

Google Code-in 2019 Mentor Email Archive

Sent 1/17/2020

Subject: Final Week Notes for Mentors and Org Admins

Thank you for doing such a great job keeping up with the student task reviews and for all of the time and enthusiasm you have all put into helping students this year!

There's less than a week to go before you can stop worrying about reviewing GCI tasks, woo hoo!

Thank you all.

Important Dates

Tuesday, January 21st 18:00 UTC - Deadline for GCI students to claim their final task

Thursday, January 23rd 18:00 UTC - Deadline for GCI students to submit their work:

Note that you have to either approve the work or reject it, you can not send it back for more work after this deadline.

*** Friday, January 24th 18:00 UTC - Deadline for mentors to review student's work *** Also when the org admins can start selecting winners, runners up and finalists from their dashboard

Thursday, January 30th 18:00 UTC - Deadline for organizations to choose their 2 Grand Prize Winners, their 2 runners up, and the 2 finalists. You will be able to select your winners starting January 24th and can continue to edit your selections until January 30th.

Monday, February 10 - Winners and Finalists announced on g.co/gci and Google Open Source blog

Wednesday, February 12 - Emails will be sent to active mentors on how to select the size of their prize and their preferred shipping address. NOTE: Org Admins can contact Google before February 5th with any mentors who have not been active so they will not receive the tshirt invite.

Late March - tshirts start being shipped out

Choosing your Grand Prize Winners and Finalists

Disclosing Friendships with possible winners: We realize there are quite a few former GCI students and other mentors who have some kind of friendship (maybe go to same school, etc.) with some of the students that will likely be in your org's top 20.

Please remember that if you are friends with a student being evaluated you **MUST** disclose that friendship with the other mentors when that student's work is being reviewed (essentially leaving you out of the discussion of that student's work).

We know everyone wants to be fair and the best way to do that and for there not to be any

question about impartiality is to remove yourself from the discussion of your friend's work. The other mentors will appreciate the honesty and will evaluate your friend just like everyone else will be evaluated.

Choosing your Winners, Runners Up and Finalists on the dashboard

Starting on Friday, January 24th at 18:00 UTC, Org Admins can visit their [dashboard](#) and select their organization's:

- 2 Grand Prize winners
- 2 Runners Up
 - 1 Backup winner also is considered a Runner Up (in case another org chooses the same grand prize winner, not likely but a slim possibility)
 - 1 Runner Up
- 2 Finalists

Org Admins will have until Thursday, January 30th to enter their Winners, Runners Up and Finalists. Your org should be thinking about how your community will determine who the winners and finalists are.

The candidates for these 6 slots are restricted to the 20 students who completed the most tasks for your organization.

These 6 students will all be considered your Finalists and will all receive the GCI jacket and a special certificate. Runners Up and Grand Prize Winners will also receive a GCI backpack. Grand Prize Winners will receive a four day trip for themselves and a parent/legal guardian to Google headquarters in California in June.

Per the Contest Rules, orgs should choose their Grand Prize Winners, Runners Up, and Finalists based on the comprehensive body of work the student completed in the contest period from December 2, 2019 to January 23, 2020. As stated in the Contest Rules: **Each entry will be judged according to the following factors: creativity, thoroughness, and quality of work. The Organization may additionally factor the contestant's involvement in the Organization's community in the judging.**

Students who have been Grand Prize Winners in the past are not eligible to be winners again. They can be named as Runners Up and Finalists. You don't need to check if the student was a previous winner, we will. If there is an issue (very unlikely) we will move the Backup Winner into a Grand Prize Winner slot..

Important Links

1. [Roles and Responsibilities](#)

2. [API Documentation](#)
3. [Student Process](#)
4. [GCI Org Advice](#) (written by veteran org admins in)
5. [Tips for Org Admins](#) (could be interesting for Mentors too)
6. [ARCHIVE](#) of GCI 2019 Mentor/Org Admin emails for reference

If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact us at gci-support@google.com.

Best,
Stephanie

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Sent 1/7/20

Subject: Week 5 GCI updates

Thanks all for continuing to do such a wonderful job helping this year's GCI students. As of this morning we officially have more students completing tasks than during all of last year's contest! Busy times!

