Using Microsoft Teams and Totara Learn for Online Learning and Collaboration

think learning

Table of contents

Introduction

Totara Learn is flexible and can adapt to suit your organisational needs. If you need to replace face-to-face training with online delivery, you can use Microsoft Teams within Totara Learn to create online meeting spaces. What's even better is that it supports desktop, web, and mobile devices as well as providing a dial-in option for phones

Set-up the Teams meeting in Outlook

To be able to set up a Teams meeting from within Outlook, you'll need to make sure you have access to the Outlook plugin for Teams, which can be found here.

How do you know if you already have the Teams plugin for Outlook? You will see a button within the ribbon when creating a new Outlook meeting with the Teams logo and the text 'New Teams Meeting'.
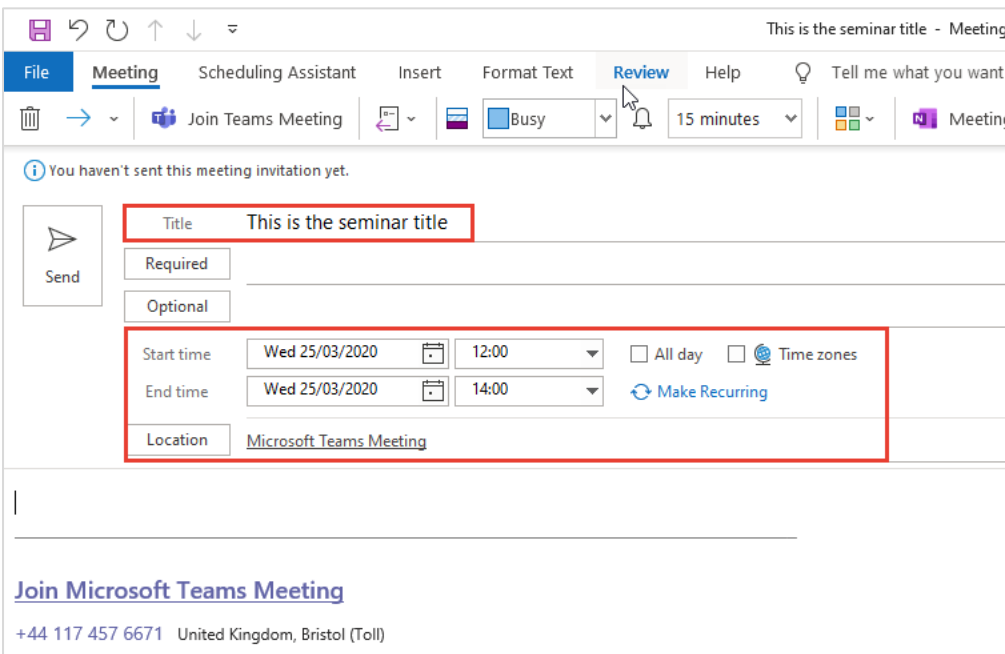
Step 1

Navigate to Outlook and create and choose 'New Teams Meeting' from the ribbon.
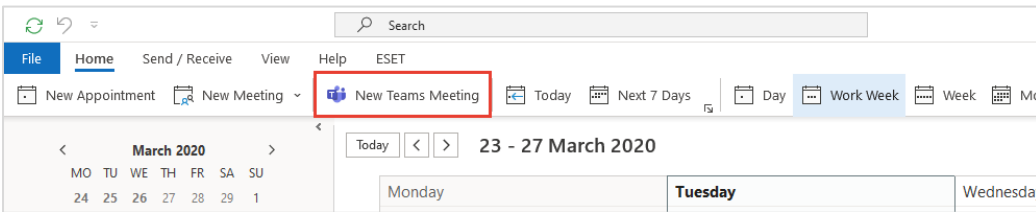
Step 2

In the 'Title' field, enter in the seminar title and add the start and end times, just like a normal meeting.

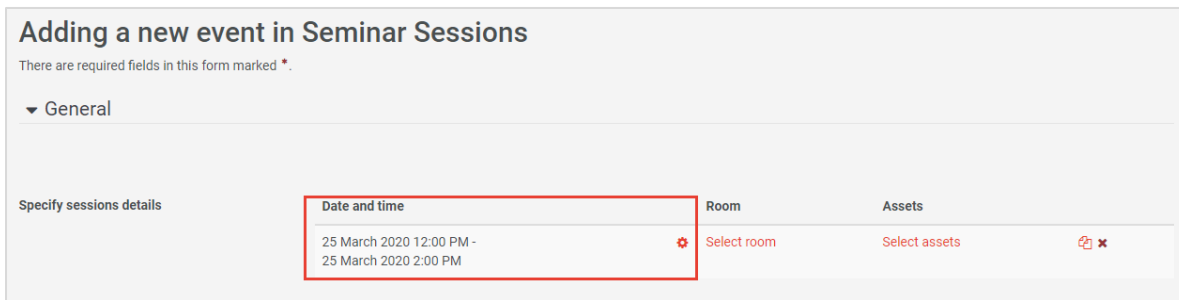You don't need to invite people as optional or required, and you shouldn't make this a recurring meeting.

Create the seminar activity in Totara Learn

In Totara Learn, you can either create a new seminar activity or update an existing seminar activity. If you need further help on creating a seminar activity, you can find a useful guide here.

Step 1

Add an event and input the same date and time details as the Teams meeting you created in Outlook.

Step 2

Click on 'Select room' and then click 'Create new room' which is found in the bottom left of the pop-up window.

