MESA DAY CONTEST RULES 2026-2027
(FINAL)

Coding Solutions

LEVEL: High School (HS)

DIVISION(S): Novice: No prior high school *Coding Solutions competition* participation, and
Experienced: Prior high school *Coding Solutions competition* participation

COMPOSITION OF TEAM: 1-2 student(s) per team

NUMBER OF TEAMS: Preliminary – Determined by your local MESA center
Regional – # of teams per division at the discretion of each region (Northern, Central, LA/Central Coast, and Southern)

SPONSORS: University of California Davis MESA College Prep
University of California Riverside MESA College Prep

OVERVIEW: Changes, if any, from "DRAFT" rules are highlighted in "yellow." Congratulations! Thanks to your outstanding participation with the MESA Program. You have been invited to a virtual interview for a software company to obtain an internship. As part of the interview process they will test your knowledge on programming fundamentals and problem solving using Python 3. Students should be familiar with Algebra topics. **Participation logistics and limits may vary by host site. Advisors and students are responsible for verifying this information with their local MESA center.** This competition will be in-person for 2026-2027 but can also be hosted virtually, dependent upon the Host Center.

MATERIALS:

- An internet connected device with a keyboard is required.
- Students must create their own account on Code HS (see enrollment instructions and Regional links on Page 5).

GENERAL RULES:

1) The challenge is suggested to take place within a 60 minute period for all participants at the same time and date. Participants must make sure they are on time and have the resources they need before the competition.
2) Students must have their full name(s), grades, school, and MESA center commented at the beginning of **one** of the challenges submitted. A 10% penalty will be assessed for failing to properly label.
3) This competition will be held during a 60-minute window.

©University of California Regents
These rules are for the internal use of MESA staff and teachers only and should not be forwarded or used outside of MESA.

   a) Novice level will have two challenges: 1 Debug Challenge, 1 Technical Challenge.
   b) Experienced level will have one three-part Technical challenge based on a real-world scenario of higher complexity.
4) Division entry will be determined by participation in prior year Coding Solutions competitions; if one team member is experienced, then the entire team will compete in the Experienced division.
5) Challenge Descriptions:
   a) A debug challenge is a type of programming challenge that requires you to find and fix errors in code. Each challenge will have 10 errors ranging in complexity.
   b) A technical challenge is a type of programming challenge that requires you to code a solution from scratch to create the desired outputs based on the prompt provided.
6) **Novice Only: The Debug Challenges must be completed in order to receive a score for the Technical Challenge.**
7) **Experienced Only: There is no Debug Challenge. You may attempt any part of the Technical Challenge in any order.**
   a) **Each part will have 5 hidden test cases with 15 total test cases.**
8) Teams will earn 10 points for each test case that their submission passes. There will be 5 hidden test cases. See "Specifications and Score Sheets" on Page 6 and Page 7.
9) To be eligible to compete in this competition, **ALL** team members must complete their specified pre-course **one week prior to the contest date:** at least 90% of assignments for Novice or 90% of assignments for Experienced.
   a) The assignments are on the **MESA Day Python Course Assignments** on the **specified CodeHS course** (see "Enrollment Links" attachment/appendix).
   b) Make sure to enroll only in your division's course, may that be novice or experienced.
10) EACH team member **MUST** follow the naming convention for their accounts; if not adhered to, the team may be disqualified (see Page 5 for visual example).
   a) First name field: Abbreviated MESA center and School Name
   b) Last name field: Student's First and Last Name
11) No outside help (e.g., online resources, AI, textbooks, etc.) apart from the documentation tab (docs) provided by CodeHS in the competition window is allowed at any time during the 60 minutes.

JUDGING:

1) Teams will have 60-minutes to complete the challenges.
2) **One team member,** on behalf of the team, will login, enroll and complete the specified competition "Course." If both team members' accounts are present for the MESA Day Challenge Course, that team **will not** be eligible for an award.
3) Challenges start and end at times and dates specified by the hosting center.
4) Teams may submit their completed programs as soon as they like or make revisions within the allotted time.
5) The timestamp of the last submission for each challenge will be used to determine the winners.
6) The final submission will be the last case that was submitted before time runs out.
7) Winners will be determined based on the following order:
   a) The first individual or team based on timestamp to
      i) Successfully submit programs that pass all test cases for challenges.
      ii) Successfully submit programs that pass all debugging test cases (if applicable) and have the most test cases passed for the Technical Challenge.
      iii) The most test cases passed for the Debug Challenge (if applicable).

