

Mentorship Experiment FAQ

This is for mentors only

Example usage:

Example question

Draft answer here - any mentor can write draft questions/answers - heading 3 style

PLEASE ADD YOUR NAME when adding or making major changes. - Thanks!

TL;DR (Updated 11 August 2017) - by [Anonymized Author]

If you don't read anything else, read this.

- **REMEMBER: IF YOU ARE IN "PRIVATE MENTOR CHAT" THE CHAT IS ON. PLEASE DO NOT KEEP MENTOR CHAT OPEN IF YOU ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO MENTOR.**
- When a mentee enters "Asking a Question" chat, **claim them in "Private Mentor Chat"** by saying something like *"I'll help [username]."* Then, click the link to follow them to the correct room.
- Once you've claimed them, **see if they respond to [Anonymized]**, and once they do, go ahead and let them know you're going to read their question and get to helping.
- It's obvious but bears repeating: **WE WILL NOT ANSWER PROGRAMMING RELATED QUESTIONS IN CHAT.**
- You'll want to **let them know that they can edit their draft**: *"If you make edits to the question right here in chat (using the "edit" button on your draft), we can see an updated version."*
- There are many possible kinds of issues that may need your help. Here are a few scenarios:
 - Their question is **more appropriate for another Stack Exchange Q&A site** - let them know and link them there (but only if you're positive it doesn't fit here and positive it fits in the other site)
 - Their question is **obviously homework** - help them make the question specific to what they're having trouble with (make it a good question). Guidance on homework questions [here](#).
 - Their question is **missing critical information** - ask them for that info while you're helping them
 - The **phrasing is unclear** - ask them what they mean by X or Y and advise them to clarify their wording
 - Their question is a **duplicate** - tell them how to find duplicates, or even grab it yourself if it's easy
 - Their **grammar/spelling isn't great** - advise them to edit, and if they're struggling, you can help them with certain phrases (use your judgement here - **as long as it's comprehensible, let it go**)
 - The issue they're having is the result of a **code typo** - you can (and should) tell them about the typo
- **Teach them to fish** - show them how to craft a great question so they can do it themselves next time! Almost everything you say to your mentee should end with a question mark (?)
- Try to avoid SO lingo or acronyms (like MCVE) - you can introduce them if necessary, but **make sure to explain them**. For example, if you want to talk about MCVE, you can say, *"It's good practice to make your examples minimal, complete, and verifiable (frequently referred to as MCVE on the site)."*
- Remember: We want to get them to a good, solid question - **don't nitpick them to perfection.**

Who's running this experiment? - [Anonymized]

The team includes:

- [Anonymized]-Researcher
- [Anonymized]-Developer
- [Anonymized]-Product Manager
- [Anonymized]-Designer

[Additional team members have been removed for anonymity.]

[Anonymized Mentor]: What should I do if a user isn't taking help well or is resisting your suggestions to an extent where it is challenging to work with them?

[Anonymized Mentor]: Simply let them know that their question will most likely be received poorly when asked on the main site. We can only help users to the extent that they're willing to be helped. If you think that the user could be helped further, you can direct them to another mentor.

If you find yourself getting frustrated with a mentee - you don't need to continue trying to help. Feel free to pardon yourself and let another mentor try if the mentee isn't being truly uncooperative

[Anonymized Mentor]: What happens once the mentees posted their question on the site? Should we also provide guidance to any follow up issues that may arise (Like - "my question is being downvoted", "no one is answering my question")

[Anonymized Mentor]: Outside of the mentoring chat room, our responsibilities are the same as usual. We may give links to the tour, the help center, or meta in the comments of their question, or we may give advice in the mentoring chat room if the mentee is still seeking help there. Try to be proactive, so that they will already know where to look if they have further questions.

[Anonymized Author]: Additionally, we'll observe if people are hanging out in the chat long after their question has been asked. We want to keep the chat high-signal, so if this becomes an issue, we'll figure out a way to address it.

[Anonymized Mentor]: How do we organize the mentoring?, in case that we have multiple mentors on-line, OP needs to speak to one, we can't have 30 people giving advice or can we?

[Anonymized Author]: I think generally, mentors can be hanging out in private Mentor chat, and a couple can hang out in public. That way, when someone enters, someone can “claim them” and head in to help.

[Anonymized Mentor]: The general procedure will be that from “mentor chat” we claim OP, first to claim goes to “asking chat” to help. Other mentors should avoid giving suggestions directly to OP, if they have suggestions they can ping mentor helping OP in the “Mentor Chat”.

[Anonymized Mentor]: Please also note from email which group you are in as a mentor, hence give precedence to people in group that is assigned to be active (note sure if we like this, but added anyway, it seem logic if we get a lot mentors that like to help)

[Anonymized Mentor]: Is it acceptable to invite mentees into a one-on-one channel to resolve their issue, and move the messages back to the main chat when finished?

[Anonymized Author]: No, please don't do that. Let's keep all messages in the main channel, and explore the necessity of splitting them out if it comes to that.

[Anonymized Mentor]: This probably is not even possible (if someone has 1 rep, they can't be invited to chat)

[Anonymized Mentor]: What if we know that the question is a duplicate?

[Anonymized Mentor]: If the question is clearly a duplicate, we should point it out to the asker. If they disagree with it being a duplicate, their question should clearly specify *why* it's different from the proposed duplicate.

[Anonymized Mentor]: If it seems like a duplicate, the mentor should suggest the duplicate to OP, if this solves the issue so be it, no question asked. If not it is good that OP include it in question (shows effort) and explains why it does not solve issue.

