

National Data Challenge 2026: Clean Data, Greener Care

Manual for participants

In this manual, you can find out how to clear your data and quantify the amount of data that you deleted.

We distinguish three types of data, each with a separate section in this document (Figure 1):

1. **Cloud-based storage**, such as Microsoft Teams, OneDrive, SharePoint and your mailbox
2. **Local storage**, like the C:\ and D:\ drives of your PC/Laptop and the locally hosted (network) drives within your institute. These drives usually contain large files from research and diagnostic departments
3. **HPC data**, which is used for complex computational calculations (if applicable). Not using this type of storage? Then you can skip this section.

When you've completed cleaning data in one or multiple of these storage locations, you can submit your cleaning results through the result form that is shared within your UMC/institute. Submission deadline is October 1st.

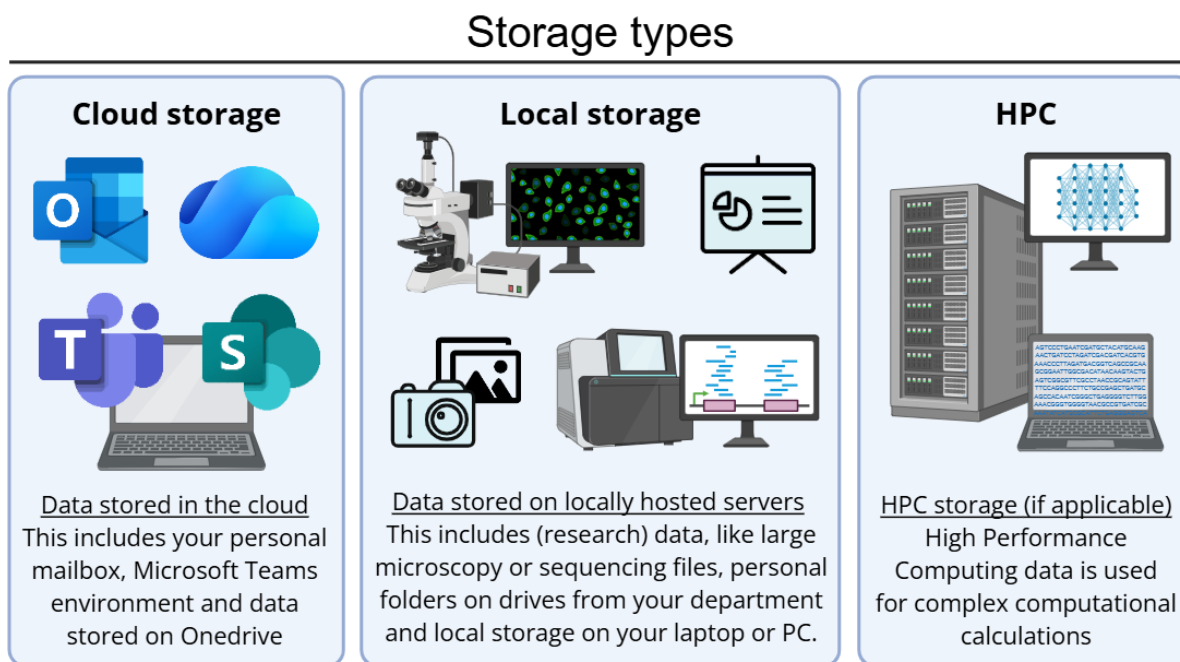


Figure 1 – Data types included in the National Data Challenge 2026

Important! Some labs/groups make use of shared group folders. When clearing data from these folders, always consult with your colleagues before removing data from shared folders!

1. Cloud-based Storage

Find instructions on how to clean your cloud-based storage below. We distinguish three different storage locations:

- Section 1.1 - Your personal OneDrive storage space (page 2)
- Section 1.2 - Your Microsoft Teams and SharePoint environment (page 4)
- Section 1.3 - Your personal E-mail inbox (page 5)

1.1 OneDrive

You can either access your OneDrive space via the Windows *File Explorer* (Option 1) or your internet browser (Option 2). Follow the steps below for cleaning your OneDrive environment:



Option 1 - OneDrive cleaning in Windows File Explorer:

- **Step 1.** Open a Windows *File explorer* window.
- **Step 2.** Right mouse-click *OneDrive* in the upper left corner and click *Properties*.
- **Step 3.** In the section *Size*, you will see a summary of the amount of data that is stored. It might take a few minutes to see the total used space. Write down this number.
- **Step 4.** After deleting your files follow steps 1-3 again to calculate (in Gigabytes) how much data has been cleaned. This is the result of your cleaning actions for OneDrive.

