

THE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP OCCUPATIONS AND STANDARDS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE (AOSC)

User Experience (UX) Designer National Occupational Framework

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Introduction to Using This Document

Under the Registered Apprenticeship Technical Assistance Centers of Excellence award, the Urban Institute leads the Occupations and Standards work. One of the main objectives of Urban's project is to create high-quality, well-researched, consensus-based work process schedules that are nonproprietary and widely available. This document is a product of that work and contains three sections: the occupational overview, the work process schedule, and the related technical instruction.

The **occupational overview** is a general introduction, including alternative job titles, any prerequisites, and, if applicable, the total number of hours needed to complete a time-based or hybrid program.

The **work process schedule** outlines the major job functions, competencies, and/or hours an apprentice completes in a registered apprenticeship program. It outlines what apprentices are expected to learn on the job with the support of a mentor or journey worker (a worker mastering the competencies of an occupation in a particular industry), including both core competencies and those deemed optional by experts in the field. The work process schedule is the foundational document guiding a program.

Urban works with numerous experts to ensure the content is thoroughly researched and vetted to reflect the expectations of industry, educators, labor unions, employers, and others involved in apprenticeship for this occupation. Sponsors and employers can use the work process schedule as their program standards with assurances it has been approved by experts in the field.

The **related technical instruction** presents considerations for the coursework that apprentices will undertake to supplement on-the-job learning. It is intended to serve as a reference to sponsors exploring their options for the accompanying classroom, virtual, or hybrid training.

How to Use the Work Process Schedule

Sponsors can adapt the work process schedule to accommodate their needs for competency- or time-based or hybrid programs. In a **competency-based** apprenticeship, sponsors assess apprentices' progress across core and optional competencies listed in the work process schedule. In a **time-based** apprenticeship, apprentices complete a predetermined number of hours across major job functions and the program overall. In a **hybrid** apprenticeship, sponsors monitor apprentices' hours spent on major job functions and assess their proficiency across competencies.

Each program type has a different method of assessment:

- **For a competency-based program**, apprentices engage in activities and make progress toward proficiency in the identified competencies. Sponsors overseeing apprentices' work assess their mastery of the outlined competencies using the following rating scale:

- 4—Competent/proficient (able to perform all elements of the task successfully and independently)
- 3—Satisfactory performance (able to perform elements of the task with minimal assistance)
- 2—Completed the task with significant assistance
- 1—Unsuccessfully attempted the task
- 0—No exposure (note the reason—absence, skill isn't covered, etc.)

The competencies may be completed in any order. Apprentices must perform at a level 4 or 3 in all competencies listed as “core” to complete the apprenticeship program successfully.

- **For a time-based program**, sponsors monitor apprentices' completion of hours in training across major job functions. The total number of hours recommended for this occupation is listed in the occupational overview and is based on guidance from the US Department of Labor. Generally, apprentices must have at least 2,000 hours overall for on-the-job learning, but occupations of greater complexity may require more hours. Sponsors will provide apprentices with supervised work experience and allocate the total number of hours across the major job functions to adequately train their apprentices.
- **The hybrid approach** blends both competency- and time-based strategies. Sponsors measure apprentices' skills acquisition through a combination of completing the minimum number of hours of on-the-job learning successfully demonstrating identified competencies. Sponsors will assess apprentices' proficiencies as described for competency-based programs with a rating scale of 0–4 for every core competency. Generally, apprentices have at least 2,000 hours overall for on-the-job learning, but occupations of greater complexity may require more hours. Sponsors will document apprentices' completion within a minimum and maximum range of hours assigned for each major job function.

User Experience Designer Occupational Overview

Occupational Purpose and Context

User Experience (UX) Designers envision how people can best experience products and bring that vision to life by designing digital and physical products and services. UX designers work on all parts of the design process, including researching their user base, developing and testing solutions, and defining and measuring success. Throughout the design process, they communicate and collaborate with teams of other designers, researchers, engineers, and product managers/product owners to improve the user's experience. At each stage, UX designers anticipate and uncover what users need, advocate for them, and ensure that the final product addresses those needs in the context of business objectives.

Potential Job Titles

Experience designer, information architect, interaction designer, interface specialist, product designer, service designer, user experience (UX) architect, user experience (UX) designer, user experience (UX) strategist

Apprenticeship Prerequisites

Individuals who have general computer skills and enjoy collaborating with others are well-suited for UX design. Some apprenticeship programs may require apprentices to have prior knowledge or demonstrated interest in UX research, design, programming languages, visual communication, or human-computer interaction (HCI). Applicants that wish to enter this field might also have a portfolio of prior relevant work. Some apprenticeships may require this while others may not.

