



# eGUIDE

## Becoming a UX24/7 Accredited Practitioner

An information booklet for freelance  
user experience professionals

UX24/7  
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## Introduction

The UX industry is changing. In the past 15 years the number of freelance and contract practitioners working in the field worldwide has grown exponentially as digital growth has accelerated. At the same time customers of user experience services have become better educated as their knowledge has grown or their roles have been filled by more experienced freelance or agency practitioners moving inhouse.

Whilst the backdrop to the industry has evolved the agency model that operates within it has not. Services that are considered to be commoditised within the industry are still over-complicated and remain shrouded in mystery to those outside. It is little wonder then that even blue-chip organisations are still "discovering usability", and no surprise that so many interfaces still fail to meet even basic levels of acceptable performance.

At UX24/7 we are bringing user experience to the masses. We want to change the world, one interface at a time, so that everything is usable for everyone, all of the time. This means making services easier to understand, easier to buy and more consistent in the value they deliver so they are trusted.

We believe there are better ways of working that can involve the freelance practitioner community throughout the world and benefit all—customers, consumers and practitioners.

This short guide sets out what we plan to do, how you can get involved and the benefits available to you. It won't be for everyone, and that's OK because it isn't a competition; it's about making progress.

## The Opportunity

The emergence of multiplatform, multi-screen and multichannel behaviour has brought greater complexity and both brands and agencies struggle to cope with the diversity at play. Imagine a major global brand that wants to evaluate whether the website they are developing works in all major markets and languages and on all device formats. This is almost impossible to do and as a result it isn't done, to the detriment of everyone.

At the same time with increasing pressure on budgets and therefore time, organisations find it very difficult to stop or slow development in order to carry out "user experience research". We believe that if organisations could access core user experience services in a way that caused less disruption to the development cycle they might be more inclined to include them.

At UX24/7 our goal is to deliver services to clients when they need them, wherever they are in the world and on whatever platform they choose. We believe this is possible because of the maturity of the market and the large freelance community that now exists within it.

UX practitioners are located across the globe with access to a vast and diverse array of technologies, languages and cultures. We intend to use this distribution to everyone's benefit.

So, in the future, we could receive a request for work from a company in the US as they are ending their day and use accredited practitioners first in Australia and then the UK in order to deliver results as the US begin work the following day.



By connecting with the global freelance practitioner community, UX24/7 hopes to provide a research capability that is available round the clock and has the potential to allow access to almost any device, in any language and in any culture.

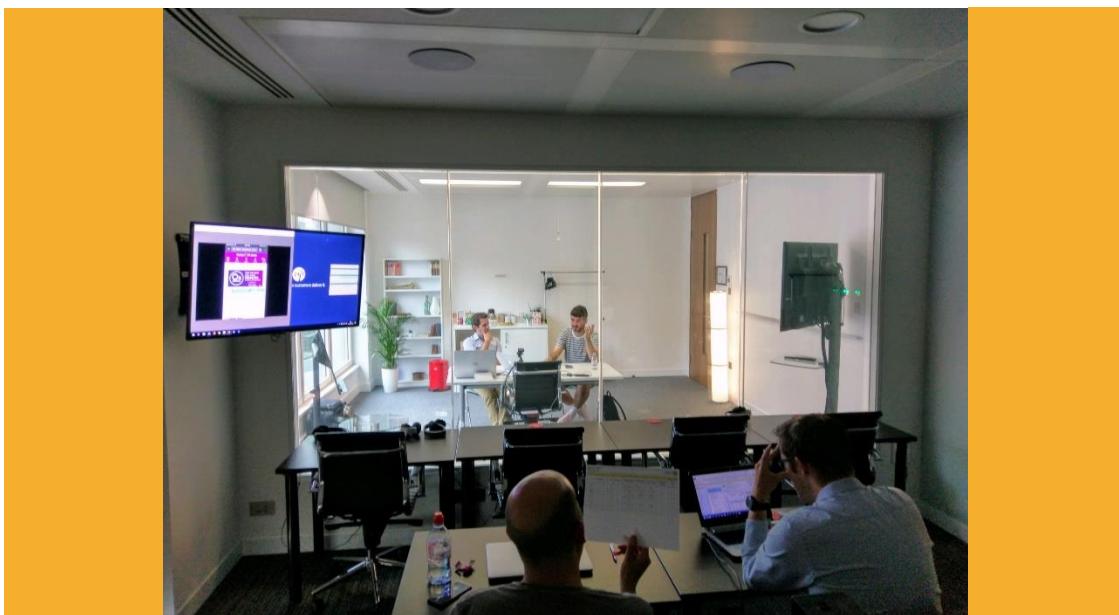
We need to overcome many challenges if we are to achieve our goal, but we believe that by doing so brands, consumers and practitioners will all benefit.