Option 2- OneDrive cleaning via internet browser:

- **Step 1.** Navigate to OneDrive in one of the following ways:
 - Open the OneDrive app on your computer *or* click the blue OneDrive icon  in the Windows taskbar area and click on the settings icon, then *Settings*. Then select *Manage Storage* (see [screenshots here](#)).
 - Login to your [OneDrive space](#) in your internet browser
- **Step 2.** In the bottom-left corner, you see a section *Storage*. Write down the total space currently in use before cleaning (see Figure 2).
- **Step 3.** Click on the storage in use. This opens a files page that shows a list of all files in your OneDrive, sorted by size.
- **Step 4.** Delete unwanted files and folders.
- **Step 5.** After deleting items, you must also delete the files in the Recycle Bin before you are able to quantify the amount of data you removed: click on the *Recycle bin* on the left side (beneath *My files*). Click on *Empty recycle bin* at the top (see blue info bubble).

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Tip! After you emptied the Recycle bin, the files can still be restored from a temporary space if needed, accessible via the link at the bottom of the Recycle bin page. After 90 days it will be automatically removed completely.

- **Step 6.** Refresh the page when you finished cleaning your data.
- **Step 7.** Refer to the storage section in the bottom left corner and write down the number of storage in use after cleaning.
- **Step 8.** Calculate (in Gigabytes) how much data you removed (number step 2 minus number step 7). This is the result of your cleaning actions for OneDrive.

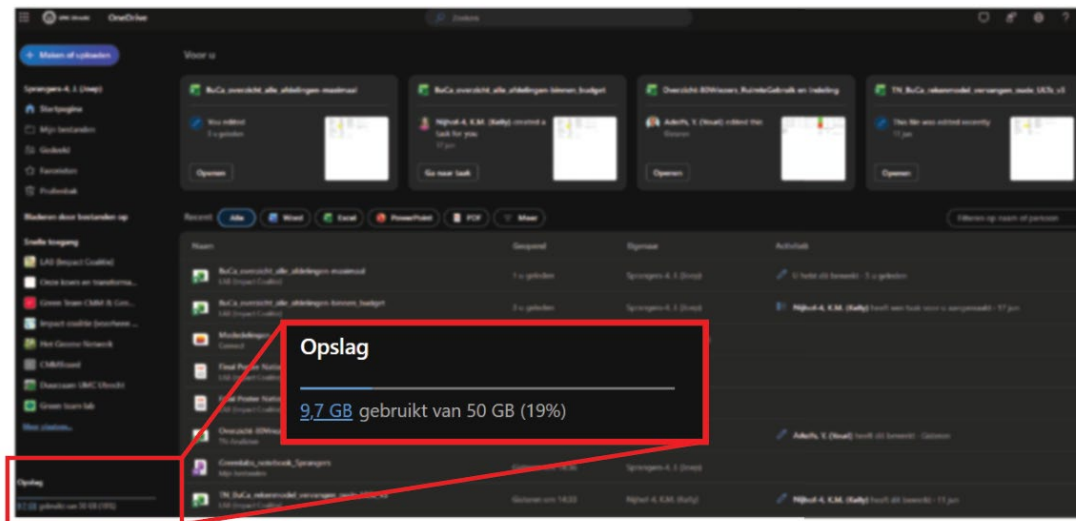


Figure 2 – Storage section in OneDrive

1.2 Microsoft Teams & SharePoint

Follow the steps below for cleaning your Microsoft Teams/SharePoint environment. Please note that you need to be an admin of the Teams folder for the following steps.



Tip! If you have a OneDrive shortcut to a Teams environment available in Windows File explorer, follow the steps for OneDrive cleaning in Windows File Explorer described above.

Cleaning your Teams environment:

- **Step 1.** In the Teams app or via teams.office.com via browser window: navigate to the Team where you want to delete data from
- **Step 2.** Open the *Shared* tab
- **Step 3.** In the top ribbon click on *Open in Sharepoint*, this could be hidden behind the 3 dots icon
- **Step 4.** Click on the settings wheel in the top right corner
- **Step 5.** Click on *Site contents* and then on *Site settings* in the top right-side ribbon
- **Step 6.** Under the column *Site Collection Administration*, click on *Storage Metrics* to see where the most data is stored. In the upper right corner, you see the total amount of data stored. **Total capacity - the free space = your total amount of data**, write down this number.
- **Step 7.** On the same page, you see an overview of the files/folders stored. Use this overview to delete files/folders from OneDrive
- **Step 8. Important!** After deleting files, go to same page from Step 3, but click on the *Recycle bin* on the left side. Click on *Empty recycle bin* at the top left side.
- **Step 9.** After deleting files follow steps 1-6 again to calculate the total amount of data in use after cleaning

Tip! After you emptied the Recycle bin, the files can still be restored from a temporary space if needed, accessible via the link at the bottom of the Recycle bin page. After 90 days it will be automatically removed completely.

Cleaning your SharePoint environment:

Note that you need to be an admin of the SharePoint site for the following steps.

- **Step 1.** Navigate to the SharePoint site where you want to delete data from
- **Step 2.** Follow the steps from section 1.2 *Microsoft Teams*, starting from *Step 4*.



1.3 E-mail inbox

Follow the steps below for cleaning your Mailbox, either via Outlook in your browser (Option 1) or via the Outlook app (Option 2).



Tip! Search for e-mails with big attachments, password resets, confirmation e-mails, calendar notifications and old order confirmations. You can also search smart i.e. for newsletters via the search box.

