

User Assistance Best Practices: Part III

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Version 1.0

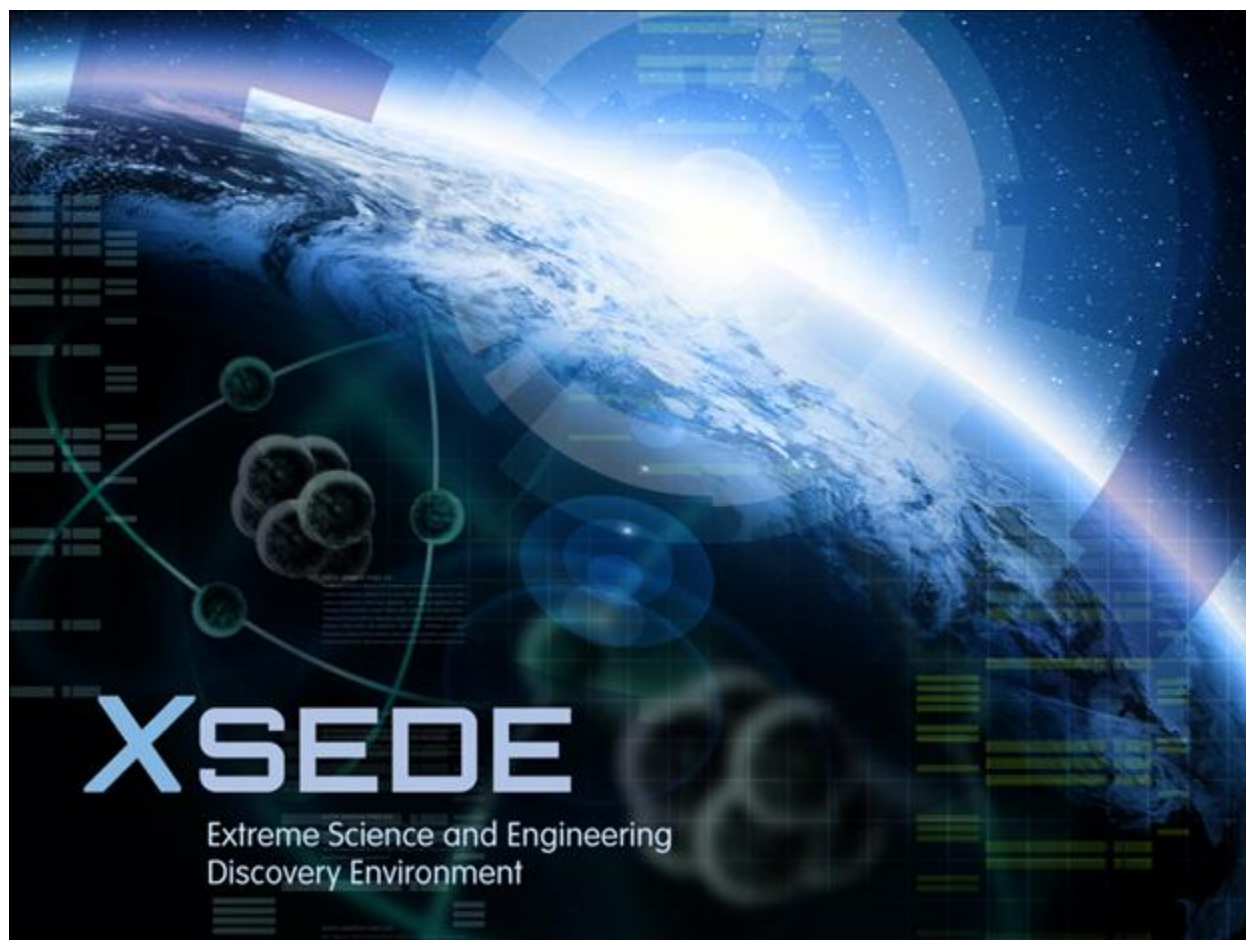


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A. Document History

Relevant Sections	Version	Date	Changes	Author
Section 3	1.0	07/12/2011	Baseline	Xizhou Feng Dean Nairn

B. Document Scope

This document lists some best practices on how to assist users as a Campus Champion. Audiences of this document may include XSEDE Campus Champions, academic research computing staff, or people who will support academic researchers or manage HPC resources. This document does not serve as a comprehensive handbook with all information required for user assistance as a campus champion. Instead, it provides a concise reference for being an effective XSEDE campus champion.