Step 3

Fill in the fields to add the room details, and in the 'Description' field add in the URL and Dial-In instructions, which you can copy from your Outlook meeting and click 'Ok' to save and select that room.

To copy the link, if you return to the Teams meeting in Outlook, you should see the joining details in the bottom pane like the below.

Select the text with your mouse and then right click and choose 'Copy'

That's it all done. Finish adding your event and now when the learners view the room details they will see the link for the Teams meeting.

Extra tips

Why not improve the user experience even more! You can create custom fields for seminars where you can put in the Teams meeting URL or dial-in number. This will act as a prompt to input those fields when creating a room as an online meeting, and you can also add them to booking confirmation emails, so learners can simply click the dial in link from their email.

Custom fields

Follow the online help here on setting up a custom field. Make sure you set up your custom field under the 'Room' tab, so you can add it as a field when setting up a new room or editing an existing room.
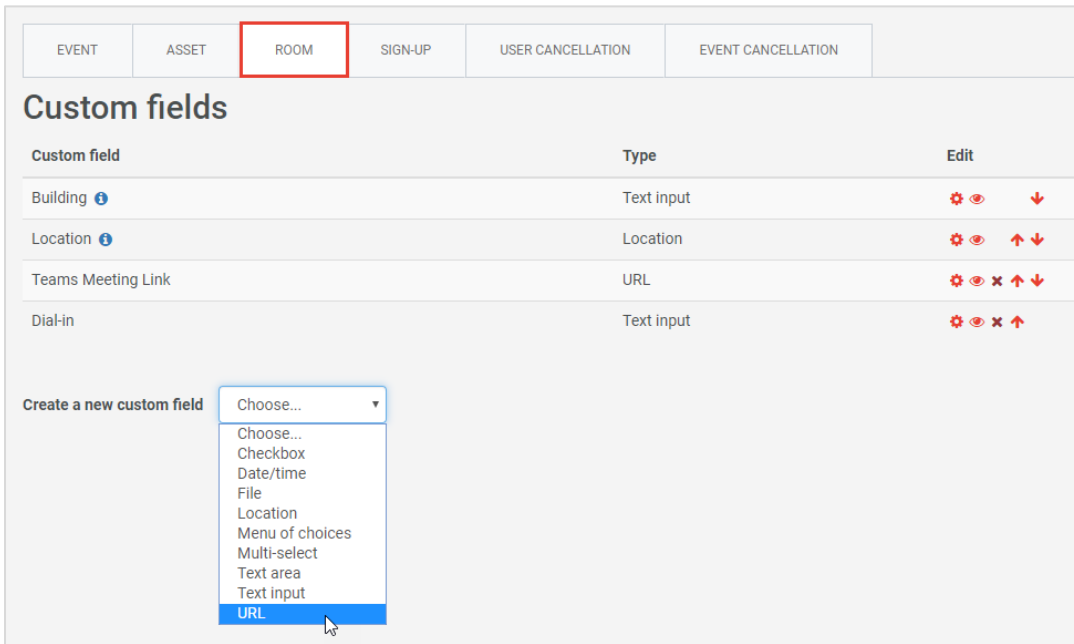
In this example there are two custom fields created:

- Teams Meeting Link is using the URL custom field
- Dial-in is using the Text input field

Save your changes after creating the custom field.

With custom fields created, follow the steps under Create the seminar activity in Totara Learn and simply copy and when it comes to Step 3 paste the details into their respective fields rather than the 'Description' field.
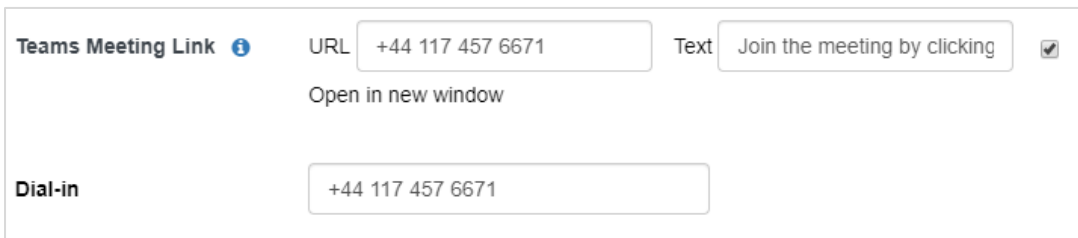
Booking confirmation and reminder emails

You can update your emails so that learners receive the joining details directly in their email message, so they can join directly from that email in Outlook.

You may want to do this for both the booking confirmation email and the booking reminder email. For more information on updating and configuring notifications for seminars click here.

If you are adding joining details to the 'Details' field of the room, you can include the placeholder [session:room:link] to include a link to the room details (including the joining instructions you set up).

If you want to add custom fields for the room, you can add those by using the room custom field shortnames which you created when setting up the room custom fields. In the above examples we set up:

- Teams Meeting Link which had the shortname teamslink
- Dial-in which had the shortname teamsdialin

To include these you can add the placeholders:

[session:room:cf_teamslink]

[session:room:cf_teamsdialin]

Tips for online meetings

To get the best out of your online meetings, check out some tips from the experts at Microsoft Teams.

Extra considerations

If you are looking to create an online learning seminar using Microsoft Teams and Totara Learn, you should note that learners will be able to see the link in the room details without having to sign-up. This means that even if you have a maximum capacity set on the room, people can access the Teams link without signing-up and you risk more people joining than you would like.

One option is to not include the Teams link at all and then 15 minutes before the session was about to start create a message to all Booked users and include the link then.