

Creating Activities in XpressLab

XpressLab includes six (6) built-in Activity Types. Each Activity Type has its own unique configurable settings, which relate to purpose of the activity you are creating. For example, some activities, such as the Practice Exercise, are not submitted for marks. Therefore, you will not be able to specify an overall value for the activity. Selecting an Activity Type also determines which Question Types are available within the Test Planner.

Activity Types

When creating activities in XpressLab, you may select one of the following built-in Activity Types:

- **Oral Discussion:** This activity type provides all of the students in your course with an opportunity to use extended speech, by posting voice-recorded messages in response to a topic or theme that you present. Students are also able to post responses to forum posts made by other students.
- **Student Journal:** This activity type offers a private discussion area used by teachers to present reflective-style assignments to students as well as providing a space for student mentoring. Each student is given his or her own journal, which may only be accessed by the teacher. Journal assignments typically require students to express their thoughts concerning lessons, events, readings and other course related themes that relate a course's content. In language courses, Student Journal activities are often used to support the development of extended speech.
- **Student Presentation:** This activity type allows students to create a virtual class presentation. Students can create PowerPoint style slides with voice recorded audio, text, pictures and video. When marked and at the teacher's discretion, student presentations can be published for the entire class to see and comment on in an integrated discussion forum.
- **Teacher Presentation:** This activity type is best used as a way to present lessons or assignments, or to supplement class lectures and course material. Presentation authors can include voice recordings, text, pictures and video within their presentation as well as including links to external web sites and text documents or worksheets to support the presentation material. Mastery-style or reflection questions can also be included within a presentation to encourage student engagement and support the retention of concepts presented. This activity type includes the Oral Questions with Sample Answers, and Multiple Choice (Text and Oral) question types.

- **Practice Exercise:** This activity type uses self-assessment style questions to reinforce listening, speaking and reading skills. A Practice Exercise can include a mix of XpressLab's built-in question types, which includes: Audio Response, Multiple Choice (Oral and Text), True/False, Text Passage Correction, Written Response, Fill-in-the-blank, and Matching questions. Student answers are not submitted for marking in this activity type. At any time, practice activities can be converted into a Standard Test, which can then be submitted for marking
- **Standard Test:** This activity type is submitted for marks. A overall Time Limit can be applied to a Standard Test in order to make it a Timed Test. In addition, Time Limits can be added to test Sections and/or Testlets to add additional time limits within the test itself. A Standard Test can include a mix of XpressLab's built-in question types, which includes: Audio Response, Multiple Choice (Oral and Text), Text Passage Correction, Written Response, Fill-in-the-blank, and Matching questions.

Steps for Creating an Activity

Activities are created within the context of a Course. Access the My Course List by selecting the **Courses** link found in the main navigation bar at the top of your screen.

Select an existing course from within the **My Course** list. Or, create a new course by selecting the red **New Course** button located in the top left corner of the My Course page. Clicking an existing course or creating a new course directs you to the **Course Dashboard** where activities are created.

Click the red **New Activity +** button, found in the top left corner of the Course tab located on the **Course Dashboard**. Clicking the **New Activity +** button brings you to the **Add Activity** page.

Complete the 5-Step Add Activity form by configuring the settings detailed below.

Step 1: Activity Settings

1. **Select an Activity Type:** Select one of the seven built-in Activity Types using the options listed here. The remaining configurable Settings will **change** depending on the Activity Type selected here. The remaining Settings described before refer to the selection of the Standard Test Activity Type. You may or may not see *all* of the fields detailed below, depending on which Activity Type you have selected.
2. **Activity Name:** Enter the name of your Activity.
3. **Description:** Enter a brief description of the activity.

