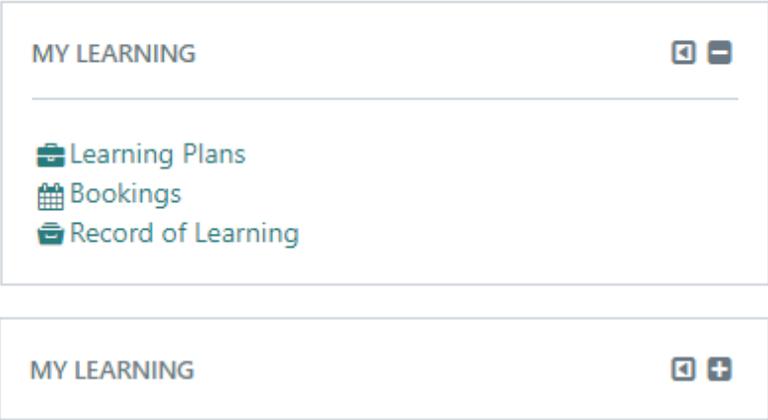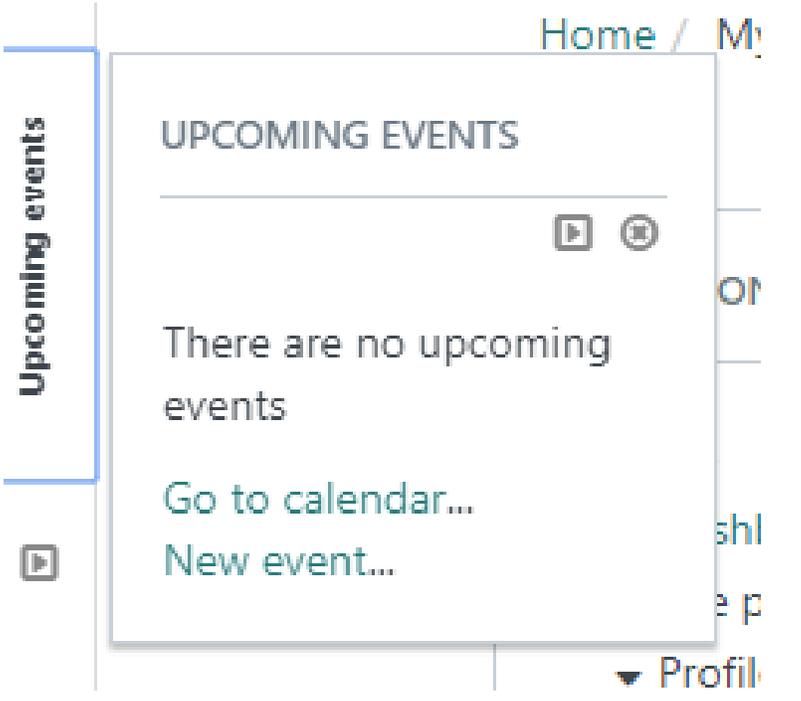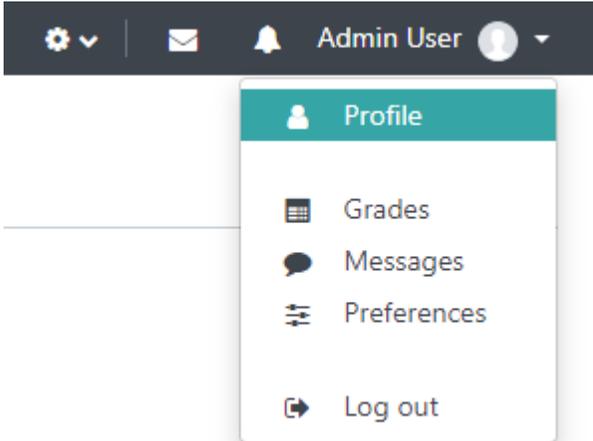# Theme settings

Whether you are using a customised theme or the inbuilt theme within Totara, there are a range of Theme settings around display and navigation within the quick-access menu via *Appearance > Themes > Theme settings.*

