

14.310x: Discussion Forum Guidelines

The discussion forum is the main way for you to communicate with the course team and other students. We hope it contributes to a sense of community and serves as a useful resource for your learning. Please take a look at the general guidelines below.

Secondly, this course is large and you have many fellow students. In order to keep the discussion forum organized and to help you sort through the messages to find what you need, the forum is organized by discussion topics. We recommend that you post your comments under the appropriate header. Thank you!

1 General Guidelines:

- **Observe the honor code.** We encourage collaboration and help, but please avoid asking for and posting blatant answers. Those caught cheating may have their accounts disabled and progress erased.
- **Be polite.** We have learners from all around the world and with different backgrounds. Something that is easy for you may be challenging for someone else. Let's build an encouraging community.
- **Upvote good posts.** This applies to questions and answers. Click on the green plus button so that good posts can be found more easily.
- **Search before asking.** The forum can become hard to use if there are too many threads, and good discussions happen when people participate in the same thread. Before asking a question, use the search feature by clicking on the magnifying glass on the left-hand side.
- **Notify staff.** If you want to have a staff member look at your post, please write [STAFF] at the start of your title.
- **Be specific.** Choose a descriptive title, and provide as much information as possible: Which part of what problem or video? Why do you not understand the question? What have you tried doing?

- **Write clearly.** We know that English is a second language for many of you, but correct language will help others respond. Avoid ALL CAPS, abbrv of wrds (abbreviation of words), and excessive punctuation!!!!
- **Use the discussion forum while working through the material.** On many pages in the learning sequences and homework, there is a link at the bottom that says “Show Discussion”. Clicking on this link will show all discussion on the forum associated with this particular learning material.

2 Collaboration Guidelines:

Below are guidelines for acceptable collaboration within the course. These will help you use the forum appropriately as an aid to learning the material. The course staff will be proactive in removing posts and replies in the discussion forum that have stepped over the line. Repeated violations of these guidelines may result in your account being deactivated.

- It is okay to discuss the general approach to solving a problem.
- You can work jointly to come up with general steps for the solution.
- It is okay to get a hint, or several hints for that matter, if you get stuck while solving a problem.
- You should work out the details of the solution to yourself.
- It is not okay to post answers to finger exercises, homework problems, or exams before the submission deadline.
- It is not okay to look at a full step-by-step solution to a problem before the submission deadline.
- It is okay to have someone show you a few steps of a solution where you have been stuck for a while, provided you have attempted to solve it yourself without success.
- After you have collaborated with others in generating a correct solution, a good test to see if you were engaged in acceptable collaboration is to make sure that you are able to do the problem on your own.

3 Discussion Topics:

The forum is organized by topic. Each unit will have a dedicated topic in the discussion forum. For questions **not related to a specific unit**, we have created the following categories:

- **GENERAL:** General discussion about the course that doesn't pertain to any specific unit. *e.g. Where can I find the exam dates? / Have you read this recent article on...?*
- **MICROMASTERS AND BLENDED MASTERS PROGRAMS:** General questions about either the MITx MicroMasters or blended Master's programs in Data, Economics, and Development Policy. *e.g. Where can I create a MicroMasters profile?*
- **INTRODUCTIONS:** Threads for student introductions. *e.g. Hello, my name is X and I come Y – nice to meet you all!*
- **TECHNICAL HELP:** Let the course team know about technical problems. *e.g. The links are not working!*