

Use Shared Drives at Brown

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When sharing files with a team or group via Google Drive, it may be useful to use the "shared drive" feature rather than a shared folder, to facilitate collaboration. Unlike shared folders, all content in a shared drive is owned by the team instead of an individual, and the same people have consistent permissions to all content in the drive. This makes it easy to avoid issues with transferring file ownership when team members join or leave.

Though Shared Drive has advantages, it may or may not be a good fit for your use case. We recommend reading this article to understand if it meets your needs.

Note: the term "shared drive" can also be used to refer to departmental file services (DFS). This article is about the Google Drive shared drive feature.

How it Works

- Content in a shared drive is not owned by an individual, it is owned by the team's shared drive.
- When you create and share a shared drive, everything in the shared drive, including any subfolders, are accessible to anyone with access to the shared drive. In other words, if you make someone an editor of the shared drive, they can edit every folder and file in the drive.
- Unlike regular folders in Google Drive, you can't add or remove people from subfolders of a shared drive, though you can share individual pieces of content (not folders) with additional people.
- You can only move content you *own* to a shared drive (may be an issue if you are organizing files on behalf of another person).

Shared Drive Tips

- If you're sharing with a large list of people such as your department, share your shared drive with a Google Group instead of individually adding each member ([here's how to request a Google Group](#)). When people join or leave the group, access to your shared drive will automatically change. If you prefer not to use a shared drive, you can still share to a Google Group in Google Drive.
- To avoid duplication, coordinate with others in your department, especially IT staff, before creating a department-wide shared drive.
- Give drives a unique name including your department name. For example, use something specific like "Psychoceramics Faculty Meetings" or "NanoLab Machine

Learning Project", not anything too general like "Meeting Minutes" or "Shared Files".

- If you include any students in your sharing permissions, take note that when they graduate, their access will continue under their alumni account. We recommend annual review of the people included in your sharing permissions, to make sure you're not oversharing sensitive data with people who are no longer contributing to your team.