## LDA Phase 1: Discovery Sprint Simulation (Weeks 2–6, Module 2 Sprints 1 & 4)

### **Phase 1: Discovery Sprint Simulation (Weeks 2–6, Module 2 Sprints 1 & 4)**

The objective of Phase 1 is to introduce participants to human-centered problem scoping utilizing the Discovery Sprint model. This phase simulates how agencies and vendors define problems before writing solicitations, with a strong emphasis on stakeholder engagement, constraint analysis, and opportunity identification. Key learning outcomes include human-centered discovery and framing. This phase commences with the identification and approval of an appropriate product in Module 2, Sprint 1, culminating in a Sprint Report deliverable in Module 2, Sprint 4.

**Facilitator Guide:**

Facilitators begin by forming teams of 4 to 5 participants. A crucial aspect of this phase involves guiding teams on the specific characteristics of a recent (within 2–3 years) digital service project suitable for analysis. This guidance must explicitly connect to the types of projects that can generate the Vendor Case Study-aligned artifacts required for Phase 2. Facilitators should emphasize the importance of identifying projects where user research was demonstrably conducted and where a clear, iterative change was implemented based on that research.   
  
The facilitator's role here extends beyond simple approval; it involves actively assessing whether the chosen project can realistically yield the necessary Vendor Case Study artifacts. If a team selects a project lacking a clear user research component or a demonstrable iteration based on feedback, it risks setting the team up for failure in Phase 2. Therefore, the facilitator acts as a compatibility gatekeeper, ensuring the selected project possesses the inherent characteristics to support the subsequent phases. This may involve probing questions such as: "Can a specific feature or design element that underwent user research be identified?" or "Is there evidence of an iterative change based on user feedback?" This proactive guidance, provided early in Phase 1, is fundamental to preventing teams from investing time in a project that cannot meet the Phase 2 requirements, thereby ensuring the cumulative learning experience remains viable.

Teams are encouraged to conduct outreach to real digital service companies or agency partners for stakeholder interviews. Facilitators should provide strategies and templates for these interactions, highlighting the value of gaining authentic insights into problem definition and stakeholder perspectives. Teams are required to conduct at least 2–3 simulated or real stakeholder interviews, with facilitators providing scenarios or role-playing exercises if real interviews are not universally feasible. Participants should utilize provided excerpts or summaries of the USDS Discovery Sprint Guide to effectively frame their problem scoping and research activities.Finally, facilitators must explicitly link the Phase 1 Discovery Summary to the upcoming Case Study Development, explaining that the research conducted in this phase forms the foundational context for the vendor response in Phase 2.

Team Deliverables: Each team is required to submit a 3-page Discovery Summary. This document must include a background and problem framing, identification of stakeholders, research and insights, and a discussion of pain points and opportunities. This deliverable is also referred to as a Sprint Report.

**Phase 1 Facilitator Checklist & Key Prompts**

| Task | Key Prompts/Considerations |
| --- | --- |
| Form Teams | Ensure equitable distribution of skills. |
| Introduce Independent Discovery | Explain the rationale for self-selection and its connection to real-world scenarios. |
| Guide Project Selection (Criteria for Case Study Evaluation compatibility) | "Does the chosen project allow for demonstration of a design file used in usability research?"  "Can an implemented change based on research insights be clearly identified or simulated?"  "Are teams aware that this discovery will directly feed into a fixed, pass/fail Case Study requirement?" |
| Encourage Outreach | "Have teams identified key stakeholders for interviews, and are their insights relevant to a digital service problem?"  Provide templates and best practices for professional engagement. |
| Facilitate Interviews | Guide teams on conducting effective interviews and provide simulated scenarios as needed. |
| Review Discovery Summary | "Is the Discovery Summary clearly articulating a problem that a digital service solution could address?"  Assess clarity, completeness, and alignment with HCD principles. |

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