Recommended Length of Apprenticeship (Time/Hybrid Programs Only)

The recommended length of time for on-the-job training in a UX designer apprenticeship is 2,000 to 4,000 hours

Work Process Schedule

User Experience Designer

ONET Code: 15-1255.00

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Instructions for Use:

Competency-based programs: In the “performance level achieved” column of the work process schedule (see examples starting on the next page), assess apprentices’ performances on each competency with the scale below. No monitoring of hours is required for this approach. See “Guidelines for Competency-Based, Hybrid and Time-Based Apprenticeship Training Approaches,” US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Apprenticeship, October 20, 2015, <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/sites/default/files/bulletins/Cir2016-01.pdf>.

- 4—Competent/proficient (able to perform all elements of the task successfully and independently)
- 3—Satisfactory performance (able to perform elements of the task with minimal assistance)
- 2—Completed the task with significant assistance
- 1—Unsuccessfully attempted the task
- 0—No exposure (note the reason—absence, skill isn’t covered, etc.)

Time-based programs: In the “hours” row, specify the number of hours apprentices will fulfill for each job function. No assessment of competencies is required for this approach.

Hybrid programs: In the “performance level achieved” column, assess apprentices’ performances on each competency using the 0–4 scale above. In the “hours” row, identify a range of hours apprentices should spend working on each major job function.

Job Function 1: Performs generative research activities to determine scope of project		
Hours (time-based and hybrid programs only):		
Competencies	Core or optional	Performance level achieved (0–4) (competency-based and hybrid programs only)
A. Assists in conducting competitive and comparative analysis of in-market solutions and services to inform product decisions	Core	
B. Utilizes various data collection methods (i.e., surveys, focus groups, interviews) to identify user preferences, needs, context of use, potential opportunities for improvement, and pain points	Core	
C. Meets with key stakeholders to identify any business requirements that must be met for the product to be successful	Core	
D. Seeks to understand, appreciate, and accept user behaviors in the context of business goals	Core	

Job Function 2: Synthesizes insights regarding user needs and behaviors to define key design goals		
Hours (time-based and hybrid programs only):		
Competencies	Core or optional	Performance level achieved (0–4) (competency-based and hybrid programs only)
A. Reviews existing research and best practices to identify patterns in customer and employee behavior as well as strategic business and design opportunities	Core	
B. Uses appropriate human-centered design methods, such as personas, scenarios, user journeys, or empathy maps, to synthesize insights	Core	
C. Contributes meaningfully to conversations on design space by demonstrating a deep understanding of user needs and behavior from qualitative and quantitative research	Core	
D. Reviews user data, current product usage analytics, and performance metrics	Optional	

E. Assists in strategy development, including creating UX briefs, establishing UX strategy, and defining success metrics	Optional	
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Job Function 3: Applies user-centered design methodologies for ideation and solution development		
Hours (time-based and hybrid programs only):		
Competencies	Core or optional	Performance level achieved (0–4) (competency-based and hybrid programs only)
A. Assists in facilitating conversations and collaborative workshops with project teams and partners to brainstorm potential solutions	Core	
B. Assists senior UX designers in storyboarding and concept development, including brainstorming user flows and interactions	Core	
C. Balances trade-offs between user and business needs in the solution-creating process	Core	

Job Function 4: Iterates and prototypes user-centered solutions to refine and enhance designs		
Hours (time-based and hybrid programs only):		
Competencies	Core or optional	Performance level achieved (0–4) (competency-based and hybrid programs only)
A. Drafts outlines of key interactions based on design plan and user flows	Core	
B. Creates a variety of low-fidelity, high-fidelity, and interactive prototypes—physical, digital, or hand drawn—for concept development and evaluation	Core	
C. Ensures all prototypes follow best practices in UX design	Core	
D. Collaborates with cross-functional team to continuously improve and adapt solutions to better serve users	Core	
E. Maintains awareness of users’ perspectives and continuously incorporates users’ needs into product prototypes	Core	