Choosing your Grand Prize Winners and Finalists

Starting on Friday, January 24th at 18:00 UTC, Org Admins can visit their [dashboard](#) and select their organization's:

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- 2 Runners Up
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Students who have been Grand Prize Winners in the past are not eligible to be winners again. They can be named as Runners Up and Finalists. You don't need to check if the student was a previous winner, we will. If there is an issue (very unlikely) we will move the Backup Winner into a Grand Prize Winner slot.

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Note that you have to either approve the work or reject it, you can not send it back for more work after this deadline.

*** Friday, January 24th 18:00 UTC - Deadline for mentors to review student's work ***

Thursday, January 30th 18:00 UTC - Deadline for organizations to choose their 2 Grand Prize Winners, their 2 runners up, and the 2 finalists. You will be able to select your winners starting January 24th and can continue to edit your selections until January 30th.

Monday, February 10 - Winners and Finalists announced on g.co/gci and Google Open Source blog

Late March - Tshirts for mentors and students will be shipped

Important Links

1. [Tips for Creating Good Tasks](#)
2. [Roles and Responsibilities](#)
3. [API Documentation](#)
4. [CSV Uploader](#) to bulk upload tasks
5. [Student Process](#)
6. [GCI Org Advice](#) (written by veteran org admins in)
7. [Tips for Org Admins](#) (could be interesting for Mentors too)
8. [Promoting GCI](#)
9. [ARCHIVE](#) of GCI 2019 Mentor/Org Admin emails for reference

Best,
Saranya and Stephanie

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Sent 12/29

Subject: Week 4 Updates

As we wrap up 2019 we wanted to thank you all for doing an amazing job this year! You all did an excellent job keeping up with your reviews and answering student questions these past couple of weeks when many mentors were celebrating holidays.

Things have been going quite smoothly and this almost entirely thanks to all of your extraordinary efforts Thank you all. We hope you have a wonderful new year!

Probably in about a week you'll get a bit of the rush for those students who procrastinated and are trying to get their 3 tasks completed to earn the t-shirt. This will likely continue until the deadline for task claims - Tuesday, January 21st.

Some interesting numbers

- 2,869 students from 75 countries have completed at least 1 task
- 1,681 students have already earned a t-shirt (completing 3 or more tasks)
- 13,000+ tasks completed in these first 4 weeks

Important Dates

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Monday, February 10 - Winners and Finalists announced on g.co/gci and Google Open Source blog

Mid March - T-shirts for mentors and students will be shipped

Links

1. [Tips for Creating Good Tasks](#)
2. [Roles and Responsibilities](#)
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5. [Student Process](#)
6. [GCI Org Advice](#) (written by veteran org admins in)
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Best,
Stephanie

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Sent 12/21

Subject: Week 3 updates and prep for the holiday rush

Excellent job everyone on keeping up with this very excited group of students! Thank you for all of your hard work.

The records keep on coming - as of today, 2,559 students have completed at least one of the 10,353 tasks being done in 19 days of the contest - that is about a 17% increase over this time last year in # of students completing tasks and a 25% increase in the number of tasks being completed.

Quick updates on bugs/some weirdness this past week in webapp

There were a few days last weekend where suddenly some folks had their GCI email notifications start appearing in their spam folders, mentors and students alike, after successfully being delivered to their regular inboxes the first couple of weeks of the program. The issue has been corrected so this should not be affecting anyone any longer. If it is, please email me at gci-support@google.com and also go ahead and mark codein-noreply@google.com as safe/not spam to make sure the messages get delivered to you in the meantime.

Prepping your mentors for the busy holiday rush

The holiday season is here -- ORG ADMINS be sure your organization has a holiday plan in place. We want you to be able to spend time with your friends and family (assuming that's what you want to do) but it's also important to maintain the under 24 hour response time for the students (with an occasional 35 hr being okay).

We encourage orgs that are being slammed to try and find a way to give overloaded mentors a break to rest. This is a marathon not a sprint. We don't want anyone burning out. It's okay to slow the students down some and not have a 5 hour turnaround (as many orgs do - which is great, but difficult to sustain as mentor availability will generally decline from now through the new year). Don't stress yourself out if a student has to wait 12 hours for a review (trust me, I try to clear out all of my support emails as soon as I read them too, but give yourself a breather).

