Exponential Contributors Guidelines

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https://doc.exponential.earth/learninminutes/exphelp/viewer/project/CONTRIBUTING.md

Thank you for considering contributing to Exponential! We appreciate the time and effort you invest in making this project better.

Copyright assignment (CLA)

> **By signing the CLA and submitting a contribution to the core kernel, you assign (transfer) the copyright in that contribution to the Exponential Foundation and 7x. They become the copyright owners.**
>
> You **give up control**: the Exponential Foundation and 7x may use, change, relicense and distribute your contribution in any way, including commercially and under other licenses, **without asking you and without paying you**. You **cannot withdraw it or set conditions on it**.
>
> **Your own custom extensions are not affected.**

There is therefore no separate copyright of "the Exponential contributors": the copyright notice names only the Exponential Foundation and 7x, the holders of every merged contribution. Contributors are credited (changelogs, commit authorship, the recognition pages); credit is not a copyright claim.

The agreement is the **Exponential Foundation and 7x Contributor Licensing Agreement**, version 1.1.0 (29 October 2026). Version 1.1.0 of the agreement (29 October 2026) is the first that assigns the copyright: its section 4.1 assigns it to the Exponential Foundation and 7x jointly, and section 4.3 keeps a license as a fallback where an assignment is not effective. The earlier version 1.0.1 assigned nothing: it granted 7x a perpetual, worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty-free, irrevocable copyright license (its section 4, derived from the Apache Individual Contributor License Agreement 2.0). Contributions made under a signed 1.0.1 stay licensed to 7x under 1.0.1 (section 12 of 1.1.0). Under section 6 the work is released under the GNU GPL version 2 or later, and the Exponential Foundation and 7x may also license it on other terms.

Read the agreement before you sign it; this summary does not replace it and is not legal advice.

Who requires it, and for what. The Exponential Foundation and 7x require a signed Contributor Licensing Agreement (CLA) for every code contribution to the core kernel of Exponential, before that contribution can be merged. The core kernel is the repository se7enxweb/exponential: `kernel/`, `lib/`, `bin/`, `design/`, `settings/`, `doc/`, the extensions shipped inside it, and everything else in this repository. The agreement is made with the Exponential Foundation and 7x (owner decision of 2026-10-29: the assignment goes to both, the Foundation named first, as in the copyright notice).

- **Every form of submission counts**: a GitHub pull request, a patch, code attached to or pasted into an issue, and code sent by mail or any other way. The agreement counts any electronic, verbal or written communication meant to share the contribution with the project, including source code control and issue tracking systems, as a submission (CLA, §3, Definitions).

- **Required before the merge.** A pull request from someone without a signed CLA on file is reviewed, but it is not merged until the CLA has been received.
- **Once is enough.** "The CLA will be signed once for all your future contributions". You sign again only "in the case where you would represent a new legal entity".
- **Your own custom extensions are not affected** (see What it does not cover).

How to sign

1. Read the Contributor Licensing Agreement page and download the agreement it links to (*Exponential Foundation and 7x CLA v1.1.0.pdf*, version 1.1.0).
2. Fill in section 2 (the copyright owner, or the legal entity authorized by the copyright owner) and the signature block, and sign it.
3. Deliver it to the Exponential Foundation and 7x "by regular mail, by emailing a scan of the signed copy, or by fax". The agreement gives the e-mail address community@se7enx.com and the postal address; if you send it by e-mail, make sure it arrived.
4. Mention in your pull request (or patch, issue or mail) that your CLA is signed; the pull request template has a checkbox for it.

Individuals and companies sign the same agreement. For a company, "the entity making a Contribution and all other entities that control, are controlled by, or are under common control with that entity are considered to be a single Contributor" (§3). If your employer has rights to what you write, you need its permission, its waiver, or a separate agreement between your employer and the Exponential Foundation and 7x.

What it does not cover

The CLA concerns code **submitted back to the project**. It does not affect:

- **your own custom extensions**, site packages, designs and themes that you write, keep and license yourself, whether you run them privately or publish them in your own repository. The CLA page says: "if you have written a contribution and want to make it available on GitHub (https://github.com), you do not need to sign the CLA. You are free to just upload your contribution to the site."
- **a site you build and run with Exponential.** Using, changing and running Exponential is governed by the GPL (see below), not by the CLA.
- **anything you mark as not a contribution**: the agreement excludes "communication that is conspicuously marked or otherwise designated in writing by You as "Not a Contribution."" (§3).

