top - here you can make announcements (a text based announcement that will appear in all rooms, for example letting people know they have 5 minutes to round up their conversations). Also, in Rooms Settings you can choose to automatically move people into opened rooms and allow people to move between the main room and the breakout room. You can also recreate rooms.
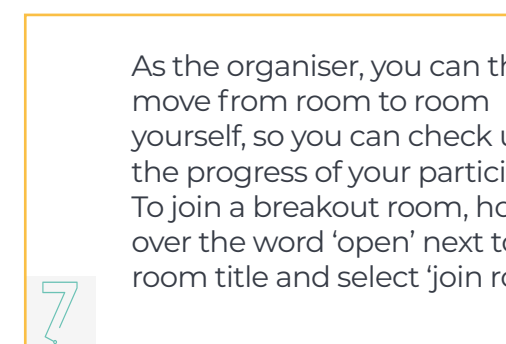
**7** As the organiser, you can then move from room to room yourself, so you can check up on the progress of your participants. To join a breakout room, hover over the word 'open' next to the room title and select 'join room'.
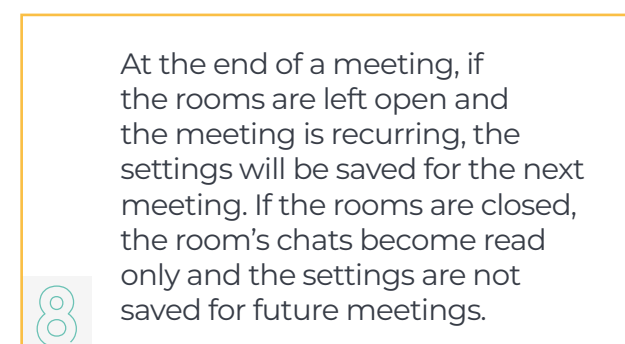
**8** At the end of a meeting, if the rooms are left open and the meeting is recurring, the settings will be saved for the next meeting. If the rooms are closed, the room's chats become read only and the settings are not saved for future meetings.

Features
in Teams

# Large Gallery View and Together Mode

## What is Large Gallery View?

One of the major dilemmas for an office meeting is room capacity. How many employees can comfortably attend a meeting in your conference room?

Do you have the resources to host larger meetings? This is where Teams can help, by offering a larger view of multiple participants in the same meeting all at once.

Previously in Teams meetings, users were only able to view up to 9 people's videos on screen during a video call. This was limiting for larger meetings, so Microsoft have created the Large Gallery View feature which will allow up to 49 people to be visible on screen during a video call. This works on meetings of 10+ people and Teams automatically arranges the windows for optimal viewing.
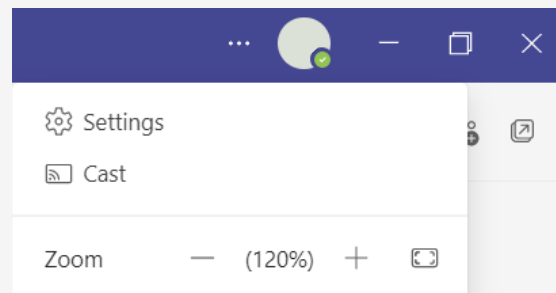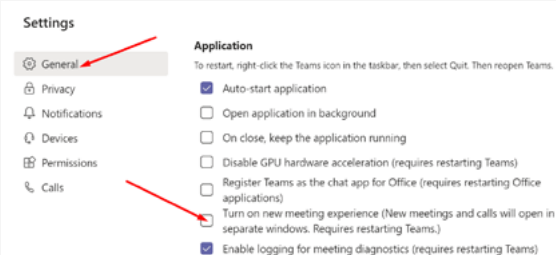
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## How do I enable Large Gallery View?

Large Gallery View is an optional feature that can be turned on or off. Here's how to enable it:

**1**  First, you need to enable the meeting experience (which as well as giving access to Large Gallery View and Together Mode, will open meetings and calls in a new window).
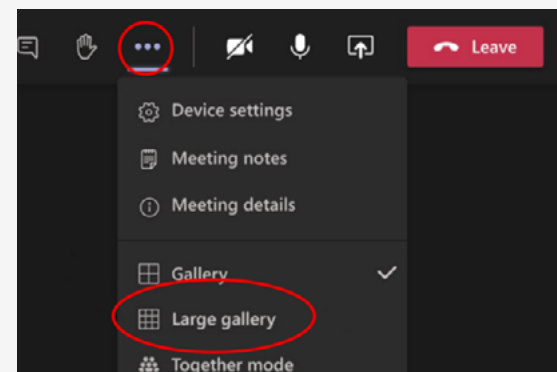


**2**  Click on your profile and choose '**settings**'.



**3**  On the General tab in Settings, select 'Turn on new meeting experience'.

**4**  To enable this change, you will need to restart Teams.

**5**  Once you have restarted you can enable Large Gallery View. This will only be available to activate on calls where at least 10 people are sharing their video.



