Code Institute
Support Guide

Getting Started

Throughout this programme, you will be exposed to new ideas and creative approaches that could help you improve not only your coding skills but other aspects of your life as well. We want you to be challenged while delighting in the demands that are placed on you throughout your time with Code Institute.

The goal for the Code Institute's programmes is to take you on a journey from absolute novice to being a world class beginner in the world of software development. You will become familiar with the various Frontend and Backend languages, tools and technologies. You will be comfortable working through various projects to ensure that, when you complete your training, you will feel that you have been through an exhausting and demanding journey, bringing you to the next stage of your career.

Below is a guide on how to make the most of our four main pillars of support:
1. Slack Community
2. Tutoring
3. Mentoring
4. Student Care

Slack Community

Slack is the home of Code Institute's Online Community, where you can join a vibrant group of fellow mentored online and classroom-based students and mentors.

Our Learning Success team will be monitoring the Slack channels every day Monday through Friday during work hours (GMT) and will respond to any open questions (which haven't already been resolved by the community) within a few hours.

With Slack, you can share ideas and issues, ask for help and help others in problem-solving, and everything in between. All aspects of software, from recursive algorithms to cat pictures are relevant here (and recursive algorithms for processing cat pictures are particularly welcome)!

You can also use Slack for your Mentoring sessions. You can find ind your Mentor on Slack by searching their Slack handle. The snapshot below highlights how to launch a call on Slack.

Please keep our Slack Community Guidelines in mind whenever posting.

Slack

Your channels are

#general - is for team-wide communication and announcements. Our Weekend Win Thread discussion for sharing our successes is held here.
#accountability - If you'd like to have an accountability partner, just say so and mention your timezone and we will pair you up!
#studygroup - This is the place for students to organise online study groups. You can now use Slack to hold these study sessions.

Per module channels (
    #html-fundamentals, #css-fundamentals,
    #js-fundamentals, #python-fundamentals,
    #user-centric-frontend, #interactive-frontend,
    #practical-python, **#data-centric-dev and**
    #full-stack-frameworks) -

these are intended for the classroom and mentored online students to discuss the content for each of the LMS modules. Feel free to ask (or answer!) a question, post ideas and discoveries, and encourage each other as you learn front end development.

Tutor Support

What support will my tutor offer?

Your tutor will provide technical support for more immediate short-term questions you have, such as:

- **Why is my code not working?**
- **How can I install MySQL?**
- **I'm getting this error when I push my code to GitHub, what does it mean?**

The tutor will offer support on any questions relating to lessons or challenges on our Learning Platform, as well as provide basic technical assistance with your projects. More general project advice will be provided by your mentor.

How do I get in touch with my tutor?

You can access the tutor page by clicking on the tutor tab which can be found by clicking into any of the modules on the LMS. A snapshot is provided below to highlight where you can find the tutor tab.

Support is then provided over live chat. Video chat is also available if the issue you are trying to resolve requires screen sharing.

When is tutoring support available?

Tutoring support is available Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm GMT. We appreciate that many students are working on the Learning Platform before 9am or after 5pm GMT. To accommodate for this, students are able to raise a question to a tutor out-of-hours, which will then be responded to on the next working day.

How many tutoring hours are available for me to use?

At the moment, we are not imposing any total limits on the overall number of hours of tutoring support we offer to students over the duration of the course. That said, to make sure that we have enough capacity to help all of our students, we have soft limits of 30 minutes per week. This means that if a student has used more than 30 minutes of tutoring support in one week (during one or more support sessions), the tutor will recommend using our community channel (Slack) or other online resources (e.g. Troubleshooting Tips, Stack overflow) for the remainder of the week. The 30 minute 'weekly limits' will be reset every Monday morning at 9am so if a student would like additional help on an issue from the previous week, they can get in touch with the tutor again on Monday morning.

Mentor support

What support will my mentor offer?

Your mentor is there to support high-level 'what?' and 'why?' questions relating to your projects and your new career path in general.

Your mentor sessions will follow the 'fixed structure for mentoring support' which has been put in place to help students get the most out of their mentor sessions.

This structure helps the mentor focus on guiding the student on their journey to become a coder, coaching the student to create professional software projects and preparing the student to land their first coding job.

You will seek the help of your dedicated mentor at three points during the creation and development of each project. You will schedule these sessions at the beginning, middle and end of each of the projects, to focus on the high-level aspects of working effectively on the process of constructing a useful and professional project.