## The Services

The methodologies most often delivered by our international network of accredited practitioners are expert review (heuristics), usability testing and online user research and will be somewhat familiar to experienced practitioners.

Our goal has not been to reinvent the wheel when creating our methodologies, we have simply adapted and defined existing methodologies to ensure they can be delivered with consistency anywhere in the world. We are also open to suggestions from practitioners and will share feedback for all to benefit.

All our methodologies designed to be delivered through the accredited practitioner network although clearly our expert review methodology, closely related to a Usability Audit or Heuristic review, represents the biggest opportunity for "follow-the-sun" working.



In terms of project length, the services range from a couple of days (and can be even less if split between practitioners) to a few weeks. For a practitioner this means we can help fill gaps in your schedule or provide a revenue stream carrying out projects for us on a regular basis without impacting your freelance business model. The full range of benefits are described later in the guide.

## Sharing our Methodologies

One of the benefits of becoming an accredited practitioner is the opportunity to input to the development of our methodologies. We recognise we are not reinventing the wheel with what we are doing and so simply want to provide easier access for clients to services that are already well defined in the industry. We therefore intend to share our methodologies and deliverable templates so that a wider group can benefit.

We believe the main value will be created for us all in the area of mobile and app methodologies. The pace of change in this area is significant and much of the learning is coming from experience working with websites and apps on various devices. We hope to provide a place where this learning can be turned into practical tools that we can all use.

We have developed a user experience index which provides a multiplatform evaluation model that underpins our expert review methodology. As the data base grows, we will provide benchmarking information using this index (to be called 247: index) so that organisations can compare themselves with peers and rivals across multiple platforms.

Our intention is to share any unique intellectual property (IP) under a creative commons licence so that anyone can use it for commercial purposes or otherwise by simply crediting UX24/7. We won't be licencing existing practice as that makes no sense.

Where practices are already known and understood, even if in some cases they are still evolving, then that is public domain knowledge and we have no right to it nor would we attempt to create the impression we have. Our sole desire in licencing the IP is to spread the word about our brand.

## Why become Accredited?

Becoming a UX24/7 accredited practitioner means that you can get paid to deliver our services. Only accredited practitioners will be able to receive information about projects we have available and apply to deliver them. That is because we need to ensure that quality levels are maintained and that services are delivered consistently and to our methodology.

Our services vary in the amount of time required to deliver them. Our expert review service has a short turnaround that can be completed in as little as 48 hours and has a methodology that is designed to be split into core elements and then re-assembled on delivery so that a project can be shared between accredited practitioners who may only have a few hours to spare.

At the other end of the scale our online research user research service has a more in-depth study methodology that would provide an accredited practitioner about two weeks of work and so requires dedicated attention throughout the project.

So, a major benefit of becoming an accredited practitioner is that you can fill gaps in your existing projects whether that is a few hours, a couple of days or a few weeks.

Other benefits include:

- Gaining access to tools, methods and an international knowledge base
- Updating your own skills and capabilities through our processes and methodologies.
- Having the opportunity to influence how our methodologies develop and evolve to keep pace with technological and behavioural market changes.
- Networking with like-minded professionals from around the world

We award a badge to our Accredited Practitioners under the Open Badge standard which you can share on your LinkedIn profile and beyond. This will help to set you apart from other practitioners because the accreditation reflects the attainment of a practical quality level.



