Time Spent Settings and Permissions

Time Spent · https://www.mooplugins.com/docs/time-spent/time-spent-settings-and-permissions/

Time Spent is designed to require very little configuration after installation.

The plugin uses Moodle's existing activity data and provides access to its report through a dedicated Moodle capability. Administrators mainly need to make sure the required logging is available and that report access is assigned only to appropriate roles.

Plugin Requirements

Time Spent requires:

- Moodle 4.5 or later
- Moodle's standard log store enabled
- Appropriate permission for users who need access to the Time Spent report

The plugin relies on Moodle course activity to build session-based time information. The standard log store should therefore remain enabled for normal operation and for historical activity to remain available when needed.

Does Time Spent Have Global Settings?

The current version of Time Spent does not provide a separate page of configurable calculation settings.

The plugin registers the **Time spent report** under Moodle's site reports area and controls access through the `local/timespent:viewreport` capability.

This means Administrators do not need to configure a separate tracking service, browser component, or Student-side setting before using the plugin.

[Moodle role permissions showing the local/timespent:viewreport capability for accessing Time Spent reports]

Report Permission

Access to Time Spent reports is controlled by the following capability:

`local/timespent:viewreport`

This is a **system-level capability**. A role that receives this capability can access Time Spent reporting across the site, rather than being limited to a single course.

Because Time Spent reports can contain Student activity information from multiple courses, this capability should be assigned only to trusted roles.

Default Permission

By default, the `local/timespent:viewreport` capability is allowed for the Moodle **Manager** role archetype.

Other roles do not automatically gain report access unless the capability is assigned through Moodle's role and permission system.

For example, an Administrator may choose to provide report access to a custom reporting role while leaving the capability unavailable to normal Teachers or Students.

Who Should Receive Report Access?

Report access is generally appropriate for roles responsible for reviewing site-wide training or Student activity, such as:

- Administrators
- Managers
- Reporting staff
- Compliance or training administrators
- Custom roles specifically created for reporting

Before assigning the capability, consider whether the role should be able to view time information across all courses and users.

Because the capability operates at system level, it should not be treated as a normal course-level Teacher permission.

Assigning the Permission

Administrators can manage the permission using Moodle's standard role configuration.

Locate the role that should receive access and enable:

`local/timespent:viewreport`

The exact navigation can vary slightly depending on the Moodle version and site configuration, but capability changes are handled through Moodle's standard role management interface.

After permission is assigned, users with that role can access the **Time spent report** from the site's reports area. The report itself is registered even for users who do not have general site-configuration permission; access is determined by the Time Spent capability.

Course-Level Access and Report Access Are Different

Having access to a Moodle course does not automatically provide access to the Time Spent report.

Similarly, being a Teacher in a course does not by itself grant the system-level `local/timespent:viewreport` capability.

This separation helps Administrators keep Student time information restricted to roles that specifically require reporting access.

Moodle Logging Requirement

Time Spent relies on Moodle activity information to calculate sessions.

Moodle's **standard log store** must therefore be enabled.

Student interactions such as opening course resources and activities generate the activity records that Time Spent uses for its session calculations.

If the required activity information is not available, Time Spent cannot calculate or reconstruct historical sessions from those missing records.

How Time Data Is Updated

Time Spent updates its stored totals from live Moodle course activity.

The report reads the stored session and total information rather than rebuilding the complete calculation from Moodle logs every time the report is opened.

This keeps the report focused on displaying calculated results rather than performing a full historical recalculation on every page load.

Privacy Support

Time Spent integrates with Moodle's Privacy API.

Stored session and total information can therefore be included in Moodle privacy processes such as supported data export and deletion requests.

Administrators should manage privacy requests through Moodle's normal privacy and data-management tools.

Personal Data and Report Access

Time Spent reports contain information associated with identifiable Moodle users, including:

- Student names
- Calculated course time
- Last session information
- Course associations

For this reason, the report capability is marked as involving personal data and should be assigned carefully.

Organizations should apply their normal privacy, retention, and access-control policies when using Time Spent information.

Export Access

A user who can access the Time Spent report can also use the report's available export functionality.

Exports contain the same type of Student and course-time information displayed in the report, so exported files should be handled according to the organization's normal data-protection practices.

The plugin limits spreadsheet exports to **10,000 rows**. If a report exceeds that limit, narrow the report or search criteria before exporting.

Recommended Permission Approach

For most sites, a simple permission model works well:

- Keep report access limited to Administrators and Managers by default.
- Grant `local/timespent:viewreport` only to additional trusted roles that genuinely need site-wide time reporting.
- Avoid assigning the capability broadly to normal Student roles.
- Review access periodically if custom reporting roles are used.

Troubleshooting Report Access

If a user cannot open the Time Spent report, check the following:

The report capability is missing

Confirm that the user's role has: `local/timespent:viewreport`

The role assignment is not system-wide

Because the capability uses system context, assigning a role only inside an individual course may not provide access to the site-wide report.

Standard logging is unavailable

If reports contain little or no time information, confirm that Moodle's standard log store is enabled and that Students are generating course activity.

There is no recorded course activity

Time Spent requires actual Moodle activity. Simply leaving a course page open without further Moodle interaction does not continuously generate active course time.

Summary

Time Spent requires only limited Administrator configuration.

The main points are:

- Moodle 4.5 or later is required.
- Moodle's standard log store should remain enabled.
- Report access is controlled by `local/timespent:viewreport`.
- The capability is system-wide and should be limited to trusted roles.
- The Manager role archetype receives the capability by default.
- Time Spent supports Moodle's Privacy API.
- Report exports should be handled as Student data.

Once these requirements and permissions are in place, Time Spent can calculate and report course-time information without any additional workflow for Students.