Mentor support

What does the fixed structure for mentoring support look like?

The fixed structure for mentoring support, which you and your mentor will follow, includes the following 17 sessions:

- **Intro session:** Intro "Meet your mentor" session at the beginning of the course, and setting of goals (already exists) | 15mins

- **Project sessions:** For each of the 5 Milestone projects:

  - **Project Inception:** This is a session where your mentor would help you plan your project work. | 30mins

    - Project Inception: This is a session where your mentor would help you plan your project work. | 30mins

    - Your mentor will help you decide which parts of your ideas would work best for the project and help you make decisions about the best technologies to implement these ideas.

Mentor support

○ **Middle of project:** You should schedule this session for when you feel that the project is mostly done, but some hard parts remain. | 30mins

— A well-known (and quite accurate) aphorism in software engineering states that "The first 90 percent of the code accounts for the first 90 percent of the development time. The remaining 10 percent of the code accounts for the other 90 percent of the development time"

— Given this difficulty, be sure to ask your mentor for help in reining in the complexity of these remaining "10" percent. Your mentor will try to help you in thinking about how to approach the remaining problems, and may advise you how to best reduce the project's scope, if needed.

○ **End of project review:**   Once your project is ready for final review, schedule a session where you will present it to your mentor, going over both the site itself and the code running it. | 30mins

— Your mentor will give you useful feedback including recommendations for final touches, and will then provide you with a short introduction and welcome to the next module.

Mentor support

- **Careers session:** After course completion, a mock interview and general advice on starting one's career | 45mins

More details about the above project sessions are available in the LMS, please see the "Additional Advice" unit which is included in the Milestone Project section at the end of the following modules:

1. User Centric Frontend Development
2. Interactive Frontend Development
3. Practical Python
4. Data Centric Development
5. Full Stack Frameworks

In order to prepare for your careers session with your mentor, we recommend reading "Preparing for your technical interviews". This unit can found at the end of the Full Stack Frameworks with Django module.

Using your mentor and tutor support wisely

A big part of being an effective developer is being able to fix problems on your own by using different sources, whether it's our Troubleshooting Tips, the Slack community or Stack Overflow questions. The best way to learn is by doing, so use your mentor and tutor sessions to supplement, not substitute your learning.

If you are turning to your mentor or tutor for help every time when you feel stuck, you aren't really learning.

You need to be able to solve problems as a developer and there isn't always going to be someone there to help you. With that in mind, here's how we suggest you use your mentoring sessions.

Prepare some questions in advance

We recommend that you come to each mentor session with 3-5 questions you would like to get answered.

Try and be as specific as possible:

Poor Choice of Question:

What languages do I need to use to build my first milestone project?

Great Question:

I have developed this user story:

— As a user, I want to view the location of local music venues so that I can go see a live band at the weekend.

I want to provide a good user experience and to do this I'm considering calling the google maps API using JavaScript. Is this a good approach to develop this feature? If not, can you advise me on an alternative approach that would be used in industry.

The steps to asking questions the right way are:

- Think through what your problem is. Write down how you are going to describe it. Think about it from the other side - what would you need to know if a stranger came to you and asked a coding question? If relevant, write down any error codes that appear on your screen. Sometimes it even happens that by thinking through the problem, you come up with the answer yourself.

- Briefly describe the problem in a paragraph. Leave out unnecessary details. Save everybody time by listing any solutions that you have tried but didn't work.

- Whenever possible, rather than focusing on specific technical questions, see if you can rephrase the questions to get your mentor to help you better understand the underlying concepts, such that you'd then be able to solve the specific issues yourself. As much as possible, avoid asking your mentor to directly help you write code. That's a poor way to learn. Instead, strive to write as much of the code you need by yourself, and then use your mentor to get help improving it.

- You are encouraged to ask your mentor for advice about your project work, but note that your project code should not include any code written by your mentor, unless it is explicitly credited to them with a comment above. Any such code provided by your mentor would not contribute to your assessment. Failure to attribute credit to code that isn't yours will be considered as plagiarism and will result in a failing grade.

Student Care Support

Our dedicated student care team are here to assist with any general questions or issues about the course.

Contact our [Student Care](#) for general questions and extra encouragement if you need it!

      a.   studentcare@codeinstitute.net

      b.   00-353-1-5394937

If you've contacted your mentor or tutor about anything and don't hear back from them within 5 days, please let us know at studentcare@codeinstitute.net.

Credit-rated, Accelerated

Industry - Validated

code
institute