Historically many students have more free time for the next few weeks as they will be on holiday and not in school so they'll be doing more GCI tasks and asking more questions and with a smaller mentor pool it can get really busy, really fast.

Releasing new tasks

Org Admins- please be sure you are releasing new tasks from your queue each week. You are probably already seeing the folks who are clearly trying to be finalists and winners so they are likely tearing through your task list. Be ready for them and also you should prep for a new wave of beginner folks coming into the program who now have a few extra hours in their lives to work on tasks.

Tasks going over 36 hours for review

When a task goes 36 hours without review Google Admins receive a notice on our dashboard so we will email the org admins and mentors to review the work asap. We understand occasionally mentors will not notice the task has gone 36 hours without review, but please try to let it be just a rare occurrence, thanks. If your org is only getting 1-3 emails a week from me or Saranya reminding you to review tasks you are doing great, don't sweat it.

We are not emailing you when we see that the reason for the 36 hours is because the student submitted work and then added more comments or work, and in some cases an entire conversation with the mentor goes on over that 36 hours back and forth so this is okay, it is just going to mess with that timer in the webapp but clearly you are responding to the student generally under 24 hours so all is well.

Overall, from our side, this is the smoothest GCI ever. We hope you are enjoying working with the students and helping introduce them to your communities and open source.

Happy holidays everyone!

Best,
Stephanie and Saranya

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Sent Monday, December 9th pm

Subject: Week 1 GCI Roundup and more Tips

Wonderful job mentors and org admins on making it through this very busy Week 1 of Google Code-in 2019! We're hitting record stats left and right - right now over 1900 students have completed 5,684 tasks - this is a 15% increase in students completing tasks and a 37% increase in number of tasks being completed compared to this time last year.

Everyone has done an amazing job keeping up with reviewing tasks and answering student questions. Keep up the great work everyone!

Reminders when reviewing tasks

- **Always press "needs more work" when sending the task back to the student.** This will restart the timer and make it clear who then has the next action. (Just like a chess clock.) You should also consider giving the student more time if necessary by adding time to their task for them at this point.
- When a task hits 36 hours without review Google Admins receive a notice on our dashboard so we will email the org admins and mentors to review the work asap. This is also available on the org admin dashboard. We understand occasionally mentors will not notice the task has gone 36 hours without review, but please try to let it be just a rare occurrence, thanks.

Reporting Plagiarism or cheating

Thank you to the org admins and mentors that have been reporting plagiarism. We know this is very annoying and frustrating for all concerned. We review all of the reports and have already frozen the accounts of 6 students.

If a student copies another student's work, then that is reason for immediate removal from the program. We will not condone this at all and it is a valuable lesson for the student to learn. If the student copies something from the internet/some other source and doesn't give accurate attribution give them a warning the first time and tell them the right way to give attribution. If they do it again then report it to Google Admins.

Here is what to do if you suspect plagiarism or any other cheating:

1. If you believe a student copied someone else's work or is cheating in some other way please contact your org admin and have them confirm.
2. Your Org Admin should then contact us immediately at gci-support@google.com.
 - Include as much information as you can as to why you suspect this is cheating. This should include a link to the task instance, as well as any other documentation, information (including the work they copied from) or logs you have.

3. We will review the information promptly. If we agree that it is cheating, we will freeze the student's account (preventing them from accessing the system and making them ineligible to receive any prizes). We will also email them to let them know why they have been removed from the program.
4. Do not feel bad about reporting a student cheating or plagiarizing - it is not fair to the other 99.95% of students who are working hard in the contest.
5. This is a valuable lesson the students need to learn. Our team has no problem banning a student for bad behavior and cheating, neither should you.

Bad tasks - please remove all tasks related to starring projects

- We continue to get reports about orgs with trivial tasks that are starring repos - sometimes as part of a legitimate task. For example, I just received a report of an org that is having students star multiple projects as a part of the task (and encourages students to star more to help the org). This is not okay! I have been reaching out to the org admins (4 orgs so far) as these reports come in to remove these tasks as mentors report these types of tasks to me.

