## Course Worksheet

What Is User Experience?

User experience (often abbreviated to the letters "UX") is a general term for all aspects of the interaction that users of a product or service have with that product and the company that provided it. In its narrowest sense, it refers to the immediate interface design of a product or site. But more broadly, user experience also encompasses other aspects of the interaction, like any associated paperwork or packaging, marketing materials and advertisements, or interacting with the company online, via a call center or in a store or office.

User experience also extends to impressions of the company's brand and general philosophy, and how that makes users feel about their own lives. If a product makes people feel good or gives them a sense of confidence, that's initially down to clever marketing; but sustaining that feeling over time is entirely a result of good user experience.

Getting the user experience for a product right should be everyone's job. Product managers, project managers, developers, testers, marketers, everyone has a role to play in making sure that the product solves users' pain points the best way it can, and communicates well exactly how it does that.

But because it's such a big job, there are several specialist careers that focus on user experience rather than on other aspects of product development. These are user research, interaction design, visual design, print and product design, content, accessibility, localization, globalization, and data science roles.
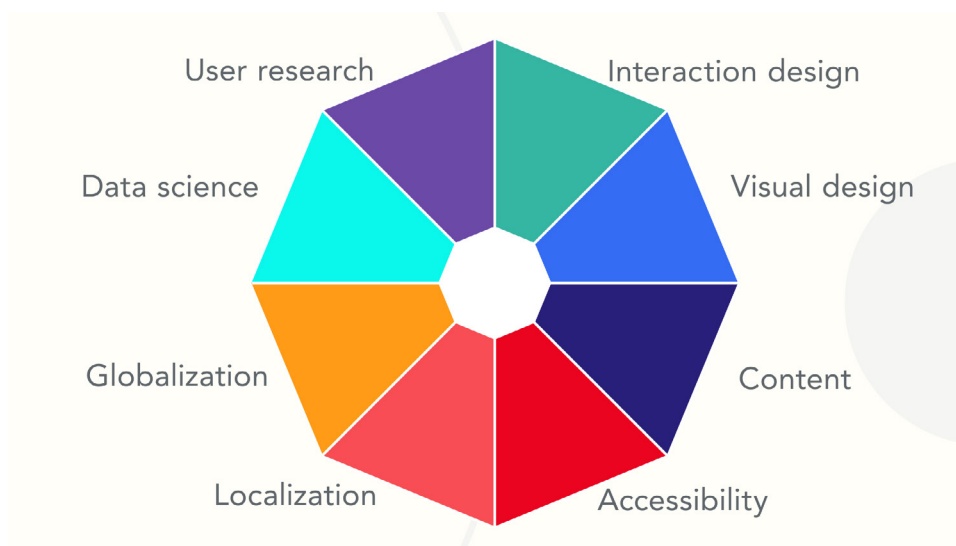
User experience is present at every part of the product development process. At the start is the strategic work. Why does the business want this product? What user needs will it fulfill? Early user research helps the team work out what user needs they should solve with the product they are developing.

Once you know that, you can decide what type of structure the product needs to have in order to work properly. This is where the content strategy and information architecture are incorporated into an interaction design, which determines how the product behaves.

