

Scales and Letters

Scales

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Scales are a way of evaluating or rating a learners' performance. Totara offers a standard set of numeric scales. It is also possible to create custom scales which can be available on the site. For example, you can give the trainer a word or small phrase as a way of rating or giving a learner feedback.

Scales may be used in Forums, Glossaries and Assignments for rating and/or grading a learner's activity.

Standard scales: Totara includes different numeric scales which can not be edited, and one non-numeric example.

Numeric: Totara includes numeric scales that range from a maximum of 100 to a minimum of 1. For example, selecting a scale of 10, will allow a rating on a scale between 10 and 1. Numeric scales can be calculated as a grade.

Included non numeric scales: Included in the standard Totara install is a scale called "Separate and Connected ways of knowing". This has 3 elements: "Mostly Separate Knowing", "Separate and Connected", "Mostly Connected Knowing". These phrases relate to a theory about how people approach the world. In edit mode, the trainer or administrator can see the scale description which explains the use of this interesting rating system.

Creating a new scale

New scales can be created by trainers with editing rights or by administrators or by any user with the manage scales role capability . Scales can be edited in the Gradebook Menu Scales. The process is similar for making a new scale for either a course or site.

Creating course scales

1. Click on the Grades link in the course Administration block, then select Scales from the Edit section of the gradebook dropdown menu.
2. On the Scales page click the "Add a new scale" button.
3. On the next page give your scale a name in the Name box (highlighted in red in the screenshot) that will identify it among other scales.
4. In the Scale box (highlighted in green), create your scale. Each item in the scale should be separated by a comma. You can use as many options here as you require. You must order the comma separated elements in increasing order of value. **For example, an A,B,C,D scale must be entered as D,C,B,A.**
5. Write a detailed description in the Description box (highlighted in blue) for your scale. Your learners will have access to the description, and you can use this to give them additional feedback. The more details you put in the description, the more learners will understand what each scale item means.

Creating a site scale

Creating scales that are available in every course is similar to creating one for a single course. The site administrator will find a Scales link in the site administration block under Grades. It will list the scales available on the site, except the standard numeric sales.

Using a scale

First the trainer needs to assign a specific scale to the activity using a drop down menu in the activities setting. Then the trainer and/or trainees can rate an activity element (for example, a post in a forum) with the pre-defined scale.

Editing a scale

If a scale has not yet been used, you will see an edit, move, and delete icon in the edit column.

Once a scale is used for an activity, it is no longer possible to move or delete it, and you can only edit the scale name and description.

Example scales

- *The Cool Scale* - Not cool, Not very cool, Fairly cool, Cool, Very cool, The coolest thing ever!
 - (Valued as 0/5pts, 1/5pt, 2/5pts, 3/5pts, 4/5pts, and 5/5pts respectively in **any normalized aggregation method**)
 - (Valued as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 respectively in the **sum aggregation method**)
- *General Introductions (The Affirmative Scale)* - Welcome!, Glad to have you here!, Great post!

- (Valued as 0/2pts, 1/2pt, and 2/2pts respectively in any **normalized** aggregation method)
- (Valued as 1, 2, and 3 respectively in the **sum** aggregation method)
- If you would like two options in your scale (incomplete and complete) type "incomplete, complete" in the scale box.
 - (Valued as 0/1pts and 1/1pt respectively in any **normalized** aggregation method like weighted mean, mean, simple weighted mean, etc.)
 - (Valued as 1 and 2 respectively in the **sum** aggregation method)
- *Generic Social Forum* (This scale only worked prior to the averaging function) - Please clarify., I don't understand., Hmm. Tell me more., Interesting, Very cool., Awesome!
 - (Valued as 0/6pts, 1/6pt, 2/6pts, 3/6pts, 4/6pts, 5/6pts, and 6/6pts respectively in any **normalized** aggregation method)
 - (Valued as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 respectively in the **sum** aggregation method)
- "Refer", pass, merit, distinction
 - (Valued as 0/2pts, 1/2pt, and 2/2pts respectively in any **normalized** aggregation method)
 - (Valued as 1, 2, and 3 respectively in the **sum** aggregation method)
- "Hesitant" Fail, Acceptable, Average, Excellent
 - (Valued as 0/3pts, 1/3pt, 2/3pts, and 3/3pts respectively in any **normalized** aggregation method)
 - (Valued as 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively in the **sum** aggregation method)

Values calculated as percentage scores

Totara uses the last entry to determine the number of points in the scale for computing percentages. For example, if your scale is 0,5,6,7,8,9,10 then Totara will use a 0-6 or 1-7 point scale depending on your chosen aggregation method.

- When using a **normalized** aggregation method, 0 will become 0/6, 5 will become 1/6, 6 will become 2/6, 7 will become 3/6, 8 will become 4/6, 9 will become 5/6, and 10 will become 6/6 for grade computation, respectively.
- When using the **sum** aggregation method, 0 will become 1, 5 will become 2, 6 will become 3, 7 will become 4, 8 will become 5, 9 will become 6, and 10 will become 7.

Either way, the numbers you enter for your scale are **NOT** calculated as entered, the system calculates the number of non-zero entries and then creates a scale from 0 to the total number of entries (n) with their values calculated as 0/n, 1/n, 2/n, 3/n....

Letters

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'Letters' allows you to associate a letter grade with a percentage range.

To associate grade letters with marks

1. Type in the grade letter you want to appear and the upper boundary for the letter grade boundary - it is best to go from highest to lowest order.
2. Click '**Save changes**'.