**6**  During the call click on the **3 dots** and then choose '**Large gallery'.**

## What is Together Mode?

Together Mode in Microsoft Teams uses AI segmentation technology to digitally place participants in a shared background, making it feel like you're sitting in the same room with everyone else in the meeting or class.

**Microsoft will be adding a selection of backgrounds to improve this experience further.**

To activate Together mode you need **at least need 5 participants** on a call with everyone's video enabled. Together Mode can fit a total of 49 users.

## How do I enable Together Mode?

Follow the instructions we just mentioned to turn on the meeting experience. Then during a call click on the 3 dots and then choose Together mode

Below is example of what Together Mode looks like:

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## Features in Teams

# Custom Teams backgrounds

### What are Teams backgrounds?

Initially, when Microsoft Teams first launched, background features were much more limited than they are today. This means users can hide and change how their background appears, which is a small but useful function if you're working away from your desk.

With the 'Add New' feature in Teams, users can change their background to a customised image during a call.

### Find your Teams background

Firstly, go into **Google Images** and type a relevant search term for the type of image that you would like ('Executive Office', 'Countryside Landscape', or 'Starship Enterprise Bridge' for example).

### Use the ideal Teams background image size

To work most effectively, your background image dimensions should be a minimum size of 1920×1080. There are two ways of finding the right size image in Google:

1. Click on the 'Tools' button and select 'Size'. This will bring down a drop-down menu of a range of image sizes to choose from on the size tab. Click on the 'large' image option for the highest quality.

2. When you have found your desired image, right-click and save the image. Once this has been saved, you can resize your image to 1920×1080 pixels or you can resize the image in Teams later on.

3. Alternatively, you can go to Google Images and type the search term but include '1920×1080 HD' after your search words, and Google should narrow down your search for you.

Google    background image    📷 🎤 🔍

Q All    🖼 Images    📰 News    ▶ Videos    📙 Books    ⋮ More    Tools

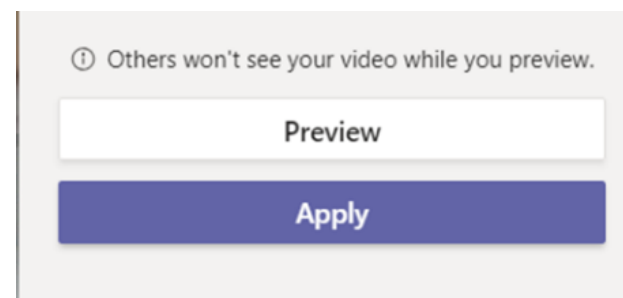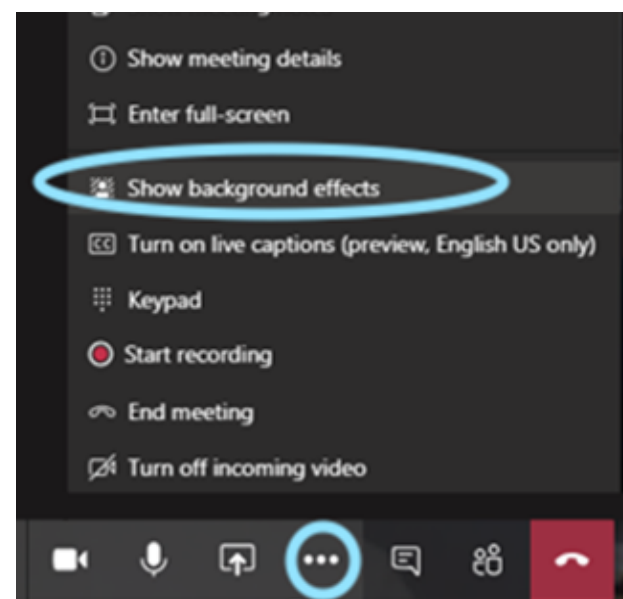Large ▾    Color ▾    Type ▾    Time ▾    Usage Rights ▾    Clear

## Check your background format and file size

As well as keeping the resolution at 1920 x 1080 pixels, for custom backgrounds, ensure you download any pictures as a JPEG or PNG format. The ideal file size is between 1-2 MB, although you may find that 3-4 MB will work just as well.