Only after the structure is in place can you proceed to designing the presentation, how it will actually look to the people who use it. This is the domain of visual designers and content creators.
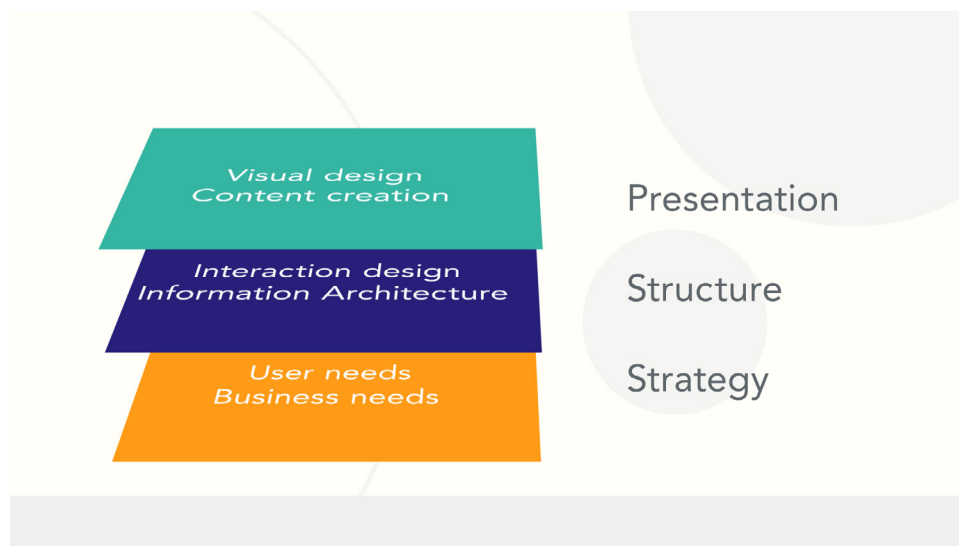
You can look at strategy, structure, and presentation as layers within the product development process. Without a strong strategy layer, it's hard to create a good structure. Without structure, it's hard to create a coherent visual design.

Next, we'll look at the different job roles within user experience, and how they impact on each of these three layers of product development.

Interaction Design

Interaction design, which is also called "experience design" or just "XD," creates the mechanics of the interface.

This is based on psychology, physiology, and user research findings to understand the most efficient, effective, and satisfying way people can interact with your product. David Hogue's course UX Foundations: Interaction Design is a good starting point for understanding this discipline.

At the strategy level, interaction designers work with user researchers and product managers to identify user pain points and desires by watching users perform their tasks and analyzing this data for opportunities. My course UX Design: 2 Analyzing User Data shows you one easy way to make this happen.

Next up, the team has to decide what they'll actually build—the structure of the product. This involves phases of ideation, storyboarding, and early prototyping to nail down the interaction. The iterative process that interaction designers use to fine-tune this structure is called design thinking. You can learn more about this in my courses Design Thinking: Understanding the Process and Design Thinking: Implementing the Process.

Diane Cronenwett's courses Interaction Design: Structure and Interaction Design: Projects and Platforms show you how to define the full scope of a project and help the rest of your team see the big picture.

If you want to learn more about the psychological principles that interaction designers use to create the structure of pages and sites, check out my course Interaction Design for the Web.

So now you can see why Interaction designers may not spend very much time doing what we think of as traditional design work—drawing interfaces. It's because instead they are busy making sure that future versions of the product are being created in a user-centric way.

Visual Design

Once the interaction design concepts, flows, and hierarchies are created, it's time to move on to that presentation layer. The visual design process often starts with paper sketches and wireframing, but the majority of the work will happen in a graphics application. Typically everything from visual prototypes through to high-fidelity screen comps is created inside a digital tool.

Pretty much any graphics application can and has been used for interface design, but some support it better than others. Here's a list of courses to help you learn how to use Photoshop, InVision, Sketch, Illustrator, Figma, After Effects, and more specifically for UX design.

- [Photoshop for UX Design](#)

- [InVision for UX Design](#)

- [Sketch for UX Design](#)

- [Illustrator for UX Design](#)

- [Figma for UX Design](#)

- [After Effects for UX Design](#)

- [Principle for UX Design](#)

Modern web and app development isn't limited to specific screen resolutions or display densities. Vector-based graphics packages allow designers to scale their work across devices more easily, and prototyping apps make it easy to link different visual states together and mock up task flows or demonstrate animation effects. These courses can help you learn to use some of the most popular of these tools.

- [Sketch: Mobile Design Workflows](#)

- [Learning Adobe XD](#)

- [Adobe XD Essential Training: Design](#)

- [Advanced Scripting with Axure RP](#)

- [InDesign for UX Design](#)

- [Affinity Designer for UX Design](#)

Visual designers aren't just making everything up as they go along. There's plenty of room for creativity, but each platform has its own design language and set of design standards. For instance, check out Brian Wood's course on using [UI kits in Adobe XD](#) which shows how to jump-start visual designs using the Google Material Design language, iOS visuals, or Microsoft Windows look.