To reiterate - please remember it is not okay to have students complete trivial tasks like:

- Require someone to make an account, sign up for a mailing list, join a chat room, or follow you on social media. Some of those things are overhead, some of the others are blatant marketing and don't benefit the student.
- Staring repos
- Forking and cloning a repo

You've all made it through the bumps that come along in the first week of GCI and have done an awesome job. Please remember it will be busy again this week and then usually the week+ of Dec 21-31 can be pretty busy too so be sure that if mentors are not available you have backup mentors for tasks.

In case you missed it, earlier today we announced [GSoC 2020](#). Busy times!

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Keep up the excellent work everyone. Please contact me at gci-support@google.com with any questions or concerns. Thanks!

Best,
Stephanie

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Sent Monday, December 2nd

SUBJECT: Tips on Cheating, Beginner tasks and sending work back

Thank you to all of the mentors and org admins who have been busy creating the 4,000+ unique tasks that are published for students to choose from (and for the unpublished ones)!

Over these first 12 hours we've seen big numbers with 1,525 students registered for the contest and 419 have already completed their first task - this is higher than even last year's numbers.

Beginner task issues

While beginner tasks should be easy for students to get started they shouldn't be tasks that take the student less than 10 minutes to complete. If you want to keep the task then add more complexity or multiple steps to it to make it more complicated.

Please remember it is not okay to have students complete trivial tasks like:

- Require someone to make an account, sign up for a mailing list, join a chat room, or follow you on social media. Some of those things are overhead, some of the others are blatant marketing and don't benefit the student.
- Staring repos
- Forking and cloning a repo

We understand some tasks like having students create a GitHub account, etc. are useful and ultimately something the student needs to do to be able to complete more tasks with your org. But you should also consider adding an extra step to those types of tasks to make it more involved.

Reporting Plagiarism or cheating

This is a contest for teenagers, which unfortunately means it is likely some cheating and plagiarizing will occur. It is not the norm, but having just one student who cheats can be incredibly frustrating.

The general consensus from Google Program Admins, Org Admins and mentors for the past few

years has been to give the student the benefit of the doubt the first time if they have copied something directly from some online source (Wikipedia, etc.) and have failed to give attribution. Many students don't understand it is not okay to just copy work from online sources, they aren't taught this in school (really). Now if you tell them the right way to give attribution and they do it again then yes it is certainly reason for removal from the program.

However if a student copies another student's work then that is reason for immediate removal from the program. We will not condone this at all and it is a valuable lesson for the student.

Here is what to do if you suspect plagiarism or any other cheating:

1. If you believe a student copied someone else's work or is cheating in some other way please contact your org admin and have them confirm.
2. Your Org Admin should then contact us immediately at gci-support@google.com.
 - o Include as much information as you can as to why you suspect this is cheating. This should include a link to the task instance, as well as any other documentation, information (the work they copied from) or logs you have.
3. We will review the information promptly. If we agree that it is cheating, we will freeze the student's account (preventing them from accessing the system and making them ineligible to receive any prizes). We will also email them to let them know why they have been removed from the program.
4. Do not feel bad about reporting a student cheating or plagiarizing - it is not fair to the other 99.95% of students who are working hard in the contest.
5. This is a valuable lesson the students need to learn. Our team has no problem banning a student for bad behavior and cheating, neither should you.

Quick Helpful tips for Mentors

- 1) **Always press "needs more work" when sending the task back to the student.** This will restart the timer and make it clear who then has the next action. (Just like a chess clock.) You can always give the student more time if necessary.
- 2) **Controlling your emails.** Emails contain a `X-For-Filtering` footer that you can use to keep your email under control. Filter on `"Interacted-True"` to find emails related to tasks you've commented on.

When student work is not enough for you to approve

Please remember that when a student submits work to you and it is not quite what you were looking for you need to hit the **'needs more work' button** to send it back to the student to continue working on. That resets the system so that when the student is ready to re-submit their edited work they can include the link/file and hit submit (instead of just writing a comment or supplying the link). This also resets the submission clock for mentors to review and sends you a notification email that work has been submitted.

