

BCS Foundation in User Experience

Course & Certificate

Overview

This 3-day course addresses User Experience (UX) practice as applied to the design of systems, products and services. It aims to provide the candidate with an understanding of the core concepts of User Experience and knowledge of the most common tools, techniques and methods used in the field. It does not focus on one specific method.

Holders of the BCS Foundation Certificate in User Experience should be able to:

- Ensure systems have an early and continual focus on users and their tasks
- Plan and carry out empirical measurements of user behaviour
- Practise validated learning through prototyping and iterative design

Who is this course for?

Anyone involved in the design and evaluation of systems, products and services, including interface designers, usability engineers, business analysts, product owners, product managers, IT managers, quality managers, testers, development managers and software developers.

What is included in the course price?

- Teaching by a real industry expert with **20+ years of experience**
- Exam and certification fee
- Delicious lunches and refreshments
- 1-year BCS Associate Membership from the Chartered Institute for IT - terms and conditions apply

Exam

- 60 minute 'closed book'
- 40 multiple choice questions
- Pass mark is 26/40 (65%)

How to book?

It's easy to book and pay for this course online. [Click to book](#)

Syllabus

1. Understand the Human Centred Approach – (5%)

- 1.1. Articulate the importance of taking the users' perspective.
- 1.2. Paraphrase the key principles of user centred design.
- 1.3. Recall ISO9241 as an important standard in the field of usability.
- 1.4. Have an understanding of different user perspectives and goals for using a system
- 1.5. Recall the difference between usability and user experience.
- 1.6. Recall the difference between usability and user acceptance testing.
- 1.7. Summarise the benefits of inclusive design.

Appreciate why it is important to take the users' perspective. Understand and appreciate the key principles of user centred design, for example from ISO9241-201.

The design is based upon an explicit understanding of users, tasks and environments.

- Users are involved throughout design and development.
- The design is driven and refined by user-centred evaluation.
- The process is iterative.
- The design addressed the whole user experience.
- The design team includes multidisciplinary skills and perspectives.

2. Conduct User Research – (10%)

- 2.1. State the components of the context of use.
- 2.2. Identify the potential users of the system.
- 2.3. Plan site visits to end users to understand the context of use.

- 2.4. Recognise good and poor questions to ask in user interviews.
- 2.5. Describe the kinds of data that should be collected during a site visit to users.
- 2.6. Interpret the data from a site visit in ways that can be used to develop a shared knowledge of the context of use.
- 2.7. State the difference between observation and interpretation.
- 2.8. List discount usability research techniques that can be used to understand the context of use, such as diary studies.
- 2.9. State the key principles of contextual inquiry.
- 2.10. Define affinity programming.
- 2.11. Choose the appropriate research method to understand the context of use.
- 2.12. Demonstrate the difference between opinion-based and behaviour based research methods.
- 2.13. Recognise that requirements gathering and conceptual design should be truly inclusive.

This section of the syllabus introduces candidates to the notion of the context of use (users, goals and environments). It demonstrates that the most powerful data for design comes from field visits where researchers observe the way users achieve their goals in their own environment.

- Articulate the steps in a suitable user research technique, such as contextual inquiry, ethnography or a site visit.
- Describe the kinds of data that should be collected during a site visit and report on appropriate data collection methods, such as AEIOU (activities, environments, interactions, objects and users) and Empathy Map.
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of opinion-based methods, like surveys and focus groups, and behaviour-based methods, like contextual inquiry.
- Explain the notion of affinity diagramming as a way to analyse the qualitative data from field visits.
- Recall how user journey maps are constructed from affinity diagrams.

3. Illustrate the Context of Use – (15%)

- 3.1. Illustrate the specific users of the system.
- 3.2. Write descriptions of users that can be used for design.
- 3.3. Explain the rationale for focusing on user needs.
- 3.4. Interpret key user needs.
- 3.5. Explain that including too many choices in a user interface increases the cognitive load on users.

3.6. State the elements of a user story.

This section of the syllabus builds upon the previous section to show how data from field visits are used to understand users and their goals.

- Demonstrate how to create personas from user research data.
- Understand how to identify users' key tasks and illustrate how they relate to user stories in a methodology like SCRUM.
- Understand Hick's Law and how it relates to the number of choices in a user interface.

4. Measure Usability – (5%)

4.1. Define usability.

4.2. Illustrate how the definition of usability can be used to construct measures of usability.

4.3. Demonstrate how to choose between good and poor design ideas by using behavioural data.

4.4. Illustrate the role design experiments play in validated learning.

4.5. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of multivariate testing as a method for choosing between design alternatives.

