

# External Tool

The external tool activity in Totara Learn lets you incorporate content from external LTI tool providers.

LTI stands for Learning Tools Interoperability, which is a standard for developing and integrating external learning applications with a learning platform, such as Totara Learn. Using LTI, external learning applications can receive data from and send data to your Totara Learn site.

Content creators can add an external tool directly to a course. Alternatively, a Site Administrator can add one at the system level, so that Course Creators can reuse it throughout the site, which is great for shared applications.

Totara Learn supports LTI 1.0, LTI 1.1 and LTI 2.0.

## Add an external tool (to a course)

To add an external tool to your course page:

1. Click **Turn editing on**.
2. Select **External Tool** from the **Add an activity/ resource** menu.
3. Enter the activity name, this is the name that appears on the course page for learners.
4. Customise the available settings, see External Tool Setting to learn more.
5. Click **Save and display** (or **Save and return to course**).

## External tool settings

Setting	Description	Notes
<b>Activity name</b>	Give the title you wish the learners to see on the course page.	-
<b>Activity description</b>	Give a short description here.	-
<b>Display description on course page</b>	Choose to show the description along with the activity name.	-
<b>Display activity name when launched</b>	Have this appear when the learner clicks the link.	-
<b>Display activity description when launched</b>	Have this appear when the learner clicks the link.	-
<b>Preconfigured tool</b>	This is how Totara communicates with the tool provider. If in doubt, leave as default.	-
<b>Select content</b>	If enabled, this button allows you to configured any tool specific settings, whereas previously you would have had to launch the tool to do this.	-
<b>Tool URL</b>	This is the URL of the external tool you are connecting to.	-
<b>Secure launch URL</b>	Similar to <b>Launch URL</b> , but used instead of the launch URL if high security is required. Totara will use the secure launch URL instead of the launch URL if the Totara site is accessed through SSL, or if the tool configuration is set to always launch through SSL. The Launch URL may also be set to an https address to force launching through SSL, and this field may be left blank.	-

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<b>Launch container</b>	This is how the external tool will be displayed. The options are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Default:</b> If in doubt; leave as default.</li> <li>• <b>Embed:</b> The external tool will be embedded in the Totara course page with blocks and navigation bar.</li> <li>• <b>Embed without blocks:</b> The external tool will be embedded in the Totara course page, but without blocks.</li> <li>• <b>New Window:</b> The external tool will open in a new window.</li> </ul>	-
<b>Consumer key</b>	The consumer key must be provided by the tool provider. The method of obtaining a consumer key varies between tool providers. It may be an automated process, or it may require a dialogue with the tool provider. Tools which do not require secure communication from Totara and do not provide additional services (such as grade reporting) may not require a resource key.	-
<b>Shared secret</b>	For pre-configured tools, it is not necessary to enter a shared secret here, as the shared secret will be provided as part of the configuration process. This field should be entered if creating a link to a tool provider which is not already configured. If the tool provider is to be used more than once in this course, adding a course tool configuration is a good idea.	-
<b>Custom parameters</b>	Custom parameters are settings used by the tool provider. For example, a custom parameter may be used to display a specific resource from the provider. Each parameter should be entered on a separate line using a format of "name=value"; for example, "chapter=3". It is safe to leave this field unchanged unless directed by the tool provider.	See the <a href="#">Custom parameters</a> section for more information.
<b>Icon URL</b>	The icon URL allows the icon that shows up in the course listing for this activity to be modified. Instead of using the default LTI icon, an icon which conveys the type of activity may be specified. If Totara is accessing Totara through SSL then use the secure icon URL field.	-
<b>Share launcher's name with the tool</b>	Specify whether the full name of the user launching the tool should be shared with the tool provider. The tool provider may need launchers' names to show meaningful information within the tool.	This setting may be overridden in the tool configuration.
<b>Share launcher's email with the tool</b>	Specify whether the e-mail address of the user launching the tool will be shared with the tool provider. The tool provider may need launcher's email addresses to distinguish users with the same name, or send emails to users based on actions within the tool.	This setting may be overridden in the tool configuration.
<b>Accept grades from the tool</b>	Specify whether the tool provider can add, update, read, and delete grades associated only with this external tool instance. Some tool providers support reporting grades back to Totara based on actions taken within the tool, creating a more integrated experience.	This setting may be overridden in the tool configuration.
<b>Common module settings</b>	See <a href="#">Common module settings</a> to learn more.	-
<b>Activity completion</b>	See <a href="#">Activity completion</a> to learn more.	-
<b>Restrict access</b>	See <a href="#">Restrict access</a> to learn more.	-
<b>Tags</b>	See <a href="#">Tags</a> to learn more.	-