Setting	Description	Notes
Theme list	This lists the themes available for selection as a course or user theme. Leave this field blank to allow any installed theme to be selected. If you wish to shorten the display of the theme menu, you may enter a comma-separated list of theme names, without spaces.	You can preview the available themes in *Quick-access menu > Appearance > Themes > Theme selector.*
Theme designer mode	Normally all theme images and style sheets are cached in browsers and on the server for a very long time, for performance. If you are designing themes or developing code then you probably want to turn this mode on so that you are not served cached versions.	This will make your site slower for all users. Alternatively, you can also reset the theme caches manually from the Theme selection page.
Allow user themes	If enabled, each user may select their preferred theme when editing their profile. All Totara pages will be displayed in the user's selected theme, apart from courses where a course theme has been set and forced. User themes allow learners a degree of personalisation and control over their learning environment and for them to set a theme which best suits their visual display /accessibility requirements.	User themes will not be mobile or tablet device optimised unless the option **Enable device detection** is disabled (unchecked).
Allow course themes	If you enable this option, then Trainers will be able to set their own course themes. Course themes override all other theme choices (site, user, or session themes). Each Editing Trainer may select their course theme via the **Force theme** option on the course settings page. The course will always be displayed in the theme specified in the course setting, with user and site themes being overridden. Course themes can be used to visually distinguish course types (such as online, classroom based or blended), subject areas or priority (Mandatory, Essential, Recommended, Optional, etc.).	Course themes will not be mobile or tablet device optimised unless the option **Enable device detection is disabled (unchecked).**
Allow category themes	If you enable this option, themes can be set at the category level with all child categories and courses inherit this theme unless they have specifically set their own theme. Category themes can be used to visually distinguish subject areas or training providers.	Enabling category themes may affect performance, as it will result in a few extra database queries on each page, so only turn this on if you need it. The category theme will not be available on mobile and tablet devices unless the option E nable device *detection* is disabled (unchecked).
Allow theme changes in the URL	If enabled, the theme can be changed by adding either: • **?theme=themename** to any Totara URL (eg: mytotarasite.com/?theme=afterburner) • **&theme=themename** to any internal Totara URL (eg: mytotarasite.com/course /view.php?id=2&theme=afterburner)	You can turn this on to aid in troubleshooting problems that may be related to the theme. This will allow you to switch to a standard or different theme for your own session without affecting other users or the site theme.

Allow users to hide blocks	Enable this option if you want to allow users to **Hide/Show** blocks (⊞ , ⊟) throughout the site. This feature uses Javascript and cookies to remember the state of each collapsible block and only affects the user's own view.	MY LEARNING ◀ ⊟ 🧰 Learning Plans 📅 Bookings 💼 Record of Learning MY LEARNING ◀ ⊞
Allow blocks to use the docks	If enabled and supported by the selected theme, users can choose to move blocks to the side dock.	Home / M Upcoming events UPCOMING EVENTS ▶ ⊗ There are no upcoming events Go to calendar... New event... ▶

User menu items	You can configure the contents of the logged in user menu (with the exception of the logout link, which is automatically added).
	
	Each line is separated by | characters and consists of:
	
	• A string in "langstringname, componentname" form or as plain text
	• An URL
	• An icon either as a pix icon or as a URL
	
	Dividers can be used by adding a line of one or more # characters where desired. For example the default user menu is:
	
	`grades,grades|/grade/report/mygrades.php|grades`
	`messages,message|/message/index.php|message`
	`preferences,moodle|/user/preferences.php|preferences`
		⚙ ✉ 🔔 Admin User 👤 ▾
		
		👤 Profile
		
		▦ Grades
		💬 Messages
		⇅ Preferences
		
		⇥ Log out

Enable device detection	Enables detection of individuals using mobiles, smartphones, tablets or default devices (desktop PCs, laptops, etc.) to access Totara, to determine the application of themes and other features.	-
Device detection regular expressions	By default, Totara can detect devices of the type default (desktop PCs, laptops, etc.), mobile (phones and small handheld devices), tablet (iPads, Android tablets) and legacy (Internet Explorer 6 users). The theme selector can be used to apply separate themes to all of these. This setting allows regular expressions that allow the detection of extra device types (these take precedence over the default types).	For example, you could enter the regular expression '/(MIDP-1.0|Maemo|Windows CE)/' to detect some commonly used feature phones add the return value 'featurephone'. This adds 'featurephone' on the theme selector that would allow you to add a theme that would be used on these devices. Other phones would still use the theme selected for the mobile device type.

Totara Academy

The Totara Academy has a whole course dedicated to using Dashboards and basic theming in Totara. Here you can learn more on how to customise your site's appearance, see best practice, and give it a go yourself.