

Course backups

A course backup is a copy of your course that includes all of the settings and content (depending on the configuration of the backup) as it was at the time the backup was taken. Essentially it is a saved fallback version of your course in case you need to revert to a previous version. It is advisable to take regular course backups, especially before making any major changes to your course.



Due to improvements in the capability of **Gallery tiles** within the [Featured link block](#), backups created prior to Totara Learn 12 that include a Featured Links Block with Gallery tiles will not restore fully in Totara Learn 12.

General backup defaults

Default settings for course backups can be set by a Site Administrator under the quick-access menu under *Courses > Backups > General backup defaults*.

Selected settings may be locked, so that they cannot be changed when creating a course backup.

By selecting a time in the **Keep logs for...** dropdown it is possible to specify how long the backup logs information is kept before being deleted. As this information may be very large, it is recommended the length of time chosen be quite short.

Automated course backup

Totara has an automated course backup system that you can run on a nightly basis to export all course content for the entire site.

The course backup tool in Totara actually runs the same functions as an individual course backup. It simply runs automatically on all of the courses on the site at a designated time. It's a good idea to schedule backups for when your server isn't usually busy. Running the backup tool over all the courses can be processor-intensive, so you shouldn't run it when there are a lot of learners trying to access the server.

Automated backup setup

Active

backup | backup_auto_active

Disabled

Default: Disabled

Choose whether or not to do automated backups. If manual is selected automated backups will be possible only by through the automated backups CLI script. This can be done either manually on the command line or through cron.

Schedule

backup | backup_auto_weekdays

- Sunday
- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday

Default: None

Choose which days of the week to perform automated backups.

Execute at

backup | backup_auto_hour

0 : 0

Default: 0:0

Choose what time automated backups should run at.

Automated backup storage

backup | backup_auto_storage

Course backup filearea

Default: Course backup filearea

Choose the location where you want backups to be stored when they are automatically created.

To setup your own automated course backups you will need to have Site Administrator access to your Totara site.

1. From the quick-access menu go to *Courses > Backups > Automated backup setup*.
2. You will then need to configure the [setup options](#) you require.
3. Next you will need to configure your desired [settings](#).
4. Click **Save changes**.

Once you have set up your backup schedule, Totara automatically creates archives of all the courses on the server at the time you specified. Once the backup is complete, Totara sends you an email describing the status of the backup. Any courses which are unavailable to Learners and have not been changed in the last month are automatically skipped in the backup process.

In addition to setting automated course backup, we strongly recommend that you perform regular site backups.

Setup options

There are a number of setup options available, and these appear at the top of the Automated backup setup page. These should be configured to best suit your situation and it is recommend that backups are scheduled outside of core site usage hours.

Setting	Description	Notes
Active	You can choose how you want the backup to be run. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabled: Run automated backup from cron • Manual: Allow the automated backup to only be run through the Command Line Interface backup script • Disabled: Turn off the automated backs 	-
Schedule	Choose which days of the week you want to perform the backup.	-
Execute at	Choose the time of the day the backup starts.	-
Automated backup storage	Choose where to store the backup files.	-
Save to	This is the where the backup will be saved, make sure you include the full folder path name. If you can, choose a backup path on another machine or on a different drive than the one Totara is on. You don't want to lose your backups at the same time you lose your Totara site if the drive fails. If you leave the field blank, then backup ZIP files will be saved in the backup folder of each course files folder.	-
Maximum number of backups kept	The number of backups for each courses to keep. Where the number is exceeded the oldest backup will be deleted.	-
Delete backups older than	Include how old in days the backup can be before it is deleted. You can also select never so the old files are never deleted.	
Maximum number of backups kept	If backups older than a specified number of days are deleted, it can happen that an inactive course ends up with no backup. To prevent this, a minimum number of backups kept should be specified.	
Use course name in backup filename	Include the course short name as part of the backup filename.	
Skip hidden courses	Choose whether to skip hidden courses (this includes audience based visibility).	
Skip course not modified since	Specify the number of days where the course hasn't been modified and won't be backed up.	
Skip courses not modified since previous backup	Choose whether to skip courses that have not been modified since the last automatic backup. This requires logging to be enabled.	-

Recommended settings

It is possible to included or exclude the following data in the backup. Users, role assignments, activities and resources, blocks, filters, comments, badges, users completion information, logs, history, question bank, and groups and groupings.