If the mentor doesn't hit 'needs more work' the system will show Org Admins and Google Program Admins that the task has been waiting for review for an extended period of time since the system is looking at that first (and only) submission by the student as the amount of time it

has been waiting for review. The student can not re-submit officially because their “submit” button is greyed out since the system is reading their first submission still and essentially waiting for mentor action (in this case clicking ‘needs more work’). Once the mentor clicks need more work it resets and allows the student to submit their edited work.

As always if you have questions please email me at gci-support@google.com

Thanks everyone on a smooth Day 1 of GCI 2019!

Important Links:

1. [Tips for Creating Good Tasks](#)
2. [Roles and Responsibilities](#)
3. [API Documentation](#)
4. [CSV Uploader](#) to bulk upload tasks
5. [Student Process](#)
6. [GCI Org Advice](#) (written by veteran org admins in)
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Best,
Stephanie

Sent Sunday, November 24

GCI 2019 Final Reminders - less than 1 week until start of GCI 2019

With less than a week to go before GCI 2019 starts for students, we wanted to go over a few things to prepare you for the very busy weeks ahead.

1. **Read the [Roles and Responsibilities](#)**
 - There are always a lot of questions about what the expectations are for each role in the GCI and GSoC programs. Please read the linked document so you know what Google expects of you and other participants.
 - Individual organizations may have additional roles and responsibilities. Talk to your Organization Administrator for more information.
2. **Enter your tasks into the system now**
 - Right now only 4 of 29 orgs have published 50 or more unique tasks.
 - Org Admins: Be sure to have a **minimum of 50 unique tasks (we strongly encourage you to have 75)** entered into system before Monday, December 2nd at 10am PT. We encourage you to enter them ASAP so if there is a problem or any confusion we can help you fix it. Definitely don't wait until a few hours before the contest starts!

- Don't publish all your tasks at the start of the program. This way you can easily (and quickly) publish more over the first few weeks of the program as your initial load of tasks rapidly disappear.

3. Do not create any tasks that require students to supply personal information

- For example, real name, age, what country they live in, pictures of themselves, hobbies, etc. This is personal information and can not be asked or required of students in any manner. If you are unsure about a task please email gci-support@google.com and we can okay it or say it's not acceptable.

4. Mentor Count

- Right now 15 orgs have 20+ mentors with the median mentor count being 21. Remember, tasks can't be published without at least 1 assigned mentor. You can continue to add more mentors throughout the program as needed.
- Org Admins please be sure to remind your mentors when you invite them to review the [Mentor Email Archive](#) so they can be aware of all of the tips we have been sending out this past month.

5. Assigning mentors to tasks

- Remember you will likely want 3-6 mentors assigned to beginner tasks as you can expect a lot of attention from students on these tasks, especially these first few weeks of the program (be sure to have a lot of instances available for your tasks).
- For non-beginner tasks multiple mentors are fine but we would discourage having more than 4 or 5 folks assigned to any task as it can get confusing who will be responding.

6. Webhooks and API

- ORG ADMINS - If you wish to receive webhook notifications of task instance activity, you must email us the URL to send them to. We need to configure it manually for each organization. See the [API documentation](#) for more information.
- Several organizations have contributed samples of how they use the API to manage tasks. We're listing those samples on our [API page](#).

7. Translation tasks

- We haven't specifically banned translations tasks this year BUT please think carefully about any translation tasks that you offer. In general, we'd encourage you to avoid them. If a task can be mostly completed with Google Translate or another automated translation tool, it is not a good task and you should not offer it. Good translation tasks should require deep knowledge of the target language -- and you must be able to verify that the work was done correctly. These tend to not be "translation" tasks, but "language" tasks.
- Zulip has written [some documentation](#) as to different classes of "translation" tasks and what to look for.
- Good examples:
 - Developing a language specific style guide for translators to use.

- Research into UI changes/challenges for different languages. (For example: German has above average word length, and might not fit on your normal buttons.)
 - Find and fix examples where a current translation has a word that doesn't make sense (and explain why it's wrong). (For example: Many languages have multiple different words that mean "button". Are you using the right one?)
- Bad examples:
 - Translate our app/documentation/poster/etc. into language X.
- It's worth repeating, you must be able to validate any translation work done. For example, if you don't speak Klingon, you have no way of knowing if the student translated into proper Klingon, or into Romulan. (And the consequences of that could be dire.)
- If you're not sure if you can make the right kind of translation tasks, we suggest you just don't offer them. Even if you tell them to not use automated translation tools, many students will anyway.