F. Follows company design system in the development of high-fidelity prototypes, if applicable	Optional	
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Job Function 5: Collaborates with cross-functional teams to develop functional products, interactions, or experiences		
Hours (time-based and hybrid programs only):		
Competencies	Core or optional	Performance level achieved (0–4) (competency-based and hybrid programs only)
A. Collaborates with cross-functional team members such as front-end or back-end developers, product managers, and product owners to inform product development	Core	
B. Uses appropriate digital UX/UI design tools and software to assist developers	Core	
C. Utilizes design systems to support product development	Optional	
D. Demonstrates basic understanding of AI and informs use of AI with knowledge of UX research and strategy	Optional	
E. Supports product creation with high-level understanding of HTML/CSS/JS and its systematic nature	Optional	
F. Supports creation of responsive designs to ensure usability across platforms and devices	Optional	
G. Ensures designs are compatible in applications and across all device types	Optional	
H. Collaborates with product development team to create physical prototypes of products using the appropriate medium (3D forms, physical microcomputing environments, and hardware)	Optional	
I. Utilizes augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technology to aid in the prototype development of a product or service	Optional	

Job Function 6: Conducts evaluative research to test and improve design solutions		
Hours (time-based and hybrid programs only):		
Competencies	Core or optional	Performance level achieved (0–4) (competency-based and hybrid programs only)
A. Prepares drafts of discussion guides to guide conversations around design solutions	Core	
B. Assists in designing and running usability evaluations, such as user tests or accessibility tests, on prototypes and solicits user feedback to improve design quality	Core	
C. Identifies and predicts design flaws, proposes solutions to mitigate them, and incorporates solutions into the final product, if applicable	Core	
D. Collaborates with product development team to synthesize data findings and iterate better versions of the design	Optional	

Job Function 7: Effectively communicates with project team, stakeholders, and partners, and demonstrates appropriate work styles		
Hours (time-based and hybrid programs only):		
Competencies	Core or optional	Performance level achieved (0–4) (competency-based and hybrid programs only)
A. Uses a compelling narrative to communicate the user's needs, project vision, and success metrics	Core	
B. Explains the design process, user feedback process, and ongoing iterative development	Core	
C. Presents confidently, speaking at the right level for the audience and confirming understanding	Core	
D. Displays best practices in giving and receiving feedback (i.e., asks for feedback regularly, asks clarifying questions)	Core	
E. Practices active listening and complex problem-solving when handling customer or client inquiries	Core	

F. Communicates with colleagues, advocates for users, and navigates conversations about viability (product manager), feasibility (engineer), desirability (of the user)	Core	
G. Demonstrates the ability to work on multiple projects and deadlines independently, if applicable	Core	
H. Exhibits a responsibility for one's actions	Core	
I. Writes and edits necessary technical documentation for digital interface products and designs, such as user manuals, testing protocols, and reports	Optional	

Job Function 8: Invests in own continuing education and professional development		
Hours (time-based and hybrid programs only):		
Competencies	Core or optional	Performance level achieved (0–4) (competency-based and hybrid programs only)
A. Stays updated on relevant internal policies, regulations, and design systems, if applicable	Core	
B. Utilizes internal and external resources available for training and talent development, if applicable	Core	
C. Maintains knowledge of industry best practices, such as design systems and tools, coding languages, communication tools, web services, and development life cycle methodologies	Core	
D. Seeks feedback to improve skills and abilities	Core	
E. Exercises self-awareness to recognize opportunities for growth	Core	
F. Acknowledges, adapts, and learns from setbacks and challenges	Core	
G. Participates in professional associations, learning communities, and other networks that can help with developing curriculum and one's own professional development	Core	
H. Develops and updates a portfolio and related products that showcase one's past projects and key skills pertinent to UX design	Optional	

Job Function 9: Upholds standards of ethical practice		
Hours (time-based and hybrid programs only):		
Competencies	Core or optional	Performance level achieved (0–4) (competency-based and hybrid programs only)
A. Respects user privacy and prioritizes informed consent in data collection and analysis, if applicable	Core	
B. Ensures all products are accessible by following inclusive design principles, addressing accessibility throughout the design process, and complying with applicable external standards and practices (e.g., Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1)	Core	
C. Demonstrates cultural sensitivity and inclusion, understanding one's personal limitations	Core	
D. Empowers users with choice, information, control, and feedback throughout their experience	Core	
E. Follows best practices for UX design, such as avoiding deceptive practices (i.e., bait and switch, forced continuity)	Core	
F. Seeks out diverse voices and experiences throughout the design and testing process	Core	

Related Technical Instruction

User Experience Designer

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Instructions for Use:

Registered apprenticeships must include at least 144 hours of related technical instruction (RTI). Courses offered by accredited colleges and universities may be assigned a credit hour determination rather than a contact hour determination. In general, an academic credit unit is the equivalent of 15 clock hours of instruction.