©University of California Regents
These rules are for the internal use of MESA staff and teachers only and should not be forwarded or used outside of MESA.

8) **TIEBREAKER:** Team that submitted completed challenges first wins.
9) If no teams are successful, no awards will be given. For preliminary competitions, advancement to regional competitions will be at the center's discretion.
10) All testing of code will occur within CodeHS.

AWARDS:

- Awards will be given per division: Novice and Experienced.
- Medals will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place based on the Grand Total.
- Please check with your MESA center to determine the number of teams that advance to Regional MESA Day.

ATTACHMENTS/APPENDIX:

- Topics Students Need to Know
- Resources
- Enrollment Links for MESA Python 3 Course (required pre-course)
- Specification and Score Sheet for Coding Solutions

©University of California Regents
These rules are for the internal use of MESA staff and teachers only and should not be forwarded or used outside of MESA.

Programming Topics Students Need to Know

- Math operators
- User input/output
- Control and conditional statements
- Loops, iterations and nesting
- Boolean Algebra
- Lists
- Functions and user defined functions
- Data Structures

Experienced ONLY:

- 2D Lists
- Dictionaries
- Manipulation of Strings
- Tuples

Mathematical Topics *(Students should aim to have a fundamental understanding of)*

- Arithmetic
- Order of operations
- Evaluating Expressions and equations
- Properties of equalities and inequalities
- Solving algebraic equations and linear equations having one or two variables

Resources

- https://www.sololearn.com/learn/courses/python-introduction
- https://www.w3schools.com/python/default.asp
- https://www.learnpython.org/

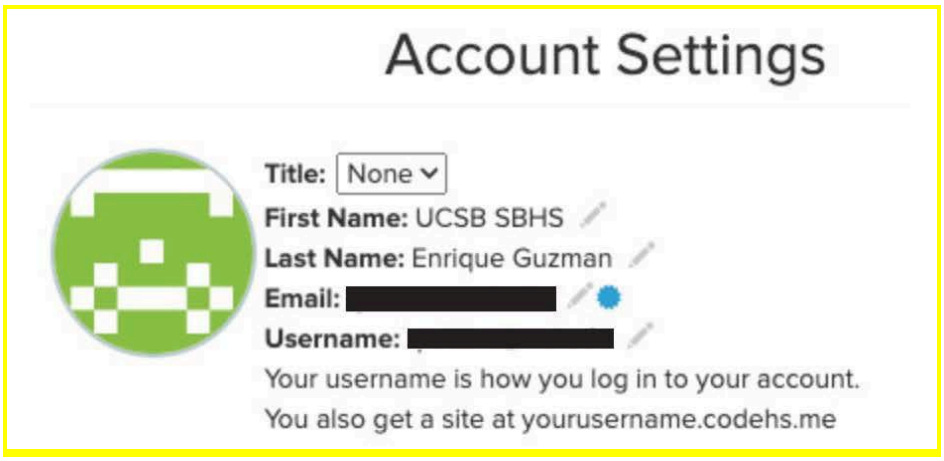
©University of California Regents
These rules are for the internal use of MESA staff and teachers only and should not be forwarded or used outside of MESA.

Enrollment Links for MESA Day Python 3 Course

Enrolling Instructions

When enrolling in CodeHS, EACH team member **MUST** include their **MESA CENTER and SCHOOL** in their registration. See below for example:

- **First name field:** Abbreviated MESA center and School Name
- **Last name field:** Student's First and Last Name



Course Links

Courses have been created to match the MESA region your local center is affiliated with. Please register for your appropriate course:

Northern: For students affiliated with CSU East Bay, RISE, UC Davis, UCSF, Ukiah

NOVICE: https://codehs.com/go/2BC36 Enrollment Code: 2BC36
EXPERIENCED: https://codehs.com/go/636F3 Enrollment Code: 636F3