8. Bug Reports

- If you discover a bug or typo please send it to us at gci-support@google.com. For bug reports please give us as much info as possible (screenshots when relevant are much appreciated).

9. Expect lots of emails

- If you are assigned to a lot of tasks then you can expect to get a bit overwhelmed with the number of emails you are going to be receiving. You'll want to figure out how you want to manage the emails to not stress yourself out. :)
- Also you will likely want to live on your dashboard and refresh often so you can see when there are comments from students asking questions.

10. Students usually aren't comfortable with chat channels right away

- Many students will ask all of their questions through the webapp directly so the comments can be seen from the task itself (and you get an email showing when there was a question posted by the student on that task or when they submit their work for review, etc).
- You will likely want to encourage students to use the chat channel/discussion forum your org uses to get a faster response from anyone in the community (rather than waiting for the mentor (you) to wake up and respond, etc.). But students may not be comfortable using chat channels right away (or at all) so be prepared for that.

Important Links:

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9. [ARCHIVE](#) of GCI 2019 Mentor/Org Admin emails for reference

Please don't forget that we are here to help! If you need any advice or guidance do not hesitate to reach out to us directly. As always, please contact us at gci-support@google.com if you have any questions or concerns. We're looking forward to the biggest and best GCI ever! Thank you all for being a part of the program.

Best,
Stephanie

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Sent Tuesday, Nov 12th

GCI Important Mentor Updates

Thank you for being a GCI 2019 Mentor or Organization Administrator! We are less than 3 weeks from the start of GCI 2019. We know you are very busy creating tasks, inviting mentors, and getting your community ready for GCI but please read this email carefully. It's long, but it contains important information.

gci-mentors mailing list

All Org Admins and Mentors who opted in have been added to the [gci-mentors](#) mailing list. Many of you have already started using the mailing list to ask for and offer advice. This is especially useful for new organizations and mentors. We hope that you continue to support one another throughout the contest!

Task API and Webhooks

You can use the [API](#) or provided [CSV Uploader](#) to bulk upload tasks. If you wish to receive webhook notifications of task instance activity, you must email us your endpoint URL. (Details are in the API documentation.)

Mentoring with multiple organizations

We realize some of you wish to mentor with more than one organization. The system does allow this but before doing it, please consider that being a GCI mentor takes a lot of time to do properly. Don't spread yourself too thin trying to help multiple organizations.

GCI begins Monday, December 2nd 18:00 UTC for students

Before December 2nd, all orgs should:

- Have published a minimum of 75 unique tasks comprising at least 100 task instances across all 5 task categories (we **strongly** encourage you to have at least 100 unique tasks ready - even if some of these are not published yet).
- Have 5+ beginner tasks each with many instances available. Most students will claim a

beginner task for their first task. Having multiple mentors that can review the beginner tasks is strongly encouraged.

- Read these [tips](#) on creating good tasks.
- The more tasks you have in your queue at the start of the contest, the easier your life will be (really, we can't stress this enough)!
- Have at least 10 mentors registered in the system (15+ would be ideal).
- Start discussing how your org is going to decide on its finalists, runners-up and winners at the end of the contest. Be sure all mentors are aware of the criteria and how your org will be evaluating difficulty and community involvement so that everyone is on the same page for the whole contest. It doesn't hurt to take notes on the students doing outstanding work as the contest goes on for reference later.

Creating good tasks

- **Do not create any tasks that require students to supply personal information.** For example, what country they live in, pictures of the student, hobbies, etc. This is personal information and can not be asked or required of students in any manner. If you are unsure about a task please reach out to gci-support@google.com and we can okay it or say it's not acceptable.
- Tasks should have a specific tangible output. Code, graphics, documentation, tests, test verification, etc.
- Do not have trivial tasks. It is not a task to require someone to make an account, sign up for a mailing list, join a chat room, or follow you on social media. Some of those things are overhead, some of the others are blatant marketing and don't benefit the student. We understand that sometimes this kind of trivial task is used as a beginner / hook task, but you'll need to find other things that are not trivial and don't violate privacy concerns.
- No tasks asking students to write blog posts about themselves. You can ask students to write a blog post about some kind of research related to your org, etc. but not a task asking them to write about their favorite tasks or why they are participating, etc.

