# Getting started with your UI/UX career

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'UI/UX design' sounds like a complex concept to people who hear it for the first time. Some mix up UI and UX when they see the definitions. In reality, it is quite simple to distinguish between them. If you're considering kickstarting a career in UI/UX design, here are some basic pointers to keep in mind.

**What are UI and UX?**
Simply put, UI (user interface) is an app's graphical layout and UX (user experience) is how a user interacts with it. UI designing consists of building an app's page layout, buttons the user clicks on, sliders, data entry fields, images, transitions - the list goes on. UI designers design anything that a user interacts with.

UX is all about how the user is interacting with the app's page layout, buttons, sliders, data entry fields, images, transitions - anything in the UI. Is the user having a hard time typing the data on a particular field? Is the user enjoying the process of accomplishing the task that the app strives to do? The user experience is defined by how easy or difficult it is to engage with the user interface elements designed by UI designers.

**Considering a career in UI/UX**
UI/UX designing has great prospects currently in Bangladesh. People are moving away from browsing websites and focusing on using apps that are simple to navigate, straightforward and easy to use. UI/UX designers play a major role in achieving that. Some examples of these simple-to-navigate and easy-to-use apps are BKash, Nagad, MyGP, Maya and Pathao. Getting started with your UI/UX designing career is the first step towards securing your place in the prospective world of UI/UX. Here is a step-by-step process on how to begin your career as a UI/UX Designer.

**Step 1.** *Courses to learn the principles of user experience design*
When you are a novice designer it is expected that you do not know much about the topic you are exploring. So, it is necessary for you to gather primary knowledge to build your basics. There are many resources for you to utilise. You can do free online courses to get an idea.

Coursera, Accenture and Udemy offer great free courses. To get certified you have to do paid courses. Certification is not integral when it comes to UI/UX designing because a good portfolio will get you a job even if you do not have certification. Creative IT institute, Shikhbe Shobai, BASIS Institute of Technology & Management (BITM) and Userhub offer paid courses with certification.

**Step 2.** *Find design software that works for you*
A good way to start is to enrol in a course or watch a YouTube video, to do a simple UI design on software that is difficult for you to navigate. Test different software and find the one that works well for you. For some, Adobe XD is great and for others, Figma is their go-to. Mockplus, Miro, Pencil Project and InVision Studio are other free software that will provide you with the basic tools for designing interfaces.

**Step 3.** *Find Inspirations to develop a keen sense of aesthetics*
Searching for inspiration is a big part of UI/UX. Apps that you think require minimal effort to navigate through and use as well as designers on Behance, Dribbble or social media can give you ideas and build your sense of aesthetics.

This comprises UI elements (reusable components), as well as standard brand guides including the colour palette, typography and iconography.

Doing courses on the principles of UI/UX is going to teach you the basics you need to create designs, but developing your own style is up to your creativity and individuality as a designer. Developing your aesthetics also allows you to apply your new skills to every step of the UI/UX design process - from user research wireframing, prototyping and user testing. Ultimately, use the knowledge gained at each step to learn how to execute other steps for future tasks.

**Step 4.** *Create a portfolio of your work to receive feedback*
After developing your own aesthetic you have to apply the skills and principles you learned to design. You could redesign an app of your liking or an app that you find needs work for a smoother experience.

Redesigning a good design will show you how to create good designs and the thoughts that go into a design. Redesigning a bad design by using your user requirement research skills and design skills can be great case studies as well. You can write about your case study and publish your design on platforms such as Behance and Dribbble. Publishing your work will assist you in getting feedback from experienced designers and improving your skills.

Portfolios should be a true expression of the designer's personality. Every piece in your portfolio should tell a story — not only about the project but also about your

unique abilities, process and creativity.
**Step 5.** *Join communities*
When you are starting your UI/UX career, you might not know many people who are professionals in design. Joining communities help beginners immensely because they can ask different questions, get professional answers, receive feedback on their designs and expand their skill set.

Best UI/UX Designer & Developer Community, Distorted Designers Community and Graphic Designer Bangladesh are a few communities where members provide feedback on designs, help members to create better designs and build networks of designers.
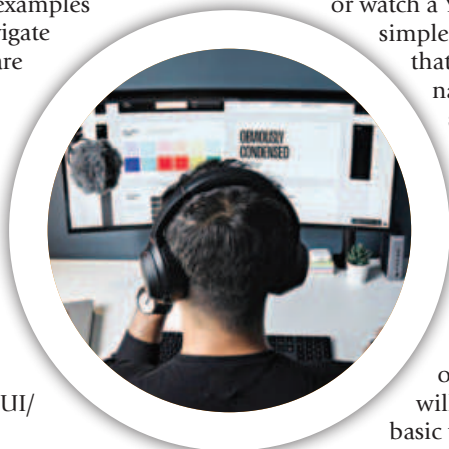
**Step 6.** *Get hands-on experience in the workplace*
There is no common path for everyone. Some designers do internships, freelance work on Upwork or Fiverr, focus on the marketplace or join a company. Communities play a big part in finding new projects. Doing different projects will enrich your portfolio and push you to develop your skills.

Viewing the job descriptions of the position you would like to apply for is crucial because you have to tweak your portfolio accordingly. Your portfolio should not only contain images of the redesigned app. There should also be a write-up to explain the process of redesigning the app from scratch.

Ragib Shahriar, a UI/UX designer working at a fast-growing Bangladeshi SaaS Startup, had his start by doing an online course and watching UI/UX videos on YouTube to build his creativity and aesthetic. He did a major case study on The Daily Star app using the skills he learned from doing an internship and various freelancing projects. He says, "Build your portfolio as you are practising to get into the UI/UX designing scene and connect with fellow designers by joining communities. Feedback is the only way you will get better."

UI/UX design has a lot of promise in Bangladesh, but it should be emphasised that transitioning from a beginner to a working designer can take anywhere from six months to a year. You will be discovering about yourself and the designs around you in this process of learning. Being consistent with your efforts, following structure and staying motivated by browsing the countless design resources online you can make the shift before you know it.