4.6. Explain the value of iterative design.

4.7. Recall that good and bad user experiences have an emotional reaction on users.

An awareness of the ISO 9241-11 definition of usability. Articulate how usability can be specified in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction. Explain the value of validated learning and why iterative design has value.

5. Information Architecture – (15%)

5.1. Recognise the way information flows between a person and a product or service.

5.2. Choose appropriate schemes for classifying and organising information.

5.3. Organise, structure and label content, functions and features.

5.4. Describe the steps in carrying out an open and a closed card sort.

5.5. Compare and contrast an implementation model, a mental model and a conceptual model.

5.6. State the concept of affordance.

State how to create a structured experience from disorganised information. Describe organisational techniques like Richard Saul Wurman's LATCH (Location, Alphabet, Time, Category, Hierarchy) model. Recall the different kinds of card sort.

Note: that a card sort can be an open card sort (no constraints) or a closed card sort (the categories into which cards are to be sorted are defined)

6. Interaction Design – (10%)

- 6.1. Describe different user interface design patterns.
- 6.2. Choose the correct interactive control in a user interface design.
- 6.3. Describe how the choice of user interface control has an impact on the time it takes users to achieve their goals.
- 6.4. Define the concept of progressive disclosure.
- 6.5. State the difference between interaction design and information architecture.
- 6.6. Explain why user interface consistency is an important design principle.
- 6.7. State the importance of focusing on the user's tasks when designing the flow of a user interface.

Describe different user interface patterns (for example, Wizards, Organiser Workspaces and Carousels). Demonstrate good and poor practice in the use of user interface controls, such as checkboxes and radio buttons. State Fitts' Law.

7. Visual Design – (10%)

- 7.1. List fundamental principles of visual design.
- 7.2. Identify good and poor page layouts.
- 7.3. Define eye tracking as a research methodology and recall key insights from eye tracking research.
- 7.4. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of using metaphorical representations in visual design.

This section of the syllabus covers:

- Describe the core principles of visual design and how they can be used to remove clutter from user interfaces.
- Recognise and appreciate that good and poor design on usability has an impact on the user's experience. Become familiar with the design principles of contrast, alignment, repetition and proximity.

- Recognise how to improve a visual design (such as a form) using these design principles.
- Describe how appropriate metaphors in user interface design can bridge the gap between the user's mental model and the design's conceptual model.
- Recognise the main eye tracking gaze patterns when viewing web page content.

8. User Interface Prototyping – (10%)

- 8.1. Choose between different types of prototype, for example paper and electronic, and recall the merits of each.
- 8.2. Recognise the appropriate type of prototype for the phase of design.
- 8.3. Describe the differences between prototypes and sketches.
- 8.4. Recognise the importance of identifying multiple different design solutions before deciding on a specific design solution.
- 8.5. Sketch paper prototypes.

Introduce high- and low-fidelity user interface prototyping. Recall that a prototype can take many forms, from paper to electronic, and that the purpose of a prototype is to support validated learning by asking and answering design questions. Practice the concept of interactive paper prototyping.

9. Usability Evaluation – (20%)

- 9.1. Recall Nielsen's Usability Heuristics and have an awareness of other usability principles.
- 9.2. State the different kinds of usability evaluation.
- 9.3. Plan usability evaluations to test design hypotheses.
- 9.4. Record the data from usability evaluations.
- 9.5. Interpret the data from usability tests to distinguish high and low severity usability problems.
- 9.6. Moderate a usability test.
- 9.7. State the difference between a usability inspection and a usability test.
- 9.8. Choose between good and poor tasks for a usability test.
- 9.9. State the difference between observation and interpretation.
- 9.10. Identify W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines as an important standard in the field of web accessibility.

This section of the syllabus covers:

- How to evaluate the usability of systems.
- Appreciate that usability evaluation is not just about usability testing but can include methods such as heuristic evaluation and A/B testing.
- Recognise that there are many different sets of usability principles.
- List Nielsen's Usability Heuristics.
- Describe the different kinds of usability evaluation, such as moderated and unmoderated usability testing and remote and lab-based testing.
- Paraphrase why usability testing can use smaller samples than opinion-based research techniques like surveys.
- Demonstrate the steps required to run an in-person, "thinking aloud" usability test. List common pitfalls in usability testing (such as focusing on opinions at the expense of behaviours).
- Record observations from a usability study and explain how these observations can be analysed with an affinity diagram. Run a usability test.

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