# User Experience Assessment

A User Experience Assessment is a holistic approach that directly links user research methods with usability evaluation methods to improve the fidelity and relevance of user testing tasks.

User Experience is often described as the intersection of the people, their activities, and the context in which they perform those activities.  Standard approaches frequently don’t integrate user testing with user research directly leaving the danger that the things that are being measured aren’t the same things that users need, or the tasks that are used for the test don’t capture the rich context that the users originally described.

This is an integrated approach that ties user needs assessment to user testing. Users are recruited to fit the expected user types for a planned system, and a user research method such as contextual inquiry or focus group is completed with them. As part of the summarization phase, participants are asked to help develop testable tasks and scenarios that best describe their activities, individual motivations, and the context of their work. If there are multiple participants for a user group, the tasks developed should be merged to increase coverage and reduce redundancy where possible.

The results of this user research activity should drive requirements and system design of course, but can also be used to drive formative and summative user tests. The same participants that participated in the user research activity can be used in the evaluation, a new group of participants can be used, or a combination of each can be recruited.

## Benefits

* All the same benefits of user testing.
* Higher confidence that testing tasks and scenarios are relevant to likely users and reflect the full scope of their needs.
* No more costly than performing user research and user testing separately.

## Limitations

* The results of this method are still limited by the ability of the business owner to identify and recruit real representative users.
* The decision to use this method needs to be made early in the process so that the user research procedures can be amended to collect task and scenario information.

## Study Execution

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| **​Milestone** | **​Owner** |
| ​Initiate Kick-off Call | HFE |
| Specify Study Objectives | ​Business Office |
| ​Perform a modified [user research method](https://vaww.portal2.va.gov/sites/humanfactors/HFBoK/SitePages/Understanding%20User%20Needs,%20Workflows,%20and%20Environments.aspx) | ​                        Business Office                                     HFE |
| Compile tasks for testing | ​HFE |
| ​Conduct a [formative](https://vaww.portal2.va.gov/sites/humanfactors/HFBoK/SitePages/Formative%20Usability%20Test.aspx) or [summative](https://vaww.portal2.va.gov/sites/humanfactors/HFBoK/SitePages/Summative%20Usability%20Test.aspx) user test | HFE |
| ​Analyze findings, write report | HFE |
| ​[Conduct After Action Review](https://vaww.portal2.va.gov/sites/humanfactors/SitePages/AAR%20Process.aspx) | HFE |

## Outcomes

* Detailed descriptions of users, their needs, desires, and the context of their activities.
* Testable user scenarios and tasks.
* Produce a list of usability problems, categorized by importance, and an overview of the types of problems encountered.
* Arrange a meeting with the business office and developer to discuss whether and how each problem can be fixed.
* If measures have been taken, summarize the results of the satisfaction questionnaire, task time and effectiveness (accuracy and completeness) measures.

The type of objective and subjective data collected during testing may include:

* Ability and time to complete a task.
* Sequence and number of steps to complete a task.
* Types and numbers of errors.
* Number of repeated errors.
* Number of design issues.
* Ratings of ease of performing a task.

Severity rankings are assigned to each problem. These rankings can be determined by the impact of the problem and the persistence of the problem.

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| **Phase of Development​** | |
| ​ | ​Planning, Scoping & Definition |
| **​X** | **​Requirements Gathering** |
| **X** | **​Early Design** |
| **​X** | **​Detailed Design & Development** |
| **​X​** | **​Field Testing** |
| ​ | ​Deployment |
| ​ | ​Post-Deployment |

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| **​Study Characteristics ​** | |
| ​**Timeframe** | 1 week (user research) 5-6 weeks (user testing) |
| **​Level of Effort** | High |
| ​**Data Collection** | Behavioral, Attitudinal |
| ​**Data Reporting** | ​Quantitative, Qualitative |

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| **​Related Methods ​** | |
| **Derived from** | ​-- |
| **​Complimentary Methods** | [**Heuristic Evaluation**](https://vaww.portal2.va.gov/sites/humanfactors/HFBoK/SitePages/Heuristic%20Evaluation.aspx) |
| **​Similar Methods** | [**Summative Usability Test**](https://vaww.portal2.va.gov/sites/humanfactors/HFBoK/SitePages/Summative%20Usability%20Test.aspx)  [**Formative Usability Test**](https://vaww.portal2.va.gov/sites/humanfactors/HFBoK/SitePages/Formative%20Usability%20Test.aspx) |
| **​Follow-Up** | -- |