

Blogs

Blogs allow users to write down their thoughts and reflections as well as presenting content to an internal or external audience of readers.

There is a built in blogging function for Totara Learn or you can enable external blogs so that users can connect to existing blogs they might have outside of Totara.

Enabling blog

Before you can use blogs on your site they will need to be enabled by a Site Administrator.

1. Go to **Advanced features** from the **Site administration** menu.
2. Make sure that **Enable blogs** is ticked.
3. Click **Save changes**.

Site administration settings

As a Site Administrator you can configure a number of site-wide settings by going to *Appearance > Blog* from the **Site administration** menu. Remember to click **Save changes** when you are done.

Setting	Description	Notes
Enable blog associations	Enables the association of blog entries with courses and course modules.	-
Blog visibility	This setting allows you to restrict the level to which user blogs can be viewed on this site. Choose from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The world can read entries set to be world-accessible• All site users can see all blog entries• Users can only see their own blog	Note that this setting specifies the maximum context of the viewer not the poster or the types of blog posts. Blogs can also be disabled completely in Advanced features if you don't want them at all.
Enable external blogs	Enables users to specify external blog feeds. Totara Learn automatically checks these blog feeds and copies new entries to the local blog of that user.	-
External blog cron schedule	How often Totara checks the external blogs for new entries.	-
Maximum number of external blogs per user	The number of external blogs each user is allowed to link to their Totara blog.	-
Enable comments	Tick this to enable comments on blogs as default. Comments can still be disabled on an individual blog basis.	-
Show comments count	Tick to show the number of comments left on a blog.	-

On this page

- [Enabling blog](#)
- [Site administration settings](#)
- [Add a new entry](#)
 - [User profile](#)
 - [Course](#)
 - [Settings](#)
- [Editing an entry](#)
 - [Deleting](#)
 - [Sharing](#)
 - [Comments](#)
- [Blog blocks](#)
- [RSS feeds](#)
- [Blog preferences](#)
 - [Preference settings](#)
- [External blogs](#)
 - [Adding an external blog](#)
 - [Editing an external blog](#)
 - [External blog settings](#)

Add a new entry

You can add a blog post from a number of locations:

- Your profile
- A course

- A **Blog menu** block

The process for all of these locations is the same, although the wording on some of the buttons varies slightly and when creating an entry from a course you can also choose to associate the post with that course.

User profile

1. Click your name in the top right then select **Profile** from the user menu.
2. In the **Miscellaneous** section click **Blog entries**.
3. Click **Add a new entry** at the top of the page.
4. Configure the [settings](#) and compose your blog post.
5. Click **Save changes**.

Course

1. From the course click on go to *Participants > Course blogs* from the course block.
2. Click **Blog about this course** at the top of the page.
3. Configure the [settings](#) and compose your blog post.
4. Click **Save changes**.

Settings

There are a number of settings available when creating or editing a blog post. Remember to click **Save changes** after adjusting any settings.

Setting	Description	Notes
Entry title	The title of the blog post.	-
Blog entry body	Enter the content of the blog post here, this can include text, images, and multimedia.	-
Attachment	Add files as attachments to the blog post.	-
Publish to	Decide who can see the post. Choose from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yourself (draft): Only you and the administrators can see this entry • Anyone on this site: Anyone who is registered on this site can read this entry • Anyone in the world: Anyone, including guests, could read this entry 	The available options will depend on the Blog visibility site-wide setting .
Tags	These are used for the Blog tags block.	See tags for more information.
Associations	Decide if you want to associate the blog post with a course.	Only available when creating a blog post from within a course.

Editing an entry

Once you have made a blog post you may wish to edit it, either to make a change to the post itself or the settings, such as changing the visibility.

1. Navigate to the post by one of the following methods:
 - **For course posts:** Go to *Participants > Course blogs* from the course block
 - **For personal posts:** Go to *Profile > Miscellaneous > Blog entries* using the [user menu](#)
 - **From a block:** From the **Blog menu** block click **Blog entries**
2. Underneath the post you wish to change click **Edit**.
3. Make the changes to the post or [settings](#).
4. Click **Save changes**.

Deleting

You can delete any post that you have created.