Thanks in advance for your help. If you have any questions about the GCI contest please contact me or the GCI program administrators at gci-support@google.com.

How does it work for students?

Read [this page](#) to learn the process a student follows to participate. You might get questions about how it works.

Help Promote GCI!

One of the key reasons GCI has grown over the past 9 years is because of your help to promote it to students and teachers. [Here's more information as to how you can help people learn about GCI.](#)

Students Plagiarizing/Cheating

This is a contest for teenagers, which unfortunately means it is likely some cheating and plagiarizing will occur. It is not the norm, but having just one student who cheats can be incredibly frustrating. Here is what to do:

- If you believe a student copied someone else's work or is cheating in some other way please contact us immediately at gci-support@google.com.
 - Include as much information as you can as to why you suspect this is cheating. This should include a link to the task instance, as well as any other documentation, information (the work they copied from) or logs you have.
- We will review the information promptly. If we agree that it is cheating, we will freeze the student's account (preventing them from accessing the system and making them ineligible to receive any prizes). We will also email them to let them know why they have been removed from the program.
- Do not feel bad about reporting a student cheating or plagiarizing - it is not fair to the other 99.95% of students who are working hard in the contest.
- This is a valuable lesson the students need to learn. Our team has no problem banning a student for bad behavior and cheating, neither should you.

Bad Behavior

In many cases student participants don't realize when they are acting or communicating poorly. They may not be familiar with your community standards and code of conduct.

- We urge you to give the student the benefit of the doubt during initial interactions. Try to teach them the correct way to interact with other students and your community. They will often be thankful -- many may not realize what they were doing was wrong/inappropriate.
- Threatening or harassing other participants (Students, Mentors, or Google representatives) is a violation of the [Contest Rules](#). Please report cases promptly, and we will take swift action to remove the offender from the contest.

Expectations

Some questions have come up around the goals of GCI. Check out an extensive [email](#) we wrote that you can find on the GCI-mentor list from 11/11/2016.

GCI Mentor Email Archive

We will keep an [archive](#) of all of these information emails that we send to all mentors and OAs for GCI 2019 and we will keep adding it to the footer of all emails for the rest of the contest so that as new mentors are added they can easily go back and read the previous emails and it is easier for folks to reference the emails.

Please let us know if you have questions about any of this information. You can always reach us at gci-support@google.com. We hope you are all getting excited about GCI 2019! Long, deep breaths everyone, here we go! :)

Best,
Stephanie

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Sent October 29 after orgs were announced

GCI 2019: Important Info for Org Admins - please read carefully

Congratulations on being selected as a Google Code-in 2019 mentoring organization! Welcome to the 3 new GCI organizations, and welcome back to our veteran organizations, we're thrilled to have you back with us!

You can start entering your tasks on the site now. **Published tasks will not be visible for the public until the contest starts Monday, December 2nd at 18:00 UTC.** Please do not wait until the Sunday night before the contest starts to upload your tasks -- it makes us nervous. :) We encourage you to upload some tasks as soon as possible to make sure they look the way you expect them to look.

You can use the [API](#) or provided [CSV Uploader](#) to bulk upload tasks.

Be sure that the link of sample tasks you sent as part of your application is not publicly accessible. We have a blog post going out today that links to the URL you put as your organization's website. In a few cases orgs also had their ideas list on that page. Students may not start working on tasks until the contest starts.

Below is a quick summary of the main points to keep in mind as you prepare for GCI 2019. For a more comprehensive list of important details please read our [Tips and Guidelines for Org Admins](#) and [FAQs](#).