Tip! Delete and unsubscribe from irrelevant newsletters and email lists and deactivate social media notifications. You can find an unsubscribe button at the end of every newsletter.

Option 1 – Mailbox cleaning via Outlook in your browser (outlook.office.com):

- **Step 1.** Click the *Settings* wheel in the upper right corner
- **Step 2.** Click *Account* on the left side
- **Step 3.** Click *Storage*
- **Step 4.** Write down the total size of your e-mail account
- **Step 5.** After deleting e-mails follow steps 1-4 again to calculate the total amount of data in use after cleaning

Option 2 – Mailbox cleaning via the **new** Outlook app:

- **Step 1.** Click the *File* tab
- **Step 2.** Click *Accounts* on the left side
- **Step 3.** Click *Storage* (with several Outlook accounts, select the correct one in the upper left corner)
- **Step 4.** Write down the total size of your e-mail account
- **Step 5.** After deleting files follow steps 1-4 again to calculate the total amount of data in use after cleaning

Option 3 – Mailbox cleaning via the **old** Outlook app:

- **Step 1.** Click the *File* tab
- **Step 2.** Click the *Tools* button (next to *Mailbox Settings*)
- **Step 3.** Click *Mailbox cleanup*
- **Step 4.** Click *View Mailbox Size*
- **Step 5.** Write down the total size of your e-mail account
- **Step 6.** After deleting files follow steps 1-5 again to calculate the total amount of data in use after cleaning

2. Local Storage

This section includes data stored on drives that are hosted by your institute, including network drives. These drives include large data files, for example from research and diagnostic laboratories, but also can be used for local storage of personal data like presentations, photos, PDF files and Office documents. These are drives that you find in the Windows “File Explorer” on your laptop or PC, which contain folders like Documents, Downloads, Desktop and folders containing research data. In addition, cleared data from your locally hosted drives (C:\ and D:\ drives of your laptop/PC) can also be submitted in this section.

Note: in some institutes you will also see your OneDrive storage folders in Windows “File Explorer”, marked by the OneDrive logo. Any cleared data from these folders should be submitted in section 1 – Cloud storage (see above).



Important! Some labs/groups make use of shared group folders. When clearing data from these folders, always consult with your colleagues before removing data from shared folders!

How to quantify removed data from UMC-hosted network drives & local drives

Follow these steps for each folder that you want to clean:

- **Step 1.** Open a Windows *File Explorer* window.
- **Step 2.** Navigate to the correct folder on the left side in the tree, click with your right mouse button on the correct folder and select *Properties*.
- **Step 3.** Write down the size in Gigabytes (depending on the size of the folder it could take some time for the final number to appear).
- **Step 4.** Delete the appropriate files.
- **Step 5.** Optional: compress large data files where possible
- **Step 6.** Repeat steps 1-3 above to check the size again and write down this number.
- **Step 7.** Calculate the difference between the number of step 3 and step 6. This is the amount of data you cleaned from this folder.
- **Step 8.** Repeat steps 2-7 for all folders you want to clean during the Challenge and sum up the total amount of data you cleaned. This is the result of your cleaning actions for Local storage.

Tip! You can clean data in stages over multiple days, keeping track of what you’ve cleared. Sum up your total when submitting your results at the end of the Challenge.

3. HPC (server) data

The High Performance Computer clusters (servers) are used by researchers for complex, computational calculations. The HPC has to be cleaned regularly, as it involves very large data files and a lot of new data is frequently added. By cleaning the HPC during the Data Challenge, you can quantify the amount of data cleared from HPC servers to raise awareness about the correct use of the HPC.

If you do not work with HPC clusters you can skip this section.

How to clean HPC data:

Important! Calculating the occupied storage space requires a lot of computing power. **ALWAYS** consult with your IT department and HPC admin who is in charge of managing your HPC before quantifying your folder size!

Similar to the cloud-based and local storage, we ask you to quantify the amount of data you cleaned from the HPC during the Data Challenge and submit your cleaning result. Because it requires more computational power to quantify the occupied space in your HPC folders, we ask you to clean the HPC together with your team.

Occupied space reports (such as “du reports”) are generated periodically in some organisations, which are useful to estimate the amount of space cleaned by you and your team. If you and your colleagues clean data in between these reports, someone from your team can submit the final cleaning results for the HPC of your entire team.

Important! Some groups make use of shared group folders on servers. When cleaning data from these folders, always consult with your colleagues before removing data from shared folders!

In case no periodically storage reports are generated, you can perform the quantification of the cleaned data yourself. Again, first ask your HPC admin and IT department for permission before you proceed. Since there are many ways to get an overview of your folders and files in Linux, this is a suggestion: Navigate to your own folder and execute the following command “`du -h -d 1`.” You will get the size of each of the directories and at the last line (before “.”) you will see the total size of your directory. Perform this command before and after you and your colleagues finished cleaning data and submit the results in Gigabyte via the Data Challenge questionnaire.