

Grade categories

Grade categories are a way of grouping grade items within the gradebook. By default each course acts as the top-level parent category in its gradebook, with other categories you might create nested underneath as subcategories. You can have multiple categories, either sitting under the parent course category or nested within one another as best suits your purposes. Each grade item, however, can only be part of one category.

When grades are grouped in a category you will be presented with a category total which can be weighed and have [grade calculations](#) applied to it.

Creating a category

You can add a new category on any course you have editing permissions on.

1. Go into a course and then select **Gradebook setup** from the **Administration** block.
2. Under the list of grade items click **Add category**.
3. Configure the [settings](#) how you want them.
4. Click **Save changes**.

Once a category is set up you can add a grade calculation on the category total, see the [Calculating grades with formulas](#) page for more information.

Settings

Setting	Description	Notes
Category name	The name of the category.	-
Aggregation	The aggregation determines how grades in a category are combined, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mean of grades: The sum of all grades divided by the total number of grades• Median of grades: The middle grade when grades are arranged in order of size• Lowest grade: The smallest grade• Highest grade: The largest grade• Mode of grades: The grade that occurs the most frequently• Natural: The sum of all grade values scaled by weight	-
Exclude empty grades	An empty grade is a grade which is missing from the gradebook. It may be from an assignment submission which has not yet been graded or from a quiz which has not yet been attempted etc. This setting determines whether empty grades are not included in the aggregation or are counted as minimal grades, for example 0 for an assignment graded between 0 and 100.	-
Drop the lowest	This setting enables a specified number of the lowest grades to be excluded from the aggregation.	-
Category total name	The grade total for the category will be displayed in grading reports like a grade item. This name is what will appear in that listing.	-
Item info	This setting provides space for entering information about the item. The information is not displayed anywhere else.	-
ID number	Setting an ID number provides a way of identifying the activity for grade calculation purposes. If the activity is not included in any grade calculation then the ID number field may be left blank. The ID number can also be set in the gradebook, though it can only be edited on the activity settings page.	-
Grade type	There are four grade types: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• None: No grading possible• Value: A numerical value with a maximum and minimum• Scale: An item in a list• Text: Feedback only Only value and scale grade types may be aggregated. The grade type for an activity-based grade item is set on the activity settings page.	-
Scale	This setting determines the scale used when using the scale grade type. The scale for an activity-based grade item is set on the activity settings page.	See Grade scales for more information.
Maximum grade	This setting determines the maximum grade when using the value grade type. The maximum grade for an activity-based grade item is set on the activity settings page.	-
Minimum grade	This setting determines the minimum grade when using the value grade type.	-

Grade to pass	This setting determines the minimum grade required to pass. The value is used in activity and course completion, and in the gradebook, where pass grades are highlighted in green and fail grades in red.	-
Grade display type	This setting determines how grades are displayed in the grader and user reports. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real: Actual grades • Percentage: Grades as a percentage of the overall available grade • Letter: Letters or words are used to represent a range of grades 	-
Overall decimal points	This setting determines the number of decimal points to display for each grade. It has no effect on grade calculations, which are made with an accuracy of five decimal places.	-
Hidden	If ticked, grades are hidden from Learners.	-
Hidden until	If grades have been hidden using the setting above, then a Hidden until date may be set to release grades after the set date.	-
Locked	If ticked, grades can no longer be automatically updated by the related activity.	-
Lock after	If grades have been locked using the setting above, then a Locked after date may be set to lock the grades at a certain point.	-
Weight adjusted	Uncheck this to reset a grade item weight to its automatically calculated value. Checking this will prevent the weight being automatically adjusted.	-
Weight	A value used to determine the relative value of multiple grade items in a category or course.	-
Parent category	Choose the parent category from the dropdown menu. The course category is always the top level category.	-

Editing a category

You can edit an existing category on any course you have editing permissions on.

1. On a course select **Gradebook setup** from the **Administration** block.
2. Alongside the category you wish to edit click *Edit > Edit settings*.
3. Configure the [settings](#) how you want them.
4. Click **Save changes**.

You can also edit any grade calculation on the category total, see the [Calculating grades with formulas](#) page for more information.

Administration settings

As a Site Administrator you can configure a number of preferences and defaults for how grade categories are used across the site. From the quick-access menu go to *Grades > Grade category settings* and remember to click **Save changes** once you are done.

With many of the settings you can choose to set them as:

- **Forced:** A forced setting cannot be changed locally from inside a course
- **Advanced:** To access advanced settings editors must click **Show more...** when viewing grade category settings

Setting	Description	Notes
Hide forced settings	If a setting below is set to Forced , meaning it can't be changed from within a course, then ticking this option will hide it from editors on the course.	-
Aggregation	Sets the default aggregation method for categories. This can be changed within each category unless set to Forced .	-
Available aggregation types	You can select from a list all of the aggregation types that should be available when creating or editing a category. Choose from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mean of grades • Weighted mean of grades • Simple weighted mean of grades • Mean of grades (with extra credits) • Median of grades • Lowest grade • Highest grade • Mode of grades • Natural 	Hold down the Ctrl key to select multiple items.

Exclude empty grades	An empty grade is a grade which is missing from the gradebook. It may be from an assignment submission which has not yet been graded or from a quiz which has not yet been attempted etc. This setting determines whether empty grades are not included in the aggregation or are counted as minimal grades, for example 0 for an assignment graded between 0 and 100.	-
Include outcomes in aggregation	If enabled, outcomes are included in the aggregation. This may result in an unexpected category total.	-
Keep the highest	If set, this option will only keep the X highest grades, X being the selected value for this option.	-
Drop the lowest	This setting enables a specified number of the lowest grades to be excluded from the aggregation.	-
Allow category grades to be manually overridden	Disabling this setting makes it impossible for users to override category grades.	-

Totara Academy



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