3. Providing Help to Users

Campus Champions can be the first point of contact when their local users need assistance to use XSEDE resources. To best help the user, a Campus Champion needs to be familiar with:

- (1) What types of help will the user need?
- (2) When should the champion step in to provide the help?
- (3) How can the help be effectively provided?
- (4) How can the champion get help from XSEDE and/or other champions to help the user?

3.1. Types of Help that Users may need from Campus Champions

- Get an appropriate XSEDE allocation
- Get familiar with and jumpstart on new XSEDE resources
- Compile/Port software to desired XSEDE resources
- Create the initial scripts or workflow to run their jobs
- Resolve incompatibility issues when moving existing codes/scripts to XSEDE systems
- Use XSEDE resources effectively
- Tune the code and workflow for better performance and/or scalability
- Solve errors occurred when running jobs on XSEDE
- Communicate with XSEDE user support effectively with their issues
- Other helps that users may need for using XSEDE resource for their research

3.2. When Campus Champions should Step in to Help

In general, a campus champion should offer the help when he/she is aware that his/her campus users need his/her assistance and he/she is immediately available to help. If the campus champion is not available, he/she should provide an appropriate XSEDE contact to the users to make sure their issues can be resolved timely. Normally, a campus champion should step in to help under the following scenarios:

- (1) Users come to Campus Champions first with their questions;
- (2) Users copy their tickets to the Champions;
- (3) Champions get the automated tickets/reports or from the XSEDE ticket system;
- (4) Champions notice the issues through other sources.

3.3. How should the Campus Champions provide the help?

- If the Campus Champions know the answer for the users' question, they can provide the help to users right away.
- If the Campus Champions understand the users' problem but don't have an immediate answer, they can help the user to phrase the question in a more understood way and forward the question/ticket to XSEDE user support.
- The Campus Champions can collect the trend of questions raised by the users and pass it along to XSEDE either via the Champions quarterly report process or through directly communication with XSEDE point of contact.
- The Campus Champions can suggest ECSS when they found that:
 - A certain application or software package needs to be available on XSEDE;
 - A process or configuration change can avoid future issues and improve user satisfaction;

- Certain documents , templates, and best practices can be included in the user guide;
 - Others?
- The Campus Champions learn from the process of going through current help so that they can provide better to users in the future.

3.4. Getting Help from XSEDE

Campus Champions can get help from XSEDE to assist users from multiple ways.

- (1) Knowledge Base: The XSEDE portal contains a rich set of documents related on XSEDE resources. Particularly, the searchable Knowledge Base <https://portal.xsede.org/knowledge-base/> can provide answers most common problems.
- (2) XSEDE Help Desk: For all questions related to XSEDE resources, if their answers cannot be found in Knowledge Base, the champions can always contact XSEDE Help Desk at help@xsede.org.
- (3) XSEDE Feedback: For any suggestions or feedbacks, the champions can send email to: feedback@xsede.org.
- (4) Direct contact with XSEDE: For issues that cannot be resolved from the above ways, the champions can contact the XSEDE staff or leadership in relevant areas. The point of contacts can be found in the contact sheet included in the Campus Champion Welcome Package.

3.5. Getting Help from Each Other

For questions outside of the XSEDE scope or unable to be answered by XSEDE resources, Campus Champions can also ask help from the campus champion community via one of the following ways:

- (1) Broadcasting your question on the Campus Champion email list (campuschampions@xsede.org);
- (2) Consulting the XSEDE leadership team for experts in related areas;
- (3) Using other approaches/social networks (e.g., Facebook, Google+ Group, etc.) that already exist or would be available in the future.

3.6. Some Useful Resources

- XSEDE Campus Champion Welcome Package
- <https://www.xsede.org/web/campus-champions/>
- <https://portal.xsede.org/user-guides>
- <https://portal.xsede.org/knowledge-base>
- <https://portal.xsede.org/allocations-overview>
- <https://www.xsede.org/gateways-listing>
- <https://portal.xsede.org/web/xup/online-training>
- <http://www.ci-train.org/training.html/>
- <http://www.supercomputing.org/>
- <https://www.xsede.org/web/xsede12/>