Let's be clear—both the interaction design and visual design are essential to a successful product. The two work together to create a clear, usable, and delightful user experience. Although I've separated the two roles here, it's not uncommon to see one person who's responsible for both the interaction and visual design of a product, especially on smaller teams.

If you're a visual designer who also needs to do interaction design, you'll find some of the core interaction design concepts in my two courses [Interaction Design for the Web](#) and [User Experience for Web Design](#) and David Hogue's [UX Foundations: Interaction Design](#).

So far we've talked about the visual design part of the presentation layer, but let's close by considering the places that interfaces are taking us these days. It's not all apps and the web. We also have wearables, voice UI, and cross-device interactions that might start on a phone but finish on a TV screen. To explore these interface types in more detail, check out Emmanuel Henri's course UX for Voice: Planning and Implementation, Renata Phillippi's User Experience Design for Wearables, and Diane Cronenwett's UX Foundations: Multidevice Design.

UX Research and Strategy

Underneath the interaction design and visual design layers of a project, providing the data and guidance that they need, is a strategic layer. User experience puts users at the center of the development process, so it's important to know as much as you can about those users. That's where user research comes in.

We've got a lot of courses on different aspects of user research in the library. Let's start with the basics. If you're completely new to research and you're not sure you could tell the difference between quantitative and qualitative research, check out Andy Schwanbeck and Peni Acayo's course Learning Design Research. This sets the scene for designers who have to work with researchers and who might also have to conduct their own research.

Amanda Stockwell's UX Foundations: Research provides an overview of many different user research methods that you can use. Also, watch her course UX Research Methods: Interviewing. And I've produced the course UX Foundations: Usability Testing. Interviewing and user testing are two central methods to learn because they give you the skills to then run many other types of research studies.

Design thinking is a popular term right now. The tools used in design thinking exercises all come from UX, so UX researchers are often the best-placed people on a team to facilitate design thinking sessions. I made a series of UX design courses that step you through the process of turning user needs into a user-centered product design.

- UX Design: 1 Overview

- UX Design: 2 Analyzing User Data

- UX Design: 3 Creating Personas

- UX Design: 4 Ideation

- UX Design: 5 Creating Scenarios and Storyboards

- UX Design: 6 Paper Prototyping

- UX Design: 7 Implementation Planning

Later in the development process, user researchers will conduct regular usability testing sessions on the product as it changes, to give the team feedback on what's working and what confuses users. Amanda Stockwell has created the course UX Research: Lean Experimentation, which shows how to perform research fast enough to suit even lean and agile teams.

It's often the case that teams aren't funded to conduct all the research they want to. Amanda's course on fast, low-cost research techniques (UX Research: Going Guerilla) shows you how to conduct valuable research on a tiny budget.

As soon as users start working with beta releases of the code, it's possible to capture metrics on their behavior and use that to help guide design decisions. Doug Rose's courses on data science are really useful here because they are aimed at user experience people and other team members who will be working to understand and present data rather than becoming a full-time data analyst themselves.

- [Learning Data Science: Understanding the Basics](#)

- [Learning Data Science: Ask Great Questions](#)

- [Learning Data Science: Tell Stories With Data](#)

Some people get scared away from user research because it sometimes involves statistics. Luckily, Eddie Davila has created a lovely series of courses to explain statistics in a way that makes good sense to people who might have to use stats in their jobs even if they don't really like them.

- [Statistics Foundations: 1](#)

- [Statistics Foundations: 2](#)

- [Statistics Foundations: 3](#)

As a team or company grows in UX maturity, more and more of their decisions and direction are determined by their users' needs. The business also needs to communicate this strategy to development teams in a way that's easy for them to put into practice. UX researchers and strategists are most often the people who provide that translation service, moving easily between the strategic, business-oriented world of product management and the operational, technology-oriented world of development.

Content and Editorial

When you think about it, pretty much any user interface is a transport mechanism for content. Ecommerce sites display product images and descriptions. Knowledge work interfaces display business data. Every word and image in the interface is trying to convey meaning in an efficient and unambiguous way.