1. Navigate to the post by one of the following methods:
 - **For course posts:** Go to *Participants > Course blogs* from the course block
 - **For personal posts:** Go to *Profile > Miscellaneous > Blog entries* using the [user menu](#)
 - **From a block:** From the **Blog menu** block click **Blog entries**

2. Underneath the post you wish to change click **Delete**.
3. In the confirmation message click **Continue** to confirm the deletion.

Sharing

If you wish to share the blog post with others then you can do this using a URL. Users will have access depending on the available visibility settings for the blog.

1. Navigate to the post by one of the following methods:
 - **For course posts:** Go to *Participants > Course blogs* from the course block
 - **For personal posts:** Go to *Profile > Miscellaneous > Blog entries* using the [user menu](#)
 - **From a block:** From the **Blog menu** block click **Blog entries**
2. Underneath the post you wish to change click **Permalink**.
3. Copy the URL from the address bar.

Comments

By clicking the **Comments** link underneath a blog post you can add a comment. This is a useful way of leaving feedback and sharing ideas or thoughts.

1. Click **Comments** under the blog post.
2. Write your comments in the available text box.
3. Click **Save comment**.

To remove a comment click the delete icon () alongside the comment.

Blog blocks

Blocks make it easier to interact with blog posts made by either yourself or others. There are three block that work with blogs:

- **Blog menu:** Allows you to browse, search, and add blog posts
- **Blog tags:** Shows tags associated with various viewable blog posts - clicking on a tag will display all posts with that tag
- **Recent blog entries:** Displays posts from the past 24 hours for the relevant context e.g. a recent blog entries block on a course page will only show recent entries about that course

Depending on where it is located the **Blog menu** block has a number of options:

- **View all entries for this course:** When viewing the block on a course. This allows you to access all of the posts made by yourself and others about the current course.
- **View my entries about this course:** When viewing the block on a course. Allows you to access to only posts made by you about the current course
- **Add an entry about this course:** Allows you to add a new [course post](#)
- **Blog entries:** Shows all of your blog posts
- **Add a new entry:** Allows you to add a new [personal blog entry](#)
- **Blog RSS feed:** Downloads an XML file for the RSS feed for all your blog posts
- **Search:** You can search for any blog post made by any user that is viewable on the site

RSS feeds

If you wish to get an RSS feed for your Totara blog then you can do this by clicking the RSS icon () underneath your blog posts or by clicking the **Blog RSS feed** link in the **Blog menu** block.

This will then automatically download an XML file containing your blogs RSS feed. You can use or share this file as you wish.

Blog preferences

You can configure your blog preferences to suit your needs.

1. From the [User menu](#) go to *Preferences > Blog preferences*.
2. Configuring your [preferences](#).
3. Click **Save changes**.

Preference settings

Setting	Description	Notes
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Blog entries per page	Set how many blog entries you wish to see on a single page, a navigation button will be available for you to browse additional posts.	-
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External blogs

If external blogs have been [enabled by a Site Administrator](#) then you can add external blogs to your account on Totara.

Adding an external blog

1. From the [User menu](#) go to *Preferences > Register an external blog*.
2. Configure the [settings](#).
3. Click **Save changes**.

Editing an external blog

To view or edit your external blogs:

1. From the [User menu](#) go to *Preferences > External blogs*.
2. You can now do one of the following:
 - Click the cog icon () to edit the [settings](#) and then click **Save changes**.
 - Click the cross icon () to remove the external blog.

You can also click the **Register an external blog** link on this page to add a new external blog.

External blog settings

Setting	Description	Notes
RSS feed URL	The URL for the external blog's RSS feed.	<p>For Wordpress sites you can just append /feed e.g. https://myblog.wordpress.com/feed/</p> <p>For Blogger or Blogspot URLs append /feeds/posts/default e.g. https://myblog.blogspot.com/feeds/posts/default</p> <p>For Tumblr append /rss e.g. https://myblog.tumblr.com/rss</p>
Name	Enter a descriptive name for your external blog.	If no name is supplied, the title of your external blog will be used.
Description	Enter a sentence or two summarising the contents of your external blog.	If no description is supplied, the description recorded in your external blog will be used.
Filter tags	You can use this feature to filter the entries you want to use. If you specify tags here (separated by commas) then only entries with these tags will be copied from the external blog.	-
Add these tags	Enter one or more local tags (separated by commas) that you want to automatically add to each blog entry copied from the external blog into your local blog.	-