Samiha Essakhi

Service Designer

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Award-winning Service Designer. Passionate about uncovering user insights to drive strategy and shape meaningful, inclusive experiences. Experienced in mixed-methods research, co-design, and aligning diverse stakeholders around evidence-based decisions.

WORK EXPERIENCE

UX Designer & Researcher | Senior Analyst | Ontario Public Service **February 2026 – Present**
Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD)
Toronto, ON

User Experience Designer | UHN Connected Care **May 2025 – December 2025**
Toronto, ON

- Collaborated with cross-functional teams across clinical, administrative, and community units to analyze existing workflows, identify inefficiencies, and translate them into streamlined, improved processes.
- Conducted end-to-end requirements analysis through interviews, workshops, journey mapping, and process modeling to document business needs for new digital solutions.
- Designed, developed, and tested workflow automations using Microsoft Power Automate, Power Apps, SharePoint, SQL views, and Power BI, improving data flow reliability across 15+ sites.
- Evaluated new system features, assessed feasibility, and provided technical recommendations to leadership on adopting or modifying digital tools.
- Supported implementation planning for new system processes, including testing, pilot rollout, and change management steps.
- Created detailed documentation to support long-term system maintenance.
- Delivered training and onboarding to frontline users through walkthroughs, demos, and user-friendly guides to ensure strong adoption.

Service Designer | NORC Innovation Centre **January 2024 – April 2025**
Toronto, ON (Mitacs Placement through UofT)

- Led foundational analysis of administrative and service delivery workflows across 15 sites, mapping current processes and identifying opportunities for efficiency, automation, and standardization.
- Conducted requirements-gathering sessions with cross-disciplinary stakeholders (operations, tech, clinical, community teams) to document system needs for digital products and workflows.
- Designed future-state process models, including flowcharts and service blueprints, to communicate proposed system improvements and workflow redesigns.
- Evaluated potential technologies and integrations—SharePoint, SQL, Power Automate, and custom solutions—to determine feasibility, enhancement scope, and organizational impact.
- Provided clear, actionable recommendations balancing business needs, constraints, and user requirements.
- Created comprehensive documentation packages including journey maps, service blueprints, technical notes, project risks, and system requirements.
- Facilitated co-design workshops to align diverse stakeholders and drive consensus for process changes and system implementation plans.

Service Designer | Bridgeable **September 2023 – December 2023**
Toronto, ON (Co-op/Mitacs Placement through UofT))

- Created qualitative research plans, journey maps, and service blueprints.
- Moderated co-design sessions and usability tests to iterate and validate concepts based on real user feedback.
- Produced high-level presentations and annotated workflows that translated research into strategy.
- Reimagined service delivery in Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities, resulting in continued collaboration with the NORC Innovation Centre (client).

UX Research Assistant | University of Toronto **July 2023 – November 2023**
Toronto, ON

- Conducted digital ethnography, stakeholder interviews, and social listening to identify key service gaps.
- Designed and led usability testing sessions and built scalable evaluation frameworks.

UX Project Assistant | University of Toronto **May 2023 – August 2023**
Toronto, ON

- Led remote, task-based usability testing sessions with over 20 students to evaluate the assistant's accuracy and user experience.
- Identified usability issues and synthesized findings into actionable design recommendations.
- Refined the virtual assistant responses and uncovered functional gaps, contributing to the expansion of its scope into a new specialty area.
- Helped enhance content accuracy and increase student engagement with the assistant.

UX Designer | UTEST, University of Toronto **May 2023 – August 2023**
Toronto, ON (Practicum)

- Conducted accessibility audits using manual and automated tools to identify violations of WCAG 2.1 and AODA standards.
- Presented clear, prioritized compliance recommendations to leadership, helping mitigate legal and operational risks.
- Performed heuristic evaluations and conducted stakeholder interviews to surface usability issues and experience gaps.
- Delivered actionable design suggestions that informed future iterations and improved overall platform usability.

EDUCATION

University of Toronto
Master in Information, User Experience Design

Ecole Nationale de Commerce et de Gestion
Master in Management, Finance & Accounting

Irrational Labs
Behavioral Design Certificate

AWARDS, SKILLS & PUBLICATIONS

Awards:

- **Service Design Award | Service Design Network** **2024**
  Won the Service Design Network award for Best Student Project that reimagines support services for older adults living in naturally occurring retirement communities.
- **Student mHealth App Competition | Human Factors and Ergonomics Society** **2024**
  Runner-up for Cura app, a comprehensive tracking application designed for effective eczema management and care.

Skills:

- **Service Design & Systems Thinking:** Service blueprinting, journey mapping, process mapping, service prototyping, information architecture, workflow analysis, systems thinking
- **Research & Co-Design:** Moderated and unmoderated usability testing, stakeholder and frontline interviews, surveys, field research, ethnography, participatory design, co-design workshops, heuristic evaluations
- **Analysis, Measurement & Reporting:** Thematic analysis, service and experience analysis, qualitative synthesis, service performance insights, documentation and reporting, SQL, Power BI, Tableau
- **Digital & Design Tools:** Figma, FigJam, Miro, Power Apps, Microsoft 365
- **Languages:** English, French, Arabic

Publication:
"Tensions in Emerging Contexts of Care: Naturally-Occurring Retirement Communities as a Liminal Space for Design"
Futures of Care Work, CSCW 2024 Workshop
Co-authored paper exploring service design in healthcare contexts, showcasing the role of digital technologies in supporting