

# NUG Meeting: How to file a good ticket

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# All the questions about tickets you were too afraid to ask!

- Ticket MYTHS vs FACTS
- Common problems and troubleshooting tips
- DOs and DON'Ts for filing a good ticket

When you submit a ticket, you want to resolve the problem ASAP so you can get back to your work

We also want to help you quickly and efficiently. If you can do a little work up front to explain your problem and provide the relevant info, most likely we can solve it faster

# Ticket MYTHS vs. FACTS

**MYTH: NERSC doesn't like answering tickets**

**FACT: Many of us work at NERSC since we like helping people. It can very satisfying to help someone solve a technical problem.**

**MYTH:** I need to be an expert to submit a ticket

**FACT:** Any user can submit a ticket. Beginner questions are very welcome.

**MYTH:** I need to have spent days stuck on a problem before I file a ticket

**FACT:** Sometimes the answer might be easy or something we've seen before. Go ahead and submit your question after you've done a little troubleshooting, not after you've been stuck for days.

# Troubleshooting tips

# Some basic pre-ticket troubleshooting

- Before you file a ticket, there are a few basic things you can check:
- [NERSC MOTD](#) shows current system status (down, degraded, etc)
- If you're on the NUG slack, this is a good place to check to see if others are reporting similar issues
- [showquota-](#) are you over quota?
- [Iris](#)- is your account current? Do you still have compute hours?
- Dotfiles - is there anything in your .bashrc, .bash\_profile files that you might have forgotten about or that needs to be updated? You'd be surprised how often these settings cause problems for users
- Try the search bar in our [docs](#)
- If none of these help, it's time to submit a ticket!

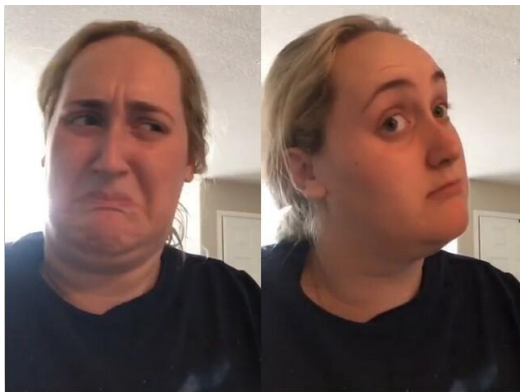


DOs and DON'Ts for  
submitting a good ticket

# DO: be specific!

## Hard to troubleshoot

- My code is slow
- My job won't start
- Cori is broken



## Better to troubleshoot

- JobID 123456 was 3x slower than JobID 234566.
- The jobscript located at `$HOME/submit_job.sh` works on Cori but not on Perlmutter. This was the error message.
- Running python `$SCRATCH/test_cori.py` crashes with this error message.

# DON'T: just paste your error message without any context!

- We are pretty good at computers, but without any context, it can be really hard to look an error message and understand what went wrong
- We'll have to ask you to provide more information, which just slows the process down



# DO: show your work!

- What are all the steps a NERSC consultant needs to reproduce the error from a fresh login?
- What troubleshooting steps have you tried?
- If you are using a software package, where is the repo/documentation?
- If a job failed, what was the jobid?
- [More tips in our docs](#)



Pasting  
a bare  
error message

Providing  
all  
the steps  
to reproduce

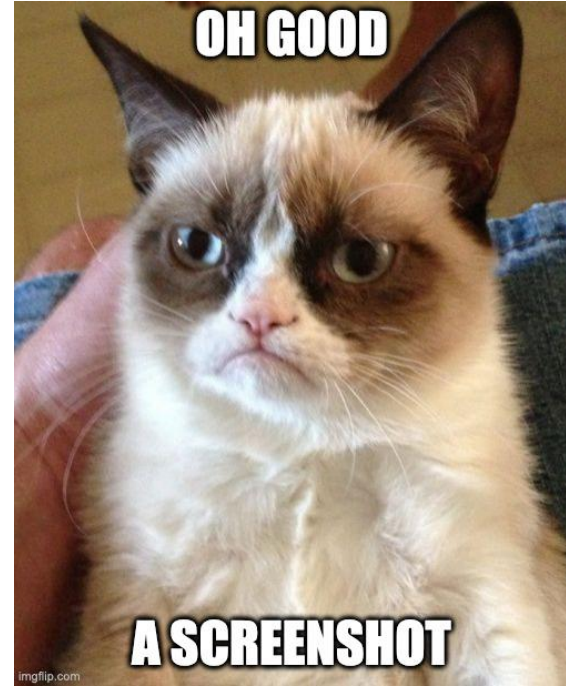
# DON'T: send screenshots!

As consultants we like to be able to copy and paste the paths in your error message to look at your files, to search stackoverflow, etc.

If you give us a screenshot we can't copy/paste anything, which just slows us down

This also applies to pictures of your screen you took with your phone

**DO: Please paste your error message in plain text, even if it seems really long!**



# tl;dr

- Our job is to help you be productive on NERSC systems!
- If you get stuck and basic troubleshooting doesn't help, please submit a ticket
  - Beginner questions welcome
  - Don't spend days stuck on something- it might be an easy fix
- When you submit a ticket, if you can do a few things, it will be easier for us to help you
  - Be specific about the problem
  - Don't provide just the error message
  - Show your work and provide all steps to reproduce, package information, etc.
  - Provide plain text instead of screenshots
- If you can give us all the information up front, we can most likely solve your problem more quickly