

# FHIR Rules for Asking Questions

Many members of the FHIR community generously give their time for free, answering other implementer's questions on various social media forums.

Some of the forums in which FHIR Community Members are regularly available:

- [chat.fhir.org](http://chat.fhir.org)
- [community.fhir.org](http://community.fhir.org)
- [stackoverflow.com](http://stackoverflow.com)
- the [FHIR email list](#)

Please note, however, that this is all provided by volunteers.

If you're going to ask a question, please take note of the following guidelines:

1. Be specific - provide enough information for someone who might answer the question to actually do so
2. Be clear - what are you asking for?
3. Don't ask questions that can be characterised as 'please do my homework for me' - you'll get better answers when your question is very focused
4. Show that you've done a bit of work yourself - indicate what you've read or where you've already looked (at minimum, reading or searching the specification and searching [chat.fhir.org](http://chat.fhir.org) is encouraged)
5. Please don't ask questions on multiple forums at once. Just ask on one, and wait at least a business day before trying another one. Someone usually responds more quickly than that, but all of us have a life

By the same token, responding to others who ask questions is encouraged. You don't need to be an "expert" or a member of any particular work group. Answering questions is a good way to build credibility within the community and to give back. That said, there are some guidelines here too:

1. Only answer questions when you're relatively confident that you know the answer to
2. Try to distinguish when you're asserting fact vs. opinion
3. If you're not completely confident in the answer, don't be afraid to indicate that
4. When possible, provide references into the specification or other authoritative specification to back up what you're saying
5. If someone asking a question has identified an area where the specification is unclear or could be improved, encourage them to submit a change request - this helps broaden the pool of those who are working to improve the specification and also increases a sense of ownership

See also [Stack Overflow Question Guidelines](#)

## Why are you here?

Mostly, you'll end up at this page if someone referred you here. That means that they think your question (or maybe your response) didn't meet these guidelines. That doesn't mean you can't ask the question or respond, but it does mean you might want to try harder to not take the service for granted.