Content strategists are responsible for the upfront planning of how content will be created, stored, displayed, maintained, and updated. They look at any existing content model and create a roadmap to get to the ideal future state. Morten Rand-Hendriksen's course [UX Foundations: Content Strategy](#) takes you through this process.

Information architects use the principles of information science to present data to users in a way that meets those users' expectations and best helps them to complete their tasks. They start by building a top-down view of the information space. What information is being presented, what's missing, what should be removed? This view defines the structure and order in which information should be presented to users. You can learn the basics of information architecture in my course [Understanding Information Architecture](#). If you will be responsible for creating the information architecture for your product, check out my course [UX Foundations: Information Architecture](#) for a step-by-step guide.

In order to ensure you are making your content available to all of your users, you need to consider accessibility and inclusive design. Derek Featherstone's [UX Foundations: Accessibility](#) course shows you how easy it is to lower the barrier to entry, by providing equal access and opportunity to people with a diverse range of hearing, movement, sight, and cognitive abilities.

One way that content strategists, accessibility experts, and information architects communicate their work with the rest of the team is through a style guide that will cover the visual design, typography, standard colors, and also the tone that content should be written in. These days, more companies are also moving to a design system, which takes the concepts from the style guide and creates a set of design and development resources that are easy for designers to mix and match as they create interface designs. I've made a course that covers the strategic elements of creating [Style Guides and Design Systems](#) for your organization, Tom Green has a

very practical course on [Developing a Design System with UXPin](#), and Demian Borba does the same thing with [Developing a Design System with Adobe XD](#). Anne Grundhoefer also has a course on [Managing a Design System with Sketch](#).

Once the content strategy, information architecture, and style guide are in place, someone needs to actually create the content that will be used in the interface. That job might be called content designer, UX writer, or content producer. Or, the job might fall to whoever is most responsible for user experience on the team. We have a couple of courses that can help you out.

Morten Rand Hendriksen's course [UX Foundations: Logic and Content](#) shows how human thought and computer logic are different, and how these differences can be used to improve communication by writing clearly and concisely. My course [Learning to Write for the Web](#) is actually applicable for apps as well. It covers the basics of how people process information so that you can write in the way that people respond best to.

Collaborating with Colleagues

A team with good user experience knowledge is more likely to develop user-centered products which will be successful in the marketplace. UX people need to convince other team members of the importance of user needs with clear data. They need to sell this in meetings with management, and get the whole team working toward user-centered goals. My course [Making User Experience Happen](#) as a Team will help you through that process.

My course [Making the Case for Usability Testing](#) should help you get buy-in to run user research. Then, it's up to you to run the types of research you feel are most necessary to help the team learn about their users. You'll probably conduct some site-based ethnographic style work but you'll be under pressure to also measure how well the current product works.

If you're working as a consultant or freelancer, Andy Schwanbeck's course [Design Research: Enhancing the Designer-Client Relationship](#) shows you how to create strong collaborative partnerships with clients so that they can contribute subject matter expertise and feel ownership of the solutions you develop together.

UX people are often the go-betweens on a project. Because we work with everybody, we can become a kind of translator between the different languages that product managers, project managers, developers, testers, and operations all speak. Our common language is the voice of the user. It's not always easy to get people to listen, but Brian Wood's course [Freelance UX: Managing Clients](#) and my course [UX Foundations: Making the Case for Usability Testing](#) can both help here.

Of course, UX needs to be able to speak technical language too. You need to be aware of the capabilities of the types of technologies you'll be working with. Without that knowledge you're likely to make silly design mistakes. IT skills change so fast that it's hard to even specify what tools to check in to. I'd suggest watching [Technology for Product Managers](#) by Cole Mercer if you want to brush up on your tech vocabulary, and [Web Programming Foundations](#) by Morten Rand-Hendriksen for an accessible overview of how web development works. I also think Morten Rand-Hendriksen's [Mapping the Modern Web Design Process](#) course is essential viewing if you're trying to fit in on a web development team.

Getting a Job in User Experience

There is growing demand for people with user experience skills. Sometimes companies might not know quite what skills they want, so as Cory Lebson says in his course [Planning a Career in User Experience](#), that means you have to take the lead in setting out a career path you're interested in, and then finding the opportunities to grow as your career takes off.