The backup page lets you set the types of content to be backed up. If you are running a nightly full-server backup (which is strongly recommended), we suggest you use the following settings:

- **Include modules and module user data:** Click both of these check boxes to preserve all Learner work for each course
- **Users:** Set this to **All** - if you need to restore your Totara server from a backup, you don't want to lose any accounts, even if they aren't associated with a current course
- **User files:** Enable (check the box) to ensure the restored server looks as much like the original as possible by restoring all user files
- **Course files:** Enable this (check the box) to prevent Learners needing to restore all of their course files after you restore the server
- **Keep:** This setting determines how many old backups will be saved - set this as high as you can without taking up too much space on your server

Manual course backup

A course can be saved with some or all of its parts by using the course backup. Typically the Site Administrator sets a schedule of automated course backups for the whole site, while a Trainer with editing privileges can create a manual course backup. Trainers can also download an existing backup for safe keeping or for use on another Totara site.



Automated course backup requires the [Totara cron](#) to be running in order to function. Cron is used to run tasks such as backups and sending emails periodically so it must be enabled.

Alongside any automated backups that are run on your Totara site it is sometimes also necessary or advisable to perform a manual backup on your individual course (especially if you are going to make any big changes to the course).

1. From the course page in the **Course** block click on **Backup**.
2. On **Initial settings** page select the areas of the course you want to include in the backup, the you have two options:
 - Click the **Next** button to select which activities are resources are included.
 - Click **Jump to final step** if you wish to include everything (in this case the backup will be performed, after which you should click **Continue**).
3. If you clicked **Next**, you'll now see the **Schema settings** page. Here you can select/deselect specific items to include in backup, including selection of specific types of activity to be backed. Once you are done, click the **Next** button.
4. When you have finished a **Confirmation and review** page where you should check that everything right, using the **Previous** button to go back and change options if necessary.
5. When If you are happy with the selected option click the **Perform backup** button.
6. Once the backup has been performed you will see a confirmation message and a **Continue** button which you should click to conclude the process.

The backup may take a few moments depending on the size of the course.

A backup file (with distinctive .mbz extension to avoid confusion with .zip files) is then saved in the course backup area. Backup file names are of the form **backup-totara-course-coursename-date-hour.mbz**, ending in **-nu.mbz** when backed up with no users and **-an.mbz** with anonymised names.

Anonymising user information

Anonymise user information is a backup feature which protects user identities by making each user anonymous. If this box is checked in the backup **Initial settings** Totara will substitute aliases for real names, substituting [@doesntexist.com](#) email addresses and so forth. For example 'Max Manager' might become 'anonfirstname4 anonlastname4'. This can only be done by users with appropriate permissions, such as Site Administrators and managers.

Additionally, users with these permissions can choose whether to include users, user role assignments, groups, groupings, user files, comments, user completion details, course logs, and grade history in the backup.

Restore a course from a backup

Courses can be restored from a backup made by Totara. The backup and restore process is a common way of moving or copying specific courses from one Totara to another.

First go to the backed up course you wish to restore and then follow the steps below:

1. In the **Course** block click **Restore**.
2. In the **Course backup area** table find the desired backup file.
3. Alongside the desired backup file click the **Restore** link.
4. You will see a confirmation screen displaying what will be restored and allowing you to pick a restore destination. Select the destination then click the **Next** button.
5. Where you go next will depend on your restore destination.
 - **Restore as a new course:** You will be taken to a page where you can search for and select the category for the new course, then click **Next**.
 - **Restore into an existing course:** You will be able to search for and select which course you wish to restore into, and also decide if you wish to delete that course's existing materials and replace them with the content of the restore file. Once you have decided, click **Next**.
 - **Restore into this course:** You will be taken to a page with the option to **Delete the contents of this course and then restore**. Select this if you want then click **Next**.
6. The next screen lets you choose which settings features you wish to restore, once you have selected click **Next**.
7. You can now select which specific items you wish to restore, and change the course name if desired before clicking **Next**.
8. There is a final opportunity to review what will be included in the restore, use the **Previous** button to amend your selections or click **Perform restore** to proceed.
9. Once the restore is complete you'll see a confirmation message and a **Continue** button, which you should click to conclude the restoration.

After clicking to continue you will be taken to the restored course, even if you have restored to a new course.

Totara Academy

The Totara Academy has a whole course dedicated to using [Courses and categories](#) in Totara Learn. Here you can learn more on how to use courses and categories, see best practice, and give it a go yourself.