The CLA page names no repositories. It lists the kinds of code it needs a signed CLA for when "you want 7x to include" it in the project: "complete/incomplete extensions [...], patches, templates, PHP files, configuration files, documentation files, translations". So an extension you **hand over to 7x for inclusion** in the project (for example to be maintained in the se7enxweb organization) is covered in the same way; an extension you only publish yourself is not.

FAQ

Do I give away my copyright? Yes. You assign it to the Exponential Foundation and 7x. Once you sign the CLA and submit a contribution, the Exponential Foundation and 7x own the copyright in it and may use, change, relicense and distribute it as they decide, without asking

or paying you.

I signed version 1.0.1 earlier. What happens to those contributions? They stay licensed to 7x under 1.0.1 (section 12 of 1.1.0); 1.0.1 never assigned the copyright. New contributions need the 1.1.0 agreement.

Can I take my contribution back? No. You cannot withdraw it or set conditions on it.

Can the Exponential Foundation and 7x relicense my contribution? Yes. As the copyright owners, they may distribute it under other licenses and in commercial products.

Why is it needed? "Before we can consider the contributions you provide to us, we must agree on what rights you are offering to us" (preamble of the agreement), and "We cannot accept your contributions unless we have a signed Contributor Licensing Agreement from you".

Is a one-line fix a contribution? The CLA page says that for "small patches or bugfixes via our bugsystem, in most cases we do not need you to sign a CLA", because "authors cannot claim copyright for small fixes". For pull requests to the kernel repository, sign the CLA anyway: a merge needs a CLA on file, and you sign only once.

I contribute for my employer. Then the company is usually the copyright owner: the company signs, or you confirm that it has given you permission or waived its rights.

I only build extensions for my own sites or customers. Nothing to sign. The CLA starts to matter only when you submit code back to the kernel, or hand code to 7x to include in the project.

I already signed the CLA for an earlier project of 7x. One signature covers "all your future contributions"; you sign again only for a new legal entity.

Does the CLA replace the GPL? No. Your contribution is released under the GPL like the rest of Exponential (see Licensing); for the kernel, the CLA additionally assigns its copyright to the Exponential Foundation and 7x.

Licensing of code improvements to Exponential

Exponential is licensed under the GPLv2 or later license, commonly known as the GNU General Public License, version 2 or any later version, grants users the freedom to modify and distribute software. When it comes to code improvements, contributors must ensure that any modifications made to the project are also released under the same GPLv2 or later license. This means that enhancements, bug fixes, or any changes to the codebase must be open-sourced, allowing others to benefit from and build upon these improvements. The "or later" clause allows the project to upgrade to future versions of the GPL, providing flexibility and ensuring alignment with the principles of free software. It's essential for contributors to understand and comply with these licensing requirements to maintain the open nature of the project.

Code of Conduct

Please make sure to review our Code of Conduct before contributing. All contributors are expected to adhere to it. It is the Contributor Covenant 2.1 with Exponential additions for partners and commercial conduct, AI-generated contributions, the CLA, and trainers and advocates. Report a problem to community@se7enx.com; the Exponential Foundation decides.

