What is User_centered Design

Source UPA :

Definition :

This standard (ISO 13407: Human-centred design process) defines a general process for including human-centered activities throughout a development life-cycle, but does not specify exact methods.
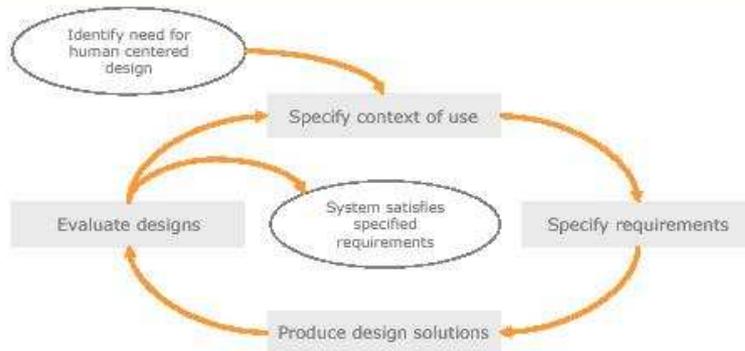
In this model, once the need to use a human centered design process has been identified, four activities form the main cycle of work:

1. **Specify the context of use**
   Identify the people who will use the product, what they will use it for, and under what conditions they will use it.
2. **Specify requirements**
   Identify any business requirements or user goals that must be met for the product to be successful.
3. **Create design solutions**
   This part of the process may be done in stages, building from a rough concept to a complete design.
4. **Evaluate designs**
   The most important part of this process is that evaluation - ideally through usability testing with actual users - is as integral as quality testing is to good software development.

The process ends - and the product can be released - once the requirements are met.

A Typical UCD Methodology

Most user-centered design methodologies are more detailed in suggesting specific activities, and the time within a process when they should be completed. The UPA publishes a poster, Designing the User Experience, showing a typical UCD process.
In this version, the UCD activities are broken down into four phases: Analysis, Design, Implementation and Deployment, with suggested activities for each phase. They are:

Analysis Phase

- Meet with key stakeholders to set vision
- Include usability tasks in the project plan
- Assemble a multidisciplinary team to ensure complete expertise
- Develop usability goals and objectives
- Conduct field studies
- Look at competitive products
- Create user profiles
- Develop a task analysis

- Document user scenarios
- Document user performance requirements

Design Phase

- Begin to brainstorm design concepts and metaphors
- Develop screen flow and navigation model
- Do walkthroughs of design concepts
- Begin design with paper and pencil
- Create low-fidelity prototypes
- Conduct usability testing on low-fidelity prototypes
- Create high-fidelity detailed design
- Do usability testing again
- Document standards and guidelines
- Create a design specification

Implementation Phase

- Do ongoing heuristic evaluations
- Work closely with delivery team as design is implemented
- Conduct usability testing as soon as possible

Deployment Phase

- Use surveys to get user feedback
- Conduct field studies to get info about actual use
- Check objectives using usability testing

You may notice that "usability testing" appears several times throughout the process, from the first phase to the last.
Providing a great user experience is an ongoing process.
You can find more information about usability and user-centered design guidelines and methodologies in the rest of the resources section of the UPA web site.