4. **Activity Code:** If you wish to apply an Activity Code to your activity, enter it in the field provided here. Entering an Activity Code is not required. If there is not code associated with this activity, you may leave this field blank. The Activity Code entered here is used to integrate student test results into the Student Information System (SIS). When completed activities or tests are submitted by test takers, the XpressLab system will automatically send a student's result code along with the activity code entered here, to the Student Information System (if any) associated with your XpressLab account.
5. **Mark Out Of:** Specify the overall value of the activity by entering a numerical value here. The numerical value entered here represents *the total possible marks* a test-taker can earn by achieving a perfect score on the activity. **Note:** Entering a Mark Out Of value is *mandatory*.
6. **Activity Language:** Identify the target language of new activity by selecting either English or French from the options listed here.
7. **Require test to be taken in a single session:** If students/test-takers are required to complete the Standard Test or activity you are creating within one test session, select the **Yes** option. Selecting **No** will allow students/test-takers to save their progress and return to the test/activity at a later date prior to completing and submitting the activity for evaluation.
8. **Allow Retake After (in days):** If you wish to allow re-takes for tests that are associated with this Activity (or Test Purpose) after a certain number of days following initial completion, select the appropriate numerical value representing the *days* following initial test completion in which the test should be made available for re-take.
9. **Test Requires Payment:** If test-takers must pay to complete the activity, select the **Yes** option here. Selecting **Yes** will open the Payment URL field. Enter the URL to the webpage test-takers must use to complete their activity payment transaction. If completing the activity does *not* require payment, select the **No** option. **Note:** By default, the No option is selected.
10. **Activity Time Limit (in minutes):** This Setting appears if the Activity Type you are creating supports an overall Time Limit. In order to apply a Time Limit to your activity, your activity **must** require students to complete the activity in a single session (i.e. you **must** select Yes to the **require test to be taken in a single session** item). Selecting the **Activity Time Limit (in minutes)** checkbox opens the Activity Time Limit field. Enter a numerical value to represent the number of minutes in which test-takers are required to complete the activity.
11. **Set the order in which questions will be displayed to students:** Select Sequential to ensure that students answer questions in order, from first to last. Select Non Sequential

to allow students to answer questions in any order they choose.

12. **Default or Randomize:** By default, the questions in our test/activity will be displayed to students **in the order in which they appear** in the Test Planner. Select the **Randomize** option to shuffle the order of questions in your activity **for each student**. The Randomize option is recommended in computer lab settings so that each student views questions in a unique order.

Step 2: Test-Taker & Permission Settings

1. **Auto Assign:** Select the **Yes** option to automatically assign all test-takers enrolled in the course to this activity. Select the **No** option if you do *not* wish to automatically assign all test-takers enrolled in the course to this activity.
2. **Is Restricted:** Restricted activities require students If the activity is Restricted, select the **Yes** option. If the activity is *not* restricted, select the **No** option. **Note:** By default, the No option is selected.
3. **Test Takers Can See Evaluated Tests:** To allow test-takers to review their completed and evaluated activity, select the **Yes** option. If you do *not* wish to allow test-takers to review their completed and evaluated activity, select the **No** option. By default, the **Yes** option is selected.
4. **Test Takers Can View Comments in Evaluated Test:** To allow test-takers to review comments added to their evaluated activity, select the **Yes** option. If you do *not* wish to allow test-takers to review comments made on their evaluated activity, select the **No** option. By default, the **Yes** option is selected.

Step 3: Evaluation Settings

1. **Tests are Invigilated:** If the activity is invigilated (i.e. proctored) select the **Yes** option. Invigilated activities require teachers to grant manual student access to the activity. This means that you must manually accept each student who has been assigned the activity, before the student can begin completing the activity. If the activity is *not* proctored, select **No**. Select No allows students to gain access to the activity, once the activity status is set to Activity. **Note:** The No option is selected by default.
2. **Rubric:** If you wish to assign a Rubric for the marking of human review questions within this activity, select the Rubric using the options provided here. If the activity is marked on a Rubric, human reviewed questions are based on the levels defined in the selected rubric and no longer based on the values assigned to the question during test authoring.

3. **Results Report Template:** Assign a Test Report Template to the activity by selecting the appropriate template from the options provided here. Any test (or activity) that uses the Test Purpose defined by this activity will use the same Report Template defined here.
4. **Scorer's Guide:** You may provide scorers that inherit this activity with a guide to help facilitate the scoring of manually marked items within this activity. To upload a Scorer Guide file, click the **Browse** button. Clicking Browse will open your local file manager. Locate the Scorer Guide file from your computer and then click open. **Note:** Acceptable Scorer Guide file formats include: PDF, doc, docx, rtf, txt, etc.

Step 4: Introduction & End Message

1. **Introduction Message:** Enter an introductory message (either text based or HTML based) to be displayed to a test-taker/student prior to the beginning the activity. Use the formatting toolbar provided along the top of the Introduction Message field to format your message to test-takers.
2. **End Message:** Enter a closing message (either text based or HTML based) to be displayed to a test-taker/student following the completion of the activity. Use the formatting toolbar provided along the top of the End Message field to format your closing message to test-takers.

Step 5: Create Activity

1. **Save:** Click the red Save button to create the new activity. Clicking Save returns you back to the **Course Dashboard**.

Your new Activity will appear at the top of the Activity list within the Course tab on the Course Dashboard. Click on the activity from below the **Activity Name** column to access the **Activity Dashboard**. Use the Activity Dashboard to access the Test Planner, where authoring occurs.