

Design Thinking Fast-Forward for UCT Staff

This one day introductory programme will expose UCT staff to the design thinking process, and several supporting principles, methods and tools.

During the day, staff will explore a design challenge in transdisciplinary teams of 5/6. They will take a human-centred approach to exploring and framing, developing, and finally proposing a design intervention.

During the initial exploration phase, staff will conduct basic research with people within the challenge space, to develop a deeper understanding of their needs, and the contextual constraints they experience. This phase usually leads to a reframing of the challenge, as the insights gained help teams to identify and understand the real problem, or problems behind the problem.

Moving into the development phase, teams begin ideating: sharing ideas and conceptualising a range of possible solutions. Rapid, inexpensive, low-resolution prototyping follows. Here, teams build to physical models to reach consensus within the team around their idea. In a longer design thinking project, these prototypes would be used to test the teams' ideas and proposals with people in the challenge space, after which, teams would refine or redesign their proposals based on user feedback.

This iterative process sees teams diverging and converging as they move towards solutions that are human-centred, and will ultimately be effective, appropriate and sustainable.

Design thinking helps to cultivate creative confidence as both creative-intuitive and analytical thinking are activated.

Thinking forward and abductive thought - unencumbered by pre-determined solutions and pre-conceived ideas - are encouraged, to help staff develop new solutions.

Design thinking helps organisations become more comfortable with the prototyping and testing of ideas early on in their development. This 'fail fast and learn' approach helps to manage the risks associated with innovation projects and complex challenges.