What should we do if a question is a typo?

[Anonymized Mentor]: Typo questions are a bit more tricky. Usually they require some domain knowledge, and they're not necessarily *off topic questions* at the time of posting, but rather closed for being not useful in the future, once the problem is resolved. If the question is clearly due to a typo, we should notify the asker.

Should we stop people from asking questions ever?

[Anonymized Author]: We should never be "preventing" people from asking a question - we should only ever advise and assist. If there is a situation in which the question is not appropriate for SO, you can strongly advise against posting - let them know what will happen if they do. Ultimately, though, we're trying to increase the question quality on SO and improve the community, but with a carrot, not a stick. :)

[Anonymized Mentor]: What specific rules are applied in the "asking a question" room?

//title is bad, idea is to add some common room ruelzz that help us to keep it nice and clean

[Anonymized Mentor]: Only use the room to talk to OP, if you need to talk to mentor use the "private-mentor-chat"

[Anonymized Mentor]: Keep the "asking-a-question" room as clean as possible, avoid to star/pin message since this can be confusing for OP (seeing stared message on the right that is not related to his question). ???If we are also RO we can also clear stars that an OP did, I have a userscript for that, but not sure if we are RO???

[Anonymized Mentor]: How do we handle multiple OP's at same time in same room?

[Anonymized Author]: General Workflow

When a new user agrees they wish to receive help in formulating their question, they will be able to click a link on the Ask Question page which directs them to the "Ask A Question" room.

Upon joining that room, anyone present in that room that's a registered mentor will be pinged to notify them their help may be needed. Please note - it's best you only attend the room if you're available to mentor - that way you won't receive pings and the room list can be used as an indicator of how many mentors are presently available.



The user seeking help will join the AaQ room and a message will be automatically posted on their behalf similar to:

How do I extend a list in Python?

tags: python list

hi I'm new to using python but have used a lot of JavaScript and in Javascript if I can add an item to a list with `list.push(a)` or extend it with another list with `list.push(...other)` but in Python `list.append(a)` works but `list.append(...other)` doesn't.

so how do I extend the list

 1  2
edit copy draft back to Stack Overflow

Note that the mentee has an “edit” link (1) which enables them to edit their post while receiving advice on what changes could be made. When the mentee clicks on that link they will see something similar to the following (kind of a work in progress):

Message in Asking a Question

Edit

```
# How do I extend a list in Python?

tags: python list

<!-- Once you're happy with your question copy and paste everything below this
line into the body field of the question on the site -->

hi I'm new to using python but have used a lot of JavaScript and in Javascript if
I can add an item to a list with `list.push(a)` or extend it with another list
with list.push(...other) but in Python list.append(a) works but
list.append(...other) doesn't.

so how do I extend the list
```

Save Draft












Your question text has been saved and updated in chat.

You can format your posts using Markdown, [as described in our help center](#).

A few basics: you can apply inline code formatting using ``backticks``, and create code blocks by indenting with four spaces. Links are like this: `[click here](http://example.com)`.

The mentee edits the markdown exactly as they would on the site and when they save changes, the chat message will be updated for the mentor to review. A notice will be added to the room saying that a draft has been edited and a link to the draft in case it's scrolled off screen. Once the mentoring is complete and everyone's happy for the question to go live, then the OP can click the “copy draft back to Stack Overflow” link (2) which'll fill out a new question with details for the OP to click submit :

Title

```
B I             
  
<!-- Once you're happy with your question copy and paste everything below  
this line into the body field of the question on the site -->  
  
hi I'm new to using python but have used a lot of JavaScript and in  
Javascript if I can add an item to a list with `list.push(a)` or extend it  
with another list with list.push(...other) but in Python `list.append(a)`  
works but `list.append(...other)` doesn't.  
  
so how do I extend the list
```

hi I'm new to using python but have used a lot of JavaScript and in Javascript if I can add an item to a list with `list.push(a)` or extend it with another list with `list.push(...other)` but in Python `list.append(a)` works but `list.append(...other)` doesn't.
so how do I extend the list

Tags

Answer your own question – share your knowledge, Q&A-style

How to Ask

Is your question about programming?

We prefer questions that can be *answered*, not just discussed.

Provide details. Share your research.

If your question is about this website, [ask it on meta](#) instead.

[visit the help center »](#)
[asking help »](#)

At this point - the OP hits “Post Your Question” and job’s done! Hurrah team!

[Anonymized Mentor]: What should we do when the OP is not ready?

[Anonymized Mentor]: Tell the user to put @mentorName when the OP is ready.

[Anonymized Mentor]: How about proportional percentage of presenting popup for mentees?

Misc observations:

- SO may be the wrong target site for a question - don't be afraid to recommend another site, but bear in mind that recommending other sites should only be done if you're absolutely confident it's on-topic for the target site and definitely off-topic for SO (and won't end up closed/downvoted on the target - we don't want other sites receiving rubbish!)
- Don't be afraid to request further information as in <https://stackoverflow.com/help/mcve> to make the question as answerable as possible (don't forget the “presume low familiarity with SO and using jargon/acronyms” in the tips though!)

- “Typically greetings are frowned upon.” - might be good to consolidate a concise bit of phrasing off either MSO or MSE about why the traditional “pleasantries” aren’t required on SO and while they’re appreciated just aren’t required kind of thing.
- Feel free to point out that people can “edit” their attempt(s) to clarify things as needs be (this may be an iterative process)

Note: If as a mentor you see an access request to the AaQ room - you should ignore it. All users that have clicked the link to receive help via the system will automatically join the room and be able to talk.