Development and Use of This RTI Outline: Employers and academic institutions may approach RTI in markedly different ways. Our goal was not to identify the single best way to provide RTI or to identify a single provider whose content we deemed to be superior. Instead, our goal was to survey numerous education providers, including employers, institutions of higher education, high schools, private continuing education providers, labor organizations, professional associations and, in some cases, municipalities that provide worker training, to identify topics or courses common among those providers that align with the job functions included in this work process schedule. Those common topics or courses are reflected in the RTI outline provided below, which may be useful in developing your RTI program or communicating your needs to an educational partner.

Licensure or certification requirements: Licensure or certification is not typically required for web designers, but some employers may seek employees who have received industry certifications on the use of various software or web design tools. Once such certification is the Google UX Design Professional Certificate.

Degree requirements for licensure or certification, if applicable: None known

Accreditation requirements of instructional provider for licensure or certification, if applicable: N/A

Anticipated changes in licensure or certification requirements, if known: None known

Examples of state licensure or certification requirements: N/A

Examples of RTI providers for this occupation

Professional associations and labor organizations: The User Experience Professionals Association International occasionally offers relevant educational courses aiming to foster continued education for new and seasoned UX professionals (<https://uxpa.org/short-courses>).

The Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) also offers a variety of educational resources for students and professionals in computing and informational technologies, including online books, courses, and training videos (<https://www.acm.org/education/about-education>). Access to these resources is made available to paid ACM members.

Military: New UX designer recruits (in the US Army, called Visual Information Specialists) are provided training in advanced graphics software and specialized equipment operation, maintenance, and repair (<https://www.goarmy.com/careers-and-jobs/support-logistics/creative/46v-visual-information-specialist>).

Federal: N/A

State: N/A

Colleges and universities: There are many accredited career colleges, community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities that offer certificate and degree programs relevant to UX design professionals.

No-cost online providers: Coursera and EdX platforms provide learning opportunities in relevant topics, such as graphic design. Students are generally required to pay tuition to the institution providing the instruction through the Coursera or EdX platform. Google provides educational opportunities for those seeking to become UX designers.

Continuing education or specialty education providers: There are several companies and organizations that provide instruction in graphic design. The programs they offer may lead to a certification, but the coursework completed with these providers generally does not transfer to an accredited college and thus cannot be applied to a college degree.

Prerequisite knowledge, skills or experience typically required by RTI providers for this occupation

UX designers may be required to have basic working knowledge of computers and the internet, along with some background in visual arts or graphic design.

Employee Onboarding

Hours: 1–3

Sample learning objectives

- Explain the mission of the employer’s organization.
- Explain the organizational structure of the employer’s organization.
- Explain the chain-of-command in the employer’s organization, as well as the steps and employee should take to report concerns about practices or behaviors in the workplace or to share ideas about how to improve processes or efficiencies.
- Explain the employer’s policies for workplace conduct and ethics.
- Explain the employer’s policies regarding medical leave and vacation.
- Explain the requirements of the apprenticeship program and the role of the apprentice in the organization’s business activities.

Computer Basics

Hours: 20–30

Sample learning objectives

- Demonstrate the ability to use desktop computers, laptop computers and smart devices to send an email, schedule a meeting, share a document, participate in group editing, use track changes to edit a document, maintain version control of documents, convert Word documents to PDF format, create e-fillable and e-signable forms and create/verify electronic signatures.
- Describe the purpose of network computing and demonstrate the ability to connect devices such as computers, printers, telephones and tablets to a secure network.
- Explain the significance of document security and the use of passwords and other document storage strategies to maintain document privacy and security.
- Explain the importance of Internet security and identify examples of cybersecurity threats, such as malware, Trojan horses, phishing, botnet, spyware, and social engineering.
- Describe effective strategies to prevent cyber-attacks, to create and maintain secure passwords and to take the appropriate action when potential cyber threats are identified.
- Explain the significance of Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) for tagging text files on World Wide Web pages to achieve the desired graphic or design effects. Demonstrate the ability to use HTML code to develop a web landing page.

The Needs of the User

Hours: 20–30

Sample learning objectives

- Explain the processes that designers use to identify user demographics, user needs, likely user concerns and challenges, and user perspectives.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop and evaluate user journey maps for different kinds of websites and apps.
- Discuss the types of user pain points that designers must address in their design plan.
- Demonstrate the ability to engage in productive brainstorming to identify and respond to likely user needs and pain points.
- Define and discuss Gestalt principles that explain how people group stimuli together to make sense of the world: similarity, proximity, continuity, closure, figure-ground, symmetry, common fate, etc.

