# Digital Services OIT Acquisition Language Examples

***(Recommended Language Examples for Service Contracts. The scope of these examples primarily applies to front end software development efforts but may be adapted to apply to other projects/product support services. This sample wording should be edited to reflect your specific project/product requirements.***

***Note - Besides the PWS language below, the acquisition team should also consider including a specific HCD related technical discriminator in the Source Selection Evaluation Plan (SSEP) so that the Offeror’s expertise and processes may be evaluated and considered in the Best Value selection process. The following is an example of wording that may be used in the Technical Discriminators section of the SSEP -“In the Technical Volume, the Offerors shall propose a detailed technical approach to utilizing Human Centered Design processes in their Product Development and User Experience strategy.”)***

## Human Centered Design (HCD)

***(Human-centered design is an approach to interactive systems development that aims to make systems usable and useful by focusing on the users, their needs and requirements, and by applying human factors, usability knowledge, and techniques. This approach enhances effectiveness and efficiency, improves user satisfaction, accessibility and sustainability.)***

The Contractor shall utilize Human Centered Design (HCD) principles as part of all product development and operations efforts. While engaging in the following HCD activities, the Contractor shall:

1. Follow the United States Digital Service value: “Design with users, not for them.”;
2. Provide expert guidance on user experience (UX) design direction and strategy; and
3. Create and maintain documentation for all activities, recommendations, and decisions.

At the start of work on a new or existing [product], conduct a product development kick-off meeting with government Product Owner and designated stakeholders to establish desired outcomes.

**User Research**

As part of user research, the Contractor shall

1. Facilitate discovery activities, to include generative research with users and business stakeholders, an assessment of current related features, a content review, an information architecture review, an accessibility review, a business process review; and collection of any available data and analytics and provide in a User Research Checklist. The following Checklist provides additional details on these requirements: (<https://department-of-veterans-affairs.github.io/va-digital-service-handbook/delivery/research-and-discovery/checklist>)
2. Partner with other VA Product Teams building a new [product] to ensure that the new tool or service fits into the existing structure. ***(Note - If possible list/define these possible products and teams in the specific PWS. If the product is meant to live on VA.gov, add this line: Conduct quantitative navigation research to learn how new or updated applications or tools map to the VA.gov information architecture.)***
3. Conduct formative and contextual user research studies to understand users’ goals, needs, journeys, and pain points with respect to the [product]. Apply insights from user research studies to define minimum viable product (MVP) functionality, including epics and user stories, as well as operational, business, functional, technical, data, and integration requirements.
4. As part of the overall product test strategy, conduct routine, iterative usability testing on [product] to continually improve the user experience and to inform content, information architecture, design, functionality, and accessibility. Iteratively apply insights gathered to inform design and development.
5. Before releasing to production, conduct user acceptance testing on new features, content reviews of existing [product] content, Information Architecture (IA) reviews for global navigation and design reviews of existing patterns and User Interface (UI) elements to identify and make modifications to accommodate the new [product], while maintaining a positive user experience. ***(Note for web design and application work, be sure to include Search Engine Optimization (SEO) as part of the IA Review requirements of this section.)***
6. The Contractor shall create a User Experience (UX) Research Plan and Summary for each user research study, which shall include a research write-up documenting research questions, hypotheses, methodology, recruiting needs, synthesis, and next steps.

**Content & Design**

1. Employ design process management by breaking designs into small, bite-sized implementations and collecting data from each deployment to inform priorities and decisions in the next iteration.
2. Write and edit plain language content for [product] Development Teams. See <https://design.va.gov> for the style guide.
3. Ensure consistency and continuity in [product] information architecture, including URL schema, page layout, menus and navigation, user flows, and search engine optimization. Work with all VA Product Teams to incorporate new [product], both authenticated and unauthenticated content and tools, into the Information Architecture Document of [product]. ***(Note - list/define these possible products and teams in the specific PWS.)***
4. Craft, test, and deploy design deliverables, including wireframes, low- and high-fidelity prototypes, or interactive web forms to facilitate usability testing and agile development of [product]. As appropriate, create and update prototypes to conduct facilitated demos or usability testing to elicit feedback for improvements to the design.
5. Develop designs that adhere to VA’s application of the U.S. Web Design System, available on <https://design.va.gov> . If the Contractor determines a need for a new pattern, the Contractor shall collaborate with [product] PM/COR to design that pattern.
6. Support and comply with all UX guidelines and standards as defined by the VA, currently at <https://department-of-veterans-affairs.github.io/va-digital-service-handbook/>

**Product Lifecycle Activities**

The Contractor shall support HCD activities for the [product] throughout its lifecycle by engaging in the following activities:

1. Conduct discovery activities on existing [product] as well as internal and external business process flows and functions. Work closely with VA customers to understand their needs and how those needs map to VA capabilities. Collect available data, user feedback, and VA stakeholder feedback and capture in a Discovery Report.
2. Maintaining a product roadmap that includes comprehensive list of the [product]’s functionality that needs to be built or updated and prioritization of these based on Discovery that has happened, as well as product KPIs. These product’s Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) shall be established in concert with the VA Product Owner and key stakeholders, as well evaluation KPI methodologies. All KPIs shall be designed to allow the team to effectively objectively evaluate the product against user needs throughout the life of the product.
3. Participate in VA stakeholder meetings, some of which will be in-person at VA facilities, to plan building and integrating the services and change management activities including but not limited to managing agendas, minutes, action items, and collaboration tool management meetings.
4. Mock proposed [product] to receive feedback from potential consumers and iterate on designs quickly prior to beginning software development.

**Deliverables**

1. User Research Checklist
2. User Experience Research Plan and Studies
3. User Test Documentation
4. Information Architecture Document
5. Epics, User Stories, Wireframes
6. Discovery Report
7. Product plan/Roadmap and KPIs

**SCHEDULE FOR DELIVERABLES**

***(Indicate delivery dates in terms of number of days after (DAC) award. If a deliverable is requested in draft, and then final submission-the deliverable line item is complete, no further update can be requested. Continued reporting should be a separate line item )***

| **Task** | **Deliverable ID** | **Deliverable Description** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| HCD and UX | A | **User Research Checklist**  Due xx days after contract (DAC)  Electronic submission to: VA PM, COR, CO.  Inspection: destination  Acceptance: destination |
| HCD and UX | B | **User Experience Research Plan**  Due xx days after contract (DAC)  Electronic submission to: VA PM, COR, CO.  Inspection: destination  Acceptance: destination |
| HCD and UX | C | **User Test Documentation**  Due xx days after contract (DAC)  Electronic submission to: VA PM, COR, CO.  Inspection: destination  Acceptance: destination |
| HCD and UX | D | **Information Architecture Document**  Due xx days after contract (DAC)  Electronic submission to: VA PM, COR, CO.  Inspection: destination  Acceptance: destination |
| HCD and UX | E | **Epics, User Stories, Wireframes**  Due xx days after contract (DAC)  Electronic submission to: VA PM, COR, CO.  Inspection: destination  Acceptance: destination |
| HCD and UX | F | **Discovery Report**  Due xx days after contract (DAC)  Electronic submission to: VA PM, COR, CO.  Inspection: destination  Acceptance: destination |
| HCD and UX | G | **Product Plan and Roadmap**  Due xx days after contract (DAC)  Electronic submission to: VA PM, COR, CO.  Inspection: destination  Acceptance: destination |