

Introduction to Course 4

Understand the UX research process

Build a UX research plan (part 1)

Build a UX research plan (part 2)

▶ **Video:** Continue building a research plan: Methodology
1 min

📖 **Reading:** Learn more about methodology
20 min

▶ **Video:** Continue building a research plan: Participants
3 min

📖 **Reading:** Recruit a diverse participant pool
20 min

📖 **Practice Quiz:** Practice Activity: Continue building your CoffeeHouse research plan: Methodology and participants
1 question

📖 **Reading:** Activity Exemplar: Continue building your CoffeeHouse research plan: Methodology and participants
10 min

📖 **Reading:** Assistive technology for participants with disabilities
20 min

▶ **Video:** Finish building a research plan: Script
6 min

📖 **Practice Quiz:** Test your knowledge on UX research participants and scripts
3 questions

📖 **Practice Quiz:** Practice Activity: Finish building your CoffeeHouse research plan: Script
1 question

📖 **Reading:** Activity Exemplar: Finish building your CoffeeHouse research plan: Script
10 min

📖 **Reading:** Example UX research plans
20 min

Respect user data and privacy

Week 1 review

Recruit a diverse participant pool

As you develop your UX research plan, you'll outline a group of participants to include in the study and collect feedback from. The participants in your study should represent your product's potential users. These participants play a big role in shaping your designs because you'll take their pain points and suggestions into account as you iterate.

How and where you find research study participants can differ depending on the company you work for and the type of product you're designing. Regardless, there are some important best practices to follow when recruiting a diverse and inclusive group of research participants.

Where can I find participants?

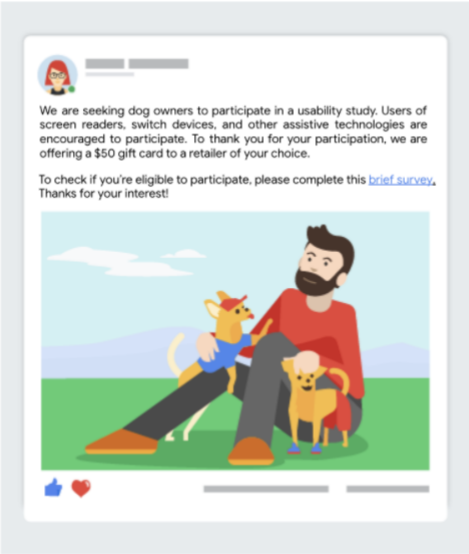
Finding people who will provide feedback about your designs might seem a little overwhelming at first. The good news is that there are a few different places you can turn to find research participants!

Existing user base



If you're conducting research and creating designs for a company with an **existing user base**, you'll likely be able to recruit participants from that group of established connections. This might not be the case for your current project in this program, but recruiting from an existing user base is pretty common in the real world.

Online



Alternatively, if you're coming up with designs for an imaginary company or a newly established business, the easiest way to recruit participants for your study is **online**. You can use social media, online design communities, or even fee-based research recruitment agencies. There are also websites created specifically to connect companies with research participants, like [UserTesting](#) and [User Interviews](#). Keep in mind that recruiting participants online can have downsides. For example, you risk leaving out populations of potential users, like older people who don't use the internet or people who don't have internet access at home. As you create your research study plan, consider the target audience for the product you're designing and decide if you can recruit that type of user online.

Hallway testing



If recruiting participants online isn't an option, a less formal way to recruit for your study is to ask people in person. You can use a recruiting method known as **hallway testing**, which means asking people that pass by in the "hallway" to try the product you've designed. Try to position yourself in a location where you're most likely to encounter your product's target audience, like a dog park or a coffee shop. Hallway testing can be effective if you're recruiting a small number of participants, if you have limited time, or if you want to conduct research for free. However, finding participants in this way is risky because the people you collect feedback from might not have all the characteristics of your product's potential users.

Incentives



There's one more thing to consider when it comes to finding participants: Incentives. **Incentives** are something that motivates or encourages people to participate in a research study. Incentives can take the form of monetary compensation, gift cards, physical gifts, or a gesture to thank participants for their time and feedback, like a paid lunch. No matter where you find participants — online or in person — you'll need to consider how you'll incentivize them to engage in your study.

Who will the research study participants be?

Your research plan should include a list of the primary characteristics of the people you will recruit to participate in the study. The types of participants you select should be based on your research goals and the target users of the product you're designing.

The best way to check if potential participants meet your desired characteristics and represent a diverse set of individuals is with a screener survey. A **screener survey** is a detailed list of questions that help you determine whether potential participants meet the requirements of the research study. To learn more about screener surveys, check out this [article from User Interviews](#).

As you create a screener survey, remember that getting feedback from participants with diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and abilities is extremely important for ensuring that your designs are accessible and equitable. A **representative sample** is a small group of participants who represent both your target user group and user groups that are often marginalized. And a **marginalized population** is one where people have specific characteristics and life experiences that prevent them from fitting into what society inaccurately defines as "normal," such as people with disabilities or people with limited access to technology. Collecting feedback from a representative sample will help you enrich the overall user experience on your product.

In an effort to be inclusive of people of all abilities when you're recruiting participants for your usability study, your first instinct might be to seek out people based on their disability status. But directly asking someone's disability status limits people to only one aspect of their identity: their disability. Disability status can be considered Sensitive Personally Identifiable Information, which is illegal to inquire about in many situations. Instead of recruiting participants who are visually impaired, hearing impaired, or who have physical impairments, **recruit participants who use the assistive technologies you want to involve in your study**. For example, seek out participants who use:

- Screen readers
- Closed captions
- Switch devices
- Keyboard-only navigation
- Magnification devices or magnified screens
- Any other assistive technologies that will provide insights about your UX design

Remember, the participants you collect feedback from during research are key to the success of your product's design. Participants provide valuable perspective about the user experience you've developed and can highlight areas for improvement in your work. As you recruit participants for your own research study, be sure to find individuals who align with the target users of the product you're designing and who come from diverse backgrounds of all kinds.

One more thing to keep in mind when finding diverse participants for your usability study: It's a good goal to have between five and eight participants. Five participants is a large enough sample size to gain valuable feedback, and there is often diminishing return on investment if more than eight participants are added to the study.

Mark as completed

