

# C++ Scoped Enum proposal

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Following discussions on StackOverflow ([insert links<sub>i</sub>](#)), it seems that there has been great interest in the subject of enums in C++. This proposal aims to being a discussion of improved *compile-time* support for enums, in particular enumeration and cast to underlying type.

For maintaining backwards-compatibility with C, this proposal *only* targets the scoped enums, identified by "enum class <...>".

## 0.1 Enumeration

Sometimes it may be desirable to enumerate through an enumeration to know its values. One particular use case is when an enum is used as a template parameter:

```
template<enum T, typename V>
requires std::is_default_constructible_v<V>
class foo {
public:
    bool has_value(T t) { return mEnumMap.contains(t); }
    void add_value(T t, V&& v) { mEnumMap[t] = v; }
private:
    std::map<T, V> mEnumMap;
};

void fill(foo<auto T, auto V>& f) {
    auto begin = std::enum_iterator<T, V>.begin();
    auto end = std::enum_iterator<T, V>.end();
    for (auto it = begin; it != end; it++) f.add_value(*it, V);

    // Alternatively:
    for (auto t : std::enum_values_v<T, V>) f.add_value(t, V);
}
```

In such a system, we may maintain a dictionary of various enum members and bind them to a particular type "V".

## 0.2 Underlying type

In current C++ standard, when needing to compare an enum value with its underlying type, a relatively verbose code expression is required:

```
// Check if enum value is 0
auto enum_value = MyEnum::Value;
bool is_zero = static_cast<std::underlying_type_t<T>>(enum_value) == 0;
```

This document proposes a simpler syntax. Assume we have a definition `enum class MyEnum:`

```
// Check if enum value is 0
auto enum_value = MyEnum::Value;
bool is_zero = std::enum_value<MyEnum::Value> == 0;
```

Seemingly, this does not yield much benefit since we just removed a `static_cast` and replaced one template meta-function with another. But without the `static_cast` we can have the compiler auto-generate an implicit operator overload, similar to `ToInt()` found in some object-oriented languages. And with that in mind, we should be able to write our expression above in much simpler terms:

```
// Check if enum value is 0
auto enum_value = MyEnum::Value
bool is_zero = (enum_value == 0);
```

Sometimes, we may also wish to convert the other way around. But for this we need to make sure that our input value does actually represent a valid enum value. Additionally, this document proposes the following syntax:

```
namespace std {
    template<enum T, typename V>
    requires is_integral_v<V>
    optional<T> enum_cast(V v) {
        T out;
        if (enum_try_cast<T, V>(&out, v)) return out;
        else return nullopt;
    }
}
```

### 0.3 Overview

This is the complete list of proposed functions, types, and meta-functions:

```
// header "experimental/scoped_enum"

// Alternatively:
export module std.scoped_enum;

namespace std {

    // Evaluates whether T is the name of a declared scoped enum type
    template<typename T>
    concept enum_type;

    // A forward-iterator of all values inside a declared scoped enum
    template<typename T, is_integral_v V>
    struct enum_iterator;

    // A container with all values inside a declared scoped enum,
    // with methods 'begin()', 'end()', 'cbegin()', and 'cend()' for
    // supporting forward iterating through the values.
    template<typename T, is_integral_v V>
    struct enum_values;

}
```