Working for a company

In her course Job Interview Strategies for UX Designers, Diane Cronenwett draws on her experiences as both a designer and a hiring design manager to walk you through each step of the interview process.

Diane's course Building and Maintaining Your UX Design Portfolio shows how not just visual designers but also experience designers, content strategists, and information architects can create a compelling portfolio that walks prospective employers through the decision-making process you followed to help a team create great designs.

Working as a freelancer or consultant

Rather than working as a company employee, another option is to set yourself up as a freelancer or consultant. As Cory Lebson says in his course Freelancing and Consulting in User Experience, this gives you the freedom to choose your clients and projects.

Working as a freelancer can be great if you can build a reputation and client base. Doing work for several different clients can give you variety. But it's up to you to keep your skills up to date, plus you will have an administrative overhead dealing with running your own business. Cory's course Strategies for Successful UX Freelancers will show you how to enhance your workflow so that you can keep a full pipeline of new work and still produce high-quality deliverables for the teams you support.

Other Resources

There are several industry associations for different UX disciplines.

- The User Experience Professionals Association serves user researchers and other people with usability in their job title.

- The Interaction Design Association obviously focuses on interaction design.

- The IA Institute is primarily for information architects and content writers.

- The American Institute of Graphic Arts is one of the largest associations focused on graphic design.

Of course, you can follow more than one of these groups depending on your interests. Each of these associations has an annual conference. Most have local chapters you can join, and their sites have good career advice, job boards, and links to other resources.

It's worth checking out the weekly series videos that Drew Bridewell and I have created. These short weekly videos each cover one aspect of user experience. My weekly course videos (UX Insights Weekly) focus on user research and user experience. Drew's Practical UX Weekly 2017 and Practical UX Weekly 2019 cover UX design principles by applying them to real-world projects.

The best way to move forward is to get involved. If you're just starting out that might mean joining local meetups or local chapters of industry associations. If you're working in a large organization, make friends with the UX team—they are always looking for champions on product teams. If you're in a smaller company that doesn't have dedicated user experience people, consider ways that you can enhance your product development process by gathering more user insights, working from smart interaction design principles, and considering the effect that clear, concise content creation can have on your customers.

We've covered a lot of ground in this course and in this handout, because the field of UX is broad and varied. It can feel overwhelming, but that's primarily because we've just loaded you up with enough course suggestions to keep you learning for quite a while!

List of Courses by Video Chapter

What Is User Experience?

UX Foundations: Research	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/nv707
Design Thinking: Understanding the Process	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/OZj2N
Design Thinking: Implementing the Process	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/3aGDB
Interaction Design for the Web	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/Rokvg
Interaction Design: Projects and Platforms	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/NJrdK
UX Foundations: Prototyping	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/YYJ5R
UX Research: Going Guerrilla	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/MV94K
UX Research: Lean Experimentation	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/7VZAy
UX Foundations: Usability Testing	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/mv76X
UX Foundations: Style Guides and Design Systems	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/L1QvZ
UX Foundations: Information Architecture	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/qv7Ry
UX Foundations: Content Strategy	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/9ZX1y
UX Foundations: Accessibility	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/PgPLY

The UX Job Market

Planning a Career in User Experience	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/kvmnN
Job Interview Strategies for UX Designers	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/L1QvY
Building and Maintaining Your UX Design Portfolio	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/qv7RL
Freelancing and Consulting in User Experience	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/xv7xv
Strategies for Successful UX Freelancers	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/Dm2Ed
Creative Pro Careers: Staying Ahead	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/QX5q3

Interaction Design

UX Foundations: Interaction Design	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/ry7v3
UX Design: 2 Analyzing User Data	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/PgPLQ
UX Design: 4 Ideation	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/kvmnd
UX Design: 5 Creating Scenarios and Storyboards	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/e26oz
UX Design: 6 Paper Prototyping	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/az0JM
Understanding Information Architecture	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/Gkv6L
UX Foundations: Content Strategy	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/9ZX1y
Interaction Design: Structure	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/JAx3E
Interaction Design: Projects and Platforms	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/NJrdK
Interaction Design for the Web	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/Rokvg
Design Thinking: Understanding the Process	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/OZj2N
Design Thinking: Implementing the Process	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/3aGDB

