

# How to Add a Pairing Custom Field in Azure DevOps User Stories

This document outlines the benefits of adding a custom field of type *Identity* in [Azure DevOps](#) user stories, prerequisites, and a step-by-step guide.

## Benefits of Adding a Custom Field

Having the names of both individuals pairing on a story visible on the Azure DevOps cards can be helpful during sprint ceremonies and lead to greater accountability by the pairing assignee. For example, it is easier to keep track of the individuals assigned stories as part of a pair during sprint planning by using the "pairing names" field. During stand-up it can also help the Process Lead filter stories assigned to the individual (both as an owner or as a pairing assignee) and show these on the board. Furthermore, the pairing field can provide an additional data point for reports and burndown rates.

## Prerequisites

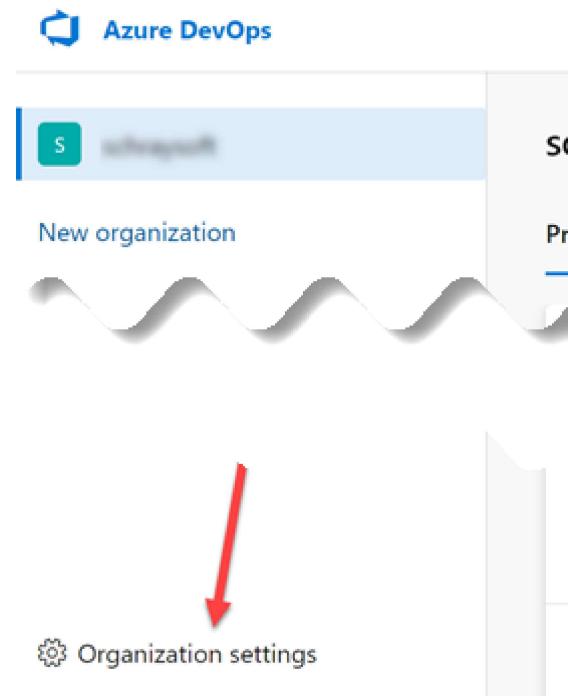
Prior to customizing Azure DevOps, review [Configure and customize Azure Boards](#).

In order to add a custom field to user stories in Azure DevOps changes must be made as an **Organization setting**. This document therefore assumes use of an existing Organization in Azure DevOps and that the user account used to make these changes is a member of the [Project Collection Administrators Group](#).

## Change the Organization Settings

1. Duplicate the process currently in use.

Navigate to the **Organization Settings**, within the Boards / Process tab.



2. Select the **Process** type, click on the icon with three dots ... and click **Create inherited process**.

The screenshot shows the 'Organization Settings' page in Azure DevOps, specifically the 'Process' section. The left sidebar has a 'Process' item selected, indicated by a red circle with the number '1'. The main area displays a list of processes under 'All processes' with tabs for 'Processes' and 'Fields'. The 'Processes' tab is selected. The list includes 'Basic', 'Agile (default)' (selected), 'Scrum', and 'CMMI'. A context menu is open over the 'Agile (default)' row, with the 'Create inherited process' option highlighted and a red circle with '3' on it. Other options in the menu include 'New team project' (with a plus sign icon) and 'Security' (with a shield icon). The 'Agile (default)' row also has a '...' icon with a red circle containing '2'.

Name	Description
Basic	This template is flexible for a...
Agile (default)	<p>2 ...</p> <p>This template is flexible and</p> <p>+ New team project</p> <p>Create inherited process</p> <p>3 Security</p>
Scrum	
CMMI	

3. Click on the newly created inherited process.

As you can see in the example below, we called it 'Pairing'.

Azure DevOps

Organization Settings

Search Settings

General

- Overview
- Projects
- Users
- Billing
- Auditing
- Global notifications
- Usage
- Extensions
- Azure Active Directory

Security

- Policies
- Permissions

Boards

Process

All processes

Processes Fields

Name:

- Basic
- Agile (default)
  - Pairing  1
  - Scrum
  - CMMI

4. Click on the work item type **User Story**.



Azure DevOps

## Organization Settings

Search Settings

### General

- Overview
- Projects
- Users
- Billing
- Auditing
- Global notifications
- Usage
- Extensions
- Azure Active Directory