## Select your Teams background image

Next go into Teams, start a New Meeting and click on the "…" which will bring up your meeting options.

From here, there is an option to "show background effects". This will show you the standard image that Microsoft has provided but there is an option to "Add New" up at the top. Click here and you can browse to your saved image and then click 'Apply'. You should now have your custom background and you can now enjoy additional privacy with your Teams meeting background!



- Show meeting details
- Enter full-screen
- Show background effects
- Turn on live captions (preview, English US only)
- Keypad
- Start recording
- End meeting
- Turn off incoming video



⚠ Others won't see your video while you preview.

**Preview**

**Apply**

Before you debut your personal chosen background, preview what it will look like by clicking 'Preview'.
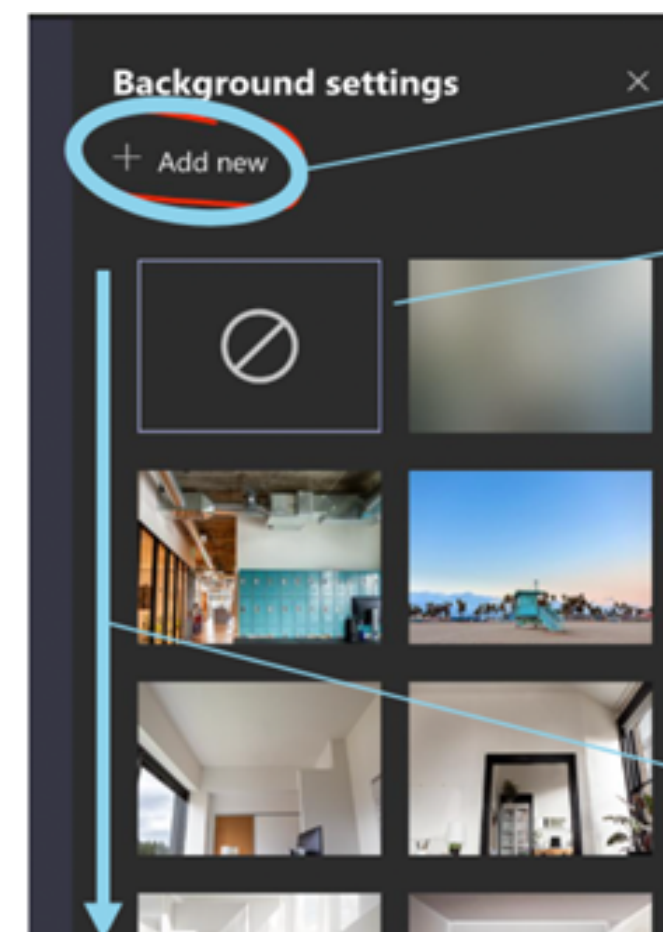


**Background settings** ✕

+ Add new

Image that you saved.

Click here to remove the background image from showing in your Teams meeting.

Here is your image selection and if you continue to scroll down, you will be able to see the images that you have added to your background list.

The option to include your own backgrounds is only currently available with the Teams application and does not work with the web application at this time.

# Glossary of Teams terms

## Private Team

Only invited participants can join a call or Channel if it's "private" – this function is regulated by the owner of a Team. These types of Channels will not be visible to the rest of an organisation.

## Chat

Using @mention, you can direct a message or task to other colleagues across an organisation. But be aware that not every @ mention is necessarily private.

## Private Chat

These are groups set up for conversation, either in direct communication with one other colleague or several at once. Conversations, here, will be privately contained to those who are invited within the chat.

## Channels

A "Channel" is a structure to your teams' activities and tasks, which can be customised around a business' workflow.

## Tabs

These are like virtual storage for files and conversation history. Every Channel will by default come set up with three tabs:

- Posts
- Files
- Wiki

## Tags

Tags can be used to group colleagues and reference them all at once, rather than individually typing out every @mention.

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We help our clients demystify Office 365 and unlock the various benefits of using Microsoft Teams on a daily basis. Whether it's keeping your remote team connected, using Teams for notetaking, task management, or ideation and deeper collaboration, Teams is so much more than a basic video conferencing application. With the help of our experts, you can discover how Teams can help your business remain connected no matter where you work.

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## Find out more

For more information on Teams please get in touch:

**Call:** 01483 412 040

**Email:** info@ramsac.com

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