## How to become Accredited?

It costs nothing to become a UX24/7 accredited practitioner other than your time. Accreditation is about gaining training in our methodology and carrying out checks to make sure there is 100% alignment and familiarity with our approach. This may be achieved in a number of ways and we will discuss with you the most appropriate method based on your qualifications and experience.

Throughout the process we are available to answer any questions and provide guidance if required. In most cases, experienced practitioners will find accreditation very simple as it will be only a case of learning about our reporting format and fine details of our method that might differ from what you are familiar with.

However, the industry includes a small population of people with limited experience or/and qualifications and so this process is designed to filter these out, so we can ensure a quality deliverable for our clients.

It is possible to be accredited to deliver one service, two services or all three as the demands for each are slightly different. Our expert review service requires minimal client contact, no facilitation and no statistical data analysis skills. To carry out usability testing for us you will need to demonstrate that you have facilitated one to one usability tests before and the reporting format is slightly different.

With online research, where we are carrying out research with 200, 400 or 600 participants, you will need to demonstrate that you have statistical skills and can carry out quantitative analysis. If you have used technologies such as Key-note Web-Effective and Loop11 you will be well on the way to becoming accredited. Overall our goal is that practitioners succeed with becoming accredited and that they can demonstrate they will meet the quality standards we desire.



## Quality Assurance

For the operational model to be successful we have to ensure that the work delivered to our clients is of the highest quality. It is an area that agencies all over the world struggle with due to the variances between practitioners in terms of experience, qualifications, training and approach. Not only that, the differences and variation in deliverables being used also causes issues of structure and layout.

We hope to limit some of the variance as a result of the structure in our methodology, the guidance notes for practitioners and the deliverable (report) design. The accreditation approval process also allows us to ensure we only provide work to competent practitioners.

On an on-going basis we will carry out a QA process on every piece of work going to a client. This is to pick up any typos or formatting issues and provides an opportunity to clarify any points made by the practitioner before the deliverable reaches the client.

Our objective with regards to our clients' perception of the quality of the work we do is that they are surprised at the high quality of our work and prepared to recommend us on the strength of our work. In order for us to achieve this we need to:

- be error free in grammar and spelling (the basics)
- thorough in our analysis and identification of issues
- insightful in our recommendations for improvement

We are happy for our accredited practitioners to share their opinions about what a client can or should do to enhance their interface, product or system and to share best practice examples. We are also happy to receive feedback about our methodologies, deliverables, systems and processes to make it easier and better for all concerns.

We believe that quality is achieved by creating an environment where people can do their best work, and that is what we set out to do.

## Commercial Arrangements

Each of our services, including any optional extras, has a time estimate associated to it which translates into a fee available for the accredited practitioner. The fee is non-negotiable but reflects a competitive contractor day rate. We are trying to fill gaps for you not provide the best day rate in the world, but it is still competitive.

When a project is assigned to an accredited practitioner for the first time it is accompanied by a purchase order and a contract. The purchase order confirms the work required and provides details against which an invoice can be submitted.

The contract is a standard subcontract agreement and sets out the terms and conditions surrounding the relationship. The contract must be signed and returned before any payment can be made or work can be delivered to a client. This is to protect our client from IP and invention claims.

Invoices may be submitted when work is complete and will be paid no later than 30 days after the end of the month in which the invoice was received.

Accredited practitioners will be asked to provide evidence that they have in place appropriate business insurance covering public and product liability.

## About UX24/7

UX24/7 is a London based UX Research Agency operating internationally. We help businesses deliver transformational change in the areas of user experience strategy, digital processes and online performance through UX consulting, insight generation and UX design.

We work with customers throughout the product development lifecycle from concept to optimisation and work across all major platforms and devices.

We provide our services internationally and deliver multi-country UX design, user research and usability testing through our growing network of senior UX24/7 Accredited Practitioners.

Our vision is to change the world, one interface at a time, so that everything is usable, everywhere, for everyone, all the time.

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