### Security

- Policies
- Permissions

/ Settings

All processes >

Work item types

+ New work item type

Name

Bug

Epic

Feature

Issue

Task

Test Case

Test Plan

Test Suite

User Story

5. Click New Field.

The screenshot shows the Azure DevOps interface under 'Organization Settings'. The left sidebar has 'Process' selected. The main area shows 'All processes > Pairing > User Story'. At the top, there are buttons for 'New field' (with a red circle and number 1), 'New group', 'New page', 'Get extensions', and a refresh icon. Below these are sections for 'Description', 'Acceptance Criteria', 'Planning', 'Deployment', 'Risk', 'Development', 'Classification', and 'Value area'. Each section contains a collapsed icon and a detailed description. The 'New field' button is highlighted with a red circle and a number 1.

6. Give it a Name and select Identity in Type. Click on Add Field.

## Add a field to User Story

The screenshot shows the 'Add a field to User Story' dialog box. The 'Definition' tab is selected, indicated by a red circle with the number 1. The 'Field' section shows 'Acceptance Criteria' selected under 'Use an existing field'. The 'Create a field' section is selected, indicated by a red circle with the number 2. A new field is being created with the name 'Pairing' (red circle 3), type 'Identity' (red circle 4), and an optional description. At the bottom right, the 'Add field' button is highlighted with a red circle 5.

Add a field to store custom, queryable data about your work items.

Use an existing field

Field

Create a field

Name  3

Type  4

Description

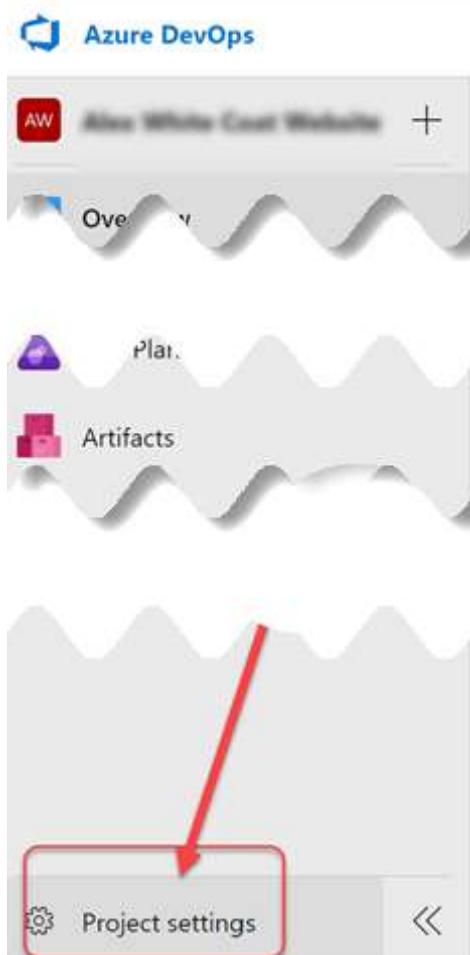
[Learn more \(1\)](#)

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This completes the change in Organization settings. The rest of the instructions must be completed under Project Settings.

## Change the Project Settings

1. Go to the Project that is to be modified, select **Project Settings**.



2. Select **Project configuration**.

The screenshot shows the 'Project settings' interface in Azure DevOps. On the left, there's a sidebar with various icons and labels: 'Project Settings' (selected), 'General', 'Overview', 'Teams', 'Permissions', 'Notifications', 'Service hooks', 'Dashboards', 'Boards', 'Project configuration' (highlighted with a red circle containing '1'), 'Team configuration', 'GitHub connections', and 'Repos'. The main area is titled 'Project details' and contains fields for 'Name' (set to 'New White Coat Website') and 'Description' (set to 'New graduation and White Coat Website'). To the right, there's a large 'AW' logo. At the bottom right of the main area is a 'Save' button.

3. Click on **process customization** page.

This screenshot shows the 'Project Settings' page for a project named 'Alex White Coat Website'. The left sidebar lists various settings options: General, Overview, Teams, Permissions, Notifications, Service hooks, Dashboards, Boards, and Project configuration. The 'Project configuration' option is currently selected. The main content area is titled 'Iterations' and displays a table of iterations for the project. The table has columns for 'Iterations', 'Start Date', and 'End Date'. Under 'Iterations', there is a section for 'Alex White Coat Website' which contains 'Iteration 1', 'Iteration 2', and 'Iteration 3'. A red arrow points from the text 'Click here' to a blue link at the top right of the page that says 'This project is currently using the Pairing process. To customize your work item types, go to the process customization page.'