Getting Started

1. Fork the repository and clone your fork to your local machine.

Shell

```
git clone https://github.com/your-username/exponential.git
```

2. Install the project dependencies.

Shell

```
composer install
```

3. Set up the development environment.
4. Create a feature branch for your contribution.

Shell

```
git checkout -b feature/your-feature
```

Making Changes

1. Always create a new branch for your work to keep the main branch clean.
2. Follow the PSR standards and our coding style.
3. Write clear, concise commit messages whose subject starts with what the change does: `Added:` , `Updated:` , `Fixed:` , `Removed:` or `Renamed:` , e.g. `Fixed: The redirect keeps the query string on the own host`. The commit-msg hook of `.githooks/` (`make hooks`) and CI check it; see the quality checks.
4. Keep your pull request focused. If you have multiple contributions, submit multiple pull requests.
5. Templates and stylesheets of the administration designs (and of extensions' admin designs) follow Styling the administration: no `<style>` block or `style=""` attribute, the shared `.a4-*` components and `--a4-*` tokens with dark values, module CSS in `stylesheets/modules/`. Its code review checklist applies to every such pull request; `tests/tests/design/AdminStylingRulesTest.php` checks it.
6. Name new code by the prefix rule. `sevenx` is 7x's official public PHP code prefix: a class or identifier cannot start with a digit (among other technical reasons), so "7x" cannot be a prefix. Extensions and PHP classes from 7x use `sevenx` or `exp`, as 7x needs; 7x uses `exp` strategically, with intent, to build the Exponential brand and to assign ownership of an extension or solution to the Exponential project and the Exponential Foundation. New kernel code uses `exp`. Existing kernel identifiers (`eZContentObject`, `eZINI`, `ezp*`) are never renamed.
7. A new file of the kernel starts with the project's copyright line, exactly `@copyright Copyright (C) 1998 - 2026 Exponential Foundation and 7x. All rights reserved.` (or the same text in the comment style of its language), followed by the license line. Never remove or change another holder's line (eZ Systems AS and the other authors); put the project's line above it. A notice shown to users reads `Exponential Copyright © 1998-2026 Exponential Foundation and 7x` and is never translated. `tests/tests/bin/CopyrightNoticeTest.php` checks every file; see Copyright and copyleft.

Submitting Changes

1. Ensure all tests pass.
2. Update the documentation if necessary.
3. Keep the file manifest current: every commit that adds, changes or removes a file updates its line in `share/filelist.md5` (`make manifest-fix`). Run `make hooks` once in your clone, and the pre-commit hook checks it, the PHP syntax and the code style for every commit. When CI still finds a stale line, its summary shows the lines to change; see Pull requests.
4. Push your changes to your fork.

Shell

```
git push origin feature/your-feature
```

5. Make sure your signed CLA is on file with 7x (Copyright assignment (CLA)).
6. Submit a pull request to the main repository and tick the CLA checkbox of the pull request template.

Code Reviews

> **Be prepared for many review rounds.** 7x does a much larger than usual number of review rounds before it accepts a commit or pull request, sometimes hundreds of revisions. Expect to revise your code, perhaps many times, until accepting it is simple and easy. This is how the kernel stays maintainable; it is not a judgment of you.

To get through review faster:

- **Keep pull requests small and focused**: one change per pull request. A fix and a refactoring are two pull requests.
- **Follow the coding standards** and the style of the files around your change, so review can focus on what the change does.
- **Add tests** that fail without your change and pass with it.
- **Answer every review comment in the pull request**, with a change or a reason, so the discussion stays in one place.
- **Keep your branch current**: rebase it on `main` when `main` has moved, before asking for the next round.
- **Don't take many rounds personally.** Each round makes the change easier to accept.

Squash and rebase your pull request (required)

7x strongly requests and requires that you **squash and rebase your pull request onto `main` while it is open**, so that merging it is clean and easy. Fold the fixups of each review round into logical commits (usually one), then rebase onto the current `main`:

Shell

```
git fetch origin
git rebase -i origin/main          # mark fixup commits as "fixup" or "squash"; keep logical comm
its, usually one
git push --force-with-lease        # only to your own pull request branch, never to main
```

Force-push only the branch of your pull request. Once a pull request is merged, `main`'s history is never rewritten: a later fix comes as a new pull request.

All contributions will be reviewed before merging. Be open to feedback and be willing to make changes if requested. Code reviews are essential to maintain code quality. A contribution to the kernel is merged only once its author's signed CLA has been received.

Issues and Discussions

Feel free to open an issue for bug reports, feature requests, or general discussions. Follow the provided templates to provide necessary details.

Where the community meets, which channel to use for what, and every public website of the project are in the help center's book Exponential Community.

Negative features. Not every reported bug is a bug. Some behavior is deliberate, or open to interpretation, and other installations, extensions and integrations depend on it working exactly as it does today. Engineers call this a negative feature. An issue or pull request that changes one needs a clear justification of the use case and of who else is affected, and it may go through many rounds of review and revision before it is accepted and merged. A proposal that keeps today's behavior as the default and adds an option is much easier to accept. The help page Getting support: negative features explains more.

Licensing

By contributing, you agree that your contributions will be licensed under the GNU General Public License, version 2.0 or later. Make sure that your contributions comply with this license. In addition, a contribution to the core kernel needs your signed Contributor Licensing Agreement (Copyright assignment (CLA)).

Thank you for contributing to Exponential!

This file is part of the source code of Exponential and is distributed with it under the GNU General Public License, version 2 (or any later version).