



# Help us help you!

Or:

## How to write a good support request

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# Some things to consider...

# 1. We can't read your mind

*Or:  
"I have a problem. Please help."*

## Don't assume any *a priori* knowledge on our part

- Tell us who you are
  - Give your CSC username and professional affiliation (especially if using non-professional email account like gmail)
- Please explain your problem clearly
  - What are you trying to do? What is the problem? What have you tried so far?
  - Remember that the person answering the question may be a different person that last time, so include all relevant information
    - If you have some older tickets that you think are relevant you can include the ticket numbers

- For a software related questions you should include at least:
  - Which system are you working on?
  - Which software were you trying to use?
    - If it's not a software installed by CSC, please provide link to software documentation
  - Include the actual commands you used and **full** error messages
    - Preferably copy-paste instead of attaching screenshots

## 2. We also can't read your files

*Or:*

*“You can check my scripts and test files in  
/scratch/project\_12345/someuser/data.”*



# We can't directly access your files, so you need to provide the relevant information

- Commands and error messages can be copy-pasted directly to the mail
  - Please copy-paste instead of attaching screenshots. We often try to replicate the problem, and copying commands from screenshots adds an extra source of potential problems.
- Small files (*e.g.* batch job scripts, Slurm output files, log files *etc*) can be attached to the mail
  - Note: Sometimes attachments can be lost due to email filters
- For bigger files (*e.g.* test data) you can use
  - Funet filesender (<https://filesender.funet.fi/>)
  - Allas a-flip command ([https://docs.csc.fi/data/Allas/using\\_allas/a\\_commands/#a-flip](https://docs.csc.fi/data/Allas/using_allas/a_commands/#a-flip))

### **3. We can't do everything (at least alone)**

*Or:*

*"We have a problem installing software X. We can't seem to add a new user to our project. I think there was some mistake with the last resource allocation. Also: Our dog just had puppies!"*

## Try to keep it one issue per request

- Only one problem per mail
  - Different issues get handled by different people
- New problem, new mail
  - Tickets with multiple issues get difficult to follow and difficult to find later
- Sending multiple tickets at one time is no problem!
  - If you have multiple issues, send multiple tickets

## For more information, please see:

- Customer Service and Feedback  
(<https://research.csc.fi/support>)
- How to write good support requests  
(<https://docs.csc.fi/support/support-howto/>)
- The XY problem (a common problem when asking for help)  
(<https://xyproblem.info>)

# Having said all that...

Writing a support request should not be scary and it should not be a chore.

Just relax, use some common sense and it will be fine!



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