Central: For students affiliated with Fresno State, San Jose State, UCSC, University of the Pacific

NOVICE: https://codehs.com/go/F1438 Enrollment Code: F1438
EXPERIENCED: https://codehs.com/go/A9F74 Enrollment Code: A9F74

Los Angeles / Central Coast: For students affiliated with CSULA, CSULB, UCLA, UCSB, USC

NOVICE: https://codehs.com/go/B4BFF Enrollment Code: B4BFF
EXPERIENCED: https://codehs.com/go/84166 Enrollment Code: 84166

Southern: For students affiliated with Imperial Valley, San Diego State, UCI, UCR

NOVICE: https://codehs.com/go/D6837 Enrollment Code: D6837
EXPERIENCED: https://codehs.com/go/DB7CA Enrollment Code: DB7CA

©University of California Regents
These rules are for the internal use of MESA staff and teachers only and should not be forwarded or used outside of MESA.

SPECIFICATION AND SCORE SHEET FOR CODING SOLUTIONS

High School - NOVICE ONLY

MESA Center: _____ Student 1: _____ Grade: _____

School: _____ Student 2: _____ Grade: _____

Novice Specification Criteria

- ☐ 2026-2027 rules were followed
- ☐ One Program is properly labeled and commented within coding project with team members' names, grade level, school, and MESA center:
  (10% penalty of **total subscores** if not properly labeled)
- ☐ All team members completed at least 90% of their respective CodeHS MESA Day course assignments
- ☐ Account name follows naming convention. If not, the team may be ineligible for award consideration.
- ☐ Program submission will be under the following team member's account:
  - ☐ _____

Novice Judging Criteria

Project Submissions:	**Debugging** *(Novice level only)*	**Technical Challenge**	**Total Time Spent**	
Time of final Submission:	: :	: :	: :	
Case #1	Pass | No Pass	Pass | No Pass	Correctly Labeled	
Case #2	Pass | No Pass	Pass | No Pass		
Case #3	Pass | No Pass	Pass | No Pass	Yes / No	
Case #4	Pass | No Pass	Pass | No Pass		
Case #5	Pass | No Pass	Pass | No Pass		
	Total Pass:	**Total Pass:**		
Total # of Ps X 10 =	Debug Subscore:	Technical Subscore:	Labeling Penalty: (*10%*)	**Grand Total**

©University of California Regents
These rules are for the internal use of MESA staff and teachers only and should not be forwarded or used outside of MESA.

SPECIFICATION AND SCORE SHEET FOR CODING SOLUTIONS

High School - EXPERIENCED ONLY

MESA Center: _____ Student 1: _____ Grade: _____

School: _____ Student 2: _____ Grade: _____

Experienced Specification Criteria

- ☐ 2026-2027 rules were followed
- ☐ One Program is properly labeled and commented within coding project with team members' names, grade level, school, and MESA center:
  (10% penalty of **total subscores** if not properly labeled)
- ☐ All team members completed at least of their respective codeHS MESA Day course assignments
- ☐ Account name follows naming convention. If not, the team may be ineligible for award consideration.
- ☐ Program submission will be under the following team member's account:
  - ☐ _____

Experienced Judging Criteria

Project Submissions:	**Technical Challenge Part 1**	**Technical Challenge Part 2**	**Technical Challenge Part 3**	**Total Time Spent**	
Time of final Submission:	: :	: :	: :	: :	
Case #1	Pass | No Pass	Pass | No Pass	Pass | No Pass	Correctly Labeled	
Case #2	Pass | No Pass	Pass | No Pass	Pass | No Pass		
Case #3	Pass | No Pass	Pass | No Pass	Pass | No Pass	Yes / No	
Case #4	Pass | No Pass	Pass | No Pass	Pass | No Pass		
Case #5	Pass | No Pass	Pass | No Pass	Pass | No Pass		
	Total Pass:	**Total Pass:**	**Total Pass:**		
Total # of Ps X 10 =	Technical 1 Subscore:	Technical 2 Subscore:	Technical 3 Subscore:	Labeling Penalty (*10%*):	**Grand Total**
		+	+	−	=

©University of California Regents
These rules are for the internal use of MESA staff and teachers only and should not be forwarded or used outside of MESA.