Visual Design and Prototyping

Photoshop for UX Design	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/ov72m
InVision for UX Design	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/zv7Q6
Sketch for UX Design	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/Wz1bX
Illustrator for UX Design	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/05ebJ
Figma for UX Design	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/EP3kK
After Effects for UX Design	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/nv7aXv
Sketch: Mobile Design Workflows	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/bKELk
Learning Adobe XD	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/61JvG
Adobe XD Essential Training: Design	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/OZjXn
Advanced Scripting with Axure RP	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/vv7ev
Adobe XD: Using UI Kits	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/Rokzb
UX Foundations: Style Guides and Design Systems	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/L1QvZ
Developing a Design System with UXPin	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/dvmxk

Developing a Design System with Adobe XD	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/yv7zW
Managing a Design System with Sketch	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/YYJOj
UX for Voice: Planning and Implementation	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/MV9Zo
User Experience Design for Wearables	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/KGDV9
UX Foundations: Multidevice Design	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/L1QJY

Collaborating with Colleagues

Freelance UX: Managing Clients	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/qv71L
UX Foundations: Making the Case for Usability Testing	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/xv7Bv
Technology for Product Managers	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/Dm25d
Web Programming Foundations	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/QX5B3
Mapping the Modern Web Design Process	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/9ZXN3
Design Research: Enhancing the Designer-Client Relationship	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/ry7V3
Making User Experience Happen as a Team	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/PgPoQ

UX Research and Strategy

Learning Design Research	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/5GVRN
UX Foundations: Research	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/nv707
UX Research Methods: Interviewing	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/e26Dz
UX Foundations: Usability Testing	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/mv76X
UX Design: 1 Overview	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/j4vE0
UX Design: 2 Analyzing User Data	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/PgPLQ
UX Design: 3 Creating Personas	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/5GVeN
UX Design: 4 Ideation	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/kvmnd
UX Design: 5 Creating Scenarios and Storyboards	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/e26oz
UX Design: 6 Paper Prototyping	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/az0JM
UX Design: 7 Implementation Planning	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/AQbz7
UX Research: Lean Experimentation	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/7VZAy
UX Research: Going Guerrilla	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/MV94K

in LEARNING

Learning Data Science: Understanding the Basics	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/1km6m
Learning Data Science: Ask Great Questions	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/VKGnE
Learning Data Science: Tell Stories With Data	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/ZzZ2k

Content Creation and Management

UX Foundations: Content Strategy	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/9ZX1y
Understanding Information Architecture	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/Gkv6L
UX Foundations: Information Architecture	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/qv7Ry
UX Foundations: Accessibility	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/PgPLY
UX Foundations: Style Guides and Design Systems	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/L1QvZ
UX Foundations: Logic and Content	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/zv7W6
Learning to Write for the Web	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/nv7qX

UX and Other Disciplines

Making User Experience Happen as a Team	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/PgPoQ
Design Research: Enhancing the Designer-Client Relationship	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/ry7V3
UX Foundations: Making the Case for Usability Testing	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/xv7Bv
UX Foundations: Style Guides and Design Systems	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/L1QvZ
Interaction Design for the Web	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/Rokvg
User Experience for Web Design	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/vv75j
UX Foundations: Interaction Design	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/ry7v3

Finding Your Next Play

Learning path: Become a User Experience Designer	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/NJr52
Learning path: Become an Interaction Designer	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/yv7aW
Learning path: Improve Your UX Design Skills	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/YYJXj
Learning path: Advance Your Skills in UX Design	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/KGDr9
Learning path: Advance Your Skills as a User Experience Researcher	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/qv7QL
Weekly series: UX Insights Weekly (Chris Nodder)	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/QX5a3

in LEARNING

Weekly series: Practical UX Weekly 2017 (Drew Bridewell)	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/9ZXm3
Weekly series: Practical UX Weekly 2019 (Drew Bridewell)	https://linkedin-learning.pxf.io/ZzOV0