Principles of Website Design

Hours: 40–50

Sample learning objectives

- Explain and demonstrate the use of good principles of web design, including identifying the website's purpose; using effective color, typography and imagery; easy navigation; F-shaped pattern reading; using visual hierarchy to establish a focal point; identifying or creating good content; creating a grid-based layout that improves the user experience; quick load time; and mobile friendly.
- Describe the principal elements of effective user interface design.
- Explain the principles of user experience design.
- Describe the key components of the user experience.
- List and explain the requirements of federal legislation regarding web accessibility.
- Explain the importance of designing websites that are accessible to individuals with disabilities, including blindness, color blindness, deafness or hearing impairment, impaired or limited vision, limited hand and finger mobility or dexterity, etc.
- Demonstrate the ability to create wireframes and prototypes appropriate to the needs of outside clients, internal design teams, programmers and accessibility testers.
- Explain the relevance of design sprints and discuss the strategies that UX designers employ to contribute to such activities, evaluate their success, and make recommendations for improvements to future design sprints.

Building Effective Websites

Hours: 40–60

Sample learning objectives

- Explain the types of research that UX designers employ to improve the user experience for websites, apps and other forms of communication.
- Describe the comparative advantages and disadvantages of commonly used web design tools, such as WordPress, Adobe Dreamweaver, and InDesign, and demonstrate the ability to create a basic website using one or more of these tools.
- Demonstrate the ability to use HTML to build content for a basic website.
- Create Cascading Style Sheets and create rules to elevate website style and design.
- Develop a website advertising a product or service, implementing a survey, and providing educational information using WordPress, Adobe Dreamweaver, and/or InDesign.
- Demonstrate the ability to use Figma and Adobe XD design tools.
- Describe the benefits and demonstrate the ability to use GitHub to retrieve and store code and to participate in a coding community.
- Demonstrate the ability to use basic JavaScript code to embed interactive content into a website.
- Develop prototype web and mobile app designs and evaluate these prototypes based on user needs, potential areas of bias, and deceptive patterns.

Accessibility Design Tools and Testing

Hours: 30–40

Sample learning objectives

- Identify the purpose of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) in establishing web accessibility standards and outline the key elements of the Web Code Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) established by W3C.
- Describe and demonstrate the ability to follow the Authoring Tool Accessibility Guidelines established by W3C.
- Describe and demonstrate the ability to follow or employ the User Agent Accessibility Guidelines established by W3C.
- Explain the principles of web accessibility as defined by WCAG including that websites should be perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust.
- Describe the types of assistive devices, tools, and technologies commonly used by individuals with disabilities to effectively interact with web content.
- Discuss strategies for developing websites, including the use of HTML tags that support the use of assistive devices and technologies.

- Describe the purpose and demonstrate the ability to use various accessibility tools, including developer, monitor, and auditor tools.
- Explain the importance of and demonstrate the ability to use a variety of usability testing tools—such as moderated research, unmoderated research, card sorting, tree testing, and A/B testing to ensure that websites meet the needs of users with disabilities.
- Demonstrate the ability to work as part of a team of web designers, web developers, and web accessibility testers to create effective websites that comply with federal laws and regulations.

The Role of AI in UX Design

Hours: 20–30

Sample learning objectives

- Explain the large language models on which modern AI is built.
- Explain the input/output structure needed for AI function.
- Discuss how organizations use AI to develop input–output maps.
- Identify the types of problems AI can be used to solve.
- Explain the principles of intelligence augmentation.
- Discuss human-centered approaches in developing AI models.
- Demonstrate the ability to use prototyping to develop and assess AI-based design.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of providing complete user control versus the use of tools that automate certain tasks.
- Discuss the phenomenon of overreliance as well as its causes, advantages, and disadvantages.
- Discuss the benefits and disadvantages of using chatbots.
- Explain the role of generative agencies and create a custom generative agent.
- Discuss the ethical and social impacts of AI and AI-based products.

Relevant military experience

46V MOS—“Visual Information Specialists” may have relevant experience and training in UX design.

Occupational insights

There have been considerable efforts to integrate principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in UX design, such as designing websites to be accessible to all individuals (including those with disabilities) and incorporating content and images that are diverse and culturally sensitive.

Currently, 60 percent of UX designers are males while 40 percent are female. 70.2 percent of UX designers are white, followed by Hispanic/Latinx (10.6 percent), Asian (10.4 percent), and unknown (5 percent).

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STATEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE

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