## Custom parameters

Variable	Source
<b>\$Context.id</b>	Course id (system generated)
<b>\$Context.title</b>	Course fullname
<b>\$Context.label</b>	Course shortname
<b>\$Context.sourcedId</b>	Course idnumber
<b>\$Context.longDescription</b>	Course summary
<b>\$Context.timeFrame.begin</b>	Course start date
<b>\$CourseSection.title</b>	Course fullname
<b>\$CourseSection.label</b>	Course shortname
<b>\$CourseSection.sourcedId</b>	Course idnumber
<b>\$CourseSection.longDescription</b>	Course summary
<b>\$CourseSection.timeFrame.begin</b>	Course start date
<b>\$User.id</b>	User id (system generated)
<b>\$User.username</b>	User profile username
<b>\$Person.name.full</b>	User profile first name + surname
<b>\$Person.name.given</b>	User profile first name
<b>\$Person.name.family</b>	User profile surname
<b>\$Person.email.primary</b>	User profile email address
<b>\$Person.sourcedId</b>	User profile idnumber
<b>\$Person.name.middle</b>	User profile middle name
<b>\$Person.address.street1</b>	User profile street
<b>\$Person.address.locality</b>	User profile city

<b>\$Person.address.country</b>	User profile country
<b>\$Person.address.timezone</b>	User profile timezone
<b>\$Person.phone.primary</b>	User profile phone 1
<b>\$Person.phone.mobile</b>	User profile phone 2
<b>\$Person.webaddresses</b>	User profile URL
<b>\$Membership.role</b>	Comma separated list of roles. If the user has the capability <b>mod/lti:manage</b> in the activity, then <b>Instructor</b> is returned. Otherwise, <b>Learner</b> is returned. Also, if the user is a Site Administrator, then full URN or URI values are added to the list, depending on the version of LTI tool used.

As an example you could have three parameters like this:

```
acme_tool_user_fullname = $Person.name.full
acme_tool_course_id = $Context.sourcedId
acme_tool_user_roles = $Membership.role
```

## Managing External tools

As a Site Administrator you can add and manage site-wide External tools, that is tools that will be made available for everyone to use. To access these settings from the **Administration** block go to *Site administration > Plugins > Activity modules > External tool > Manage tools*.

### Add a new tool (at the site level)

You can add a new tool via two methods:

- Enter the tool URL into the space provided and click the Add button.
- You can also click the **configure a tool manually** link to enter in the full settings yourself.

If you have an LTI cartridge then you can enter that URL (as in the first option above) and all the required information will be automatically configured for you.

When adding a new tool there are a number of configuration options, most of which are the same as when setting up an External course on a course. However, there are some that differ such as:

**Tool configuration usage:** This allows you to determine if a preconfigured tool is available as an option when adding an External Tool on a course, or if it appears as a separate item in the activity chooser. If you decide to list it as a separate item then it will also display any description you have entered for the tool, in the activity chooser.

**Content-Item Message:** Enabling this option will mean the **Select content** button is active when this preconfigured tool is added to a course. The button will enable the trainer who is setting up the tool to access any specific configuration within Totara, rather than having to launch the tool to access additional configurations (as was previously the case). This helps ensure that learners do not end up being confronted with unconfigured tools (where the trainer had not realised additional configurations were required within the tool itself).

### Manage preconfigured tools

Both **Manage preconfigured tools** and **Manage external tool registrations** allow you to see which tools have been successfully configured, which ones are pending, and which ones have been rejected.

Once you have added tools you will also be able to come into this section to register them (tick icon), edit their settings (cog icon) and delete them (cross icon).

## Manage external tool registrations

### External tool registrations ⓘ

CONFIGURED

PENDING

ACCEPTED

REJECTED

[Configure a new external tool registration](#)

There are no unregistered external tool registrations configured.

## LTI (Experimental)

By using the **LTI** authentication plugin, together with the **Publish as LTI tool** enrolment plugin, you can allow remote users to access selected courses and activities. In other words, Totara functions as an LTI tool provider. Find out more (including set up) in the [Publish as LTI tool section of the enrolment help page](#).