

The Design Onboarding Quest

A four to five week, structured onboarding path that gets a new designer from orientation to independent contribution on a repeatable structure, instead of however their buddy happens to onboard them that week.

This is a gamified onboarding path for new designers: five levels, run over four to five weeks, each with its own missions, XP, and a clear outcome by the end. Swap in your own company name, tools, and product names where marked.

Structure Overview

Level	Title	XP	Focus
1	Initiate	150	Orientation & ecosystem awareness
2	Explorer	50	Systems, collaboration, tooling
3	Collaborator	50	Independent task, UX audit, QA shadow
4	Contributor	20	Ownership & mentorship
5	Guild Member	30	Reflection & graduation

Level-by-level breakdown

Week 1 — Initiate (150 XP)

Key activities: Kickoff call with manager and buddy to set expectations and share the XP tracker. Access setup across core tools (design, docs, comms). General orientation to the company, its products, and background reading.

Outcomes: Can navigate core tools independently. Understands the team structure and where design fits in the product journey.

Week 2 — Explorer (50 XP)

Key activities: Read the team handbook. Explore the product ecosystem. Schedule 1:1s with the principal or lead designer, PM, buddy, and engineering manager. Observe one to two design critiques. Apply file naming and versioning conventions to a sandbox file. Write a first journal entry: first impressions.

Outcomes: Confidently navigates design system files and applies tokens or components. Participates in at least two team rituals. Shadows the QA process and asks clarifying questions.

Week 3 — Collaborator (50 XP)

Key activities: Attend team rituals (design catch-up, squad standup). Navigate the core design system files. Apply design system components to a sandbox UI task. Attend a field visit or user session if relevant to the product. Shadow a teammate running a QA checklist.

Outcomes: Completes first self-led UI/UX task with buddy support. Presents in at least one design critique and responds to peer feedback. Uses the QA checklist to review their own work and a peer's.

Week 4 — Contributor (20 XP)

Key activities: Plan and run a small UX audit on a real product or flow: choose scope, run a heuristic evaluation, share a written or video summary. Present in a critique session. Conduct and share QA on their own work. Write an onboarding tip or system improvement for the team.

Outcomes: Confidently joins rituals and contributes ideas. Supports a newer joiner or intern with context. Seen by the team as a reliable, thoughtful contributor.

Week 5 — Guild Member (30 XP)

Key activities: Present a final onboarding reflection to the team. Add a resource, checklist, or tip for future joiners. Earn recognition as a full member of the team.

Outcomes: Completed all levels of the onboarding path. Ready to take on full sprint work, join critiques, lead QA, and support onboarding of the next person.

Adapt freely. What matters is that week one, week two, and week four all point back to the same standard, not three different ideas of what “ready” looks like.