Boards     This project is currently using the Pairing process. To customize your work item types, go to the process customization page.

Iterations   Areas

Create and manage the iterations for this project. These iterations will be used by teams for iteration planning (sprint planning). [Learn more](#)

To select iterations for the team, go to [the default team's settings](#).

Iterations	Start Date	End Date
Iteration 1	... <a href="#">Set dates</a>	
Iteration 2		
Iteration 3		

New   New child | [+](#) [-](#)

Alex White Coat Website

Iteration 1   ... [Set dates](#)

Iteration 2

Iteration 3

Click here

4. Click on **Projects** then click on **Change process**.

Azure DevOps

/ Settings / Process

## Organization Settings

Search Settings

### General

- Overview
- Projects
- Users
- Billing
- Auditing
- Global notifications
- Usage
- Extensions
- Azure Active Directory

### Security

- Policies
- Permissions

### Boards

### Process

All processes > Pairing

Work item types Backlog levels Projects 1

Name	Description
New White Coat Website	... <span style="color: red;">2</span> → Change process

The screenshot shows the Azure DevOps 'Organization Settings' page. The 'Process' tab is selected in the navigation bar. On the right, under 'All processes > Pairing', there is a table listing a single project: 'New White Coat Website'. A tooltip with the text '→ Change process' and a red number '2' is displayed over the 'Change process' link in the tooltip. A red circle with the number '1' is placed over the 'Projects' tab in the navigation bar.

5. Change the **target process** to Pairing then click Save.

## Change the project process



Change the process used by the project to another process.

Select a target process

Select a target process

CMMI

Scrum

Basic

Pairing

1



Save

2

6. Go to Boards.



Azure DevOps



/ Alex White Coat W...

The screenshot shows the Azure DevOps interface for the project "Alex White Coat WebSite". The left sidebar contains links: Overview, Summary (selected), Dashboards, Wiki, Boards (with a red notification badge '1'), Repos, Pipelines, Test Plans, and a gear icon for Settings.

A context menu is open over the "Boards" link in the sidebar. The menu items are: Boards (selected, highlighted with a red notification badge '2'), Work items, Backlog (with a cursor icon pointing at it), Sprints, and Queries.

7. Click on the Gear icon to open Settings.

The screenshot shows the Azure DevOps Boards interface. On the left, there's a sidebar with options like Overview, Boards (selected), Work items, Backlogs, Sprints, Queries, Repos, and Plugins. The main area is titled "Alex White Coat Website - Boards" and shows a backlog item card. The card has a green plus icon labeled "New item", the ID "83", the title "test", and the status "Unassigned". Below the card, it says "Pairing". At the top of the main area, there are tabs for "Board" (selected), "Analytics", and "View as Backlog". To the right of the backlog items, there are columns for "Active" (0/5), "Resolved" (0/5), and "Closed" (0/5). A search bar and various navigation icons are at the top right.

8. Add field to card.

Click on the green + icon to add select the Pairing field. Check the box to display fields, even when they are empty. **Save and close**.

# Settings

Fields 1

Show the important information to your team. Fields are editable directly on the card.

**User Story**

**Core fields**

Show ID  
 Show Assigned To as:  
Avatar and full name (default)  
 Show Story Points  
 Show Tags

**Additional fields**

Add up to 10 fields in the order that you want them to appear on the card.

+ Field 2  
Pairing 3 X

Show empty fields

Check if you want to display fields, even when they are empty. 4

Save and close 5 Cancel

9. View the modified the card.

Notice the new Pairing field. The Story can now be assigned an Owner and a Pairing assignee!

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Boards interface. On the left, there's a sidebar with options: Overview, Boards, Work items, Boards, Backlogs, Sprints, and Queries. The 'Boards' option is selected. At the top, there are tabs for Board, Analytics, and View as Backlog. Below these are buttons for New item, New, Active, 0/5, and Resc. A story card is visible, titled 'Test'. It has fields for State (Unassigned), Type (New), and Pairing (Unassigned). A red arrow points from the text 'Notice the new Pairing field.' to the 'Pairing' field in the story card.

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