- Mentors must be invited by OAs (Org Admins) using the mentor's preferred Google account. You'll want to start inviting your mentors in these first few weeks.
- Mentors may be as young as 13. A special Parental Consent form (Mentor Participant) is required and will be sent my Google Program Admins to any 13-17 year old prospective mentor when they first register with your org. OAs must be 18 years or older.
- Consider having multiple "instances" for some tasks (ex: you can have 20 of the same task available for students to work on, rather than making copies of the same task over and over again. This is a good strategy for beginner tasks.)
- We strongly encourage you to have a minimum of 50 unique tasks comprising at least 100 task instances available on December 2nd, the start of the contest. *The more tasks you have in your queue at the start of the contest, the easier your life will be for the next 7 weeks - trust us on this.*
- Be sure to have tasks in all 5 categories throughout the contest.
- Tasks should range in difficulty from "I'm totally new and have no programming skills" to "I'm a comfortable programmer." Most participants will do easier tasks, but you'll be surprised by how many start easy and work their way towards harder ones. Some

students want the challenge of the harder tasks – so be sure to have some harder tasks too.

- You do not need to publish all of the tasks on the first day of the contest. We encourage you to publish more tasks every few days during the first few weeks of the contest when demand is particularly high. Fresh tasks help keep students interested!
- If you want to, you are welcome to label a task (in the title or description) as Difficult or Hard, that way students who happen to see a hard task first don't get stressed out and think all of the GCI tasks are that difficult and then they leave the contest right away. You can also put Medium or Easy, though be ready for a lot of the easy tasks to be tackled right away by folks.
- In 2018, the average number of tasks completed per org was 568.

IMPORTANT: Things to keep in mind when creating your tasks -- and information you can not ask for in tasks.

- Only Org Admins can publish tasks so you are ultimately responsible for what tasks are available for students. Mentors can create tasks but you (Org Admins) have to publish them (you can do bulk publishing, so don't worry).
- **Do not create any tasks that require students to supply personally identifiable information.** For example, what country they live in, pictures of the student, age, gender, etc. This is personal information and can not be asked or required of students in any manner.
 - If you are unsure about a task please reach out to gci-support@google.com and we will let you know if it's ok or not Students may volunteer information, but we encourage you to guide them to "Internet safely."
 - No tasks asking students to write blog posts about themselves. You can ask students to write a blog post about some kind of research related to your org, etc. but not a task asking them to write about their favorite tasks or why they are participating, etc.
- Tasks must have a specific tangible output. Code, graphics, documentation, tests, test verification, etc.
- Do not have trivial tasks. It is not a task to require someone to make an account, sign up for a mailing list, join a chat room, or follow you on social media. Some of those things are overhead, some of the others are blatant marketing and don't benefit the student. We understand that sometimes this kind of trivial task is used as a beginner / hook task, but you'll need to find other things that are not trivial and don't violate privacy concerns.

Important Notes for your Org Profile page:

- Your *Org Profile* page (under <https://codein.withgoogle.com/organizations>) is currently viewable by anyone coming to the contest site and is editable throughout the contest.
- Your *Long Description* is what the public will see - it should tell the students, parents, teachers, etc. what your org does in a clear, and concise way. This is the first, and often

only, thing people will read about your org. Make sure it is interesting (without typos) and gives students a quick understanding of what type of work your org does, it essentially is the hook to get them to go and look at your tasks and community. You can use Markdown to provide links to more content.

New contest changes for 2019:

- Orgs will be selecting 6 finalists at the end of the contest:
 - 2 of those 6 finalists will be named winners and receive the trip to Google in 2020 w/a parent/guardian and the backpack and jacket
 - 2 will be named as Runners Up and will receive a special finalist jacket and backpack
 - The last 2 will be considered finalists and will receive the special finalist jacket

Mentors Mailing List and Other Advice

If you opted-in to the mentors mailing list ([gci-mentors](#)), you should be receiving an invitation in the next few days to join the group. If you joined last year you are still on the list and do not need to rejoin.

Veteran GCI Mentors and Org Admins have a wealth of knowledge around best practices and are always ready to help! You can use the [gci-mentors](#) list to reach them. The archives are also full of useful information.

You may also wish to read the "[GCI Organization Advice](#)" document written by Mentors from RTEMS, BRL-CAD, and others as well as the [Deterring and Detecting Cheating](#) thread from a couple of years ago to help you prep your mentors.

If you have any questions or find any bugs please reach out to us at gci-support@google.com.

We're looking forward to the biggest and best Google Code-in yet as we celebrate 10 years of Google Code-in!

Best,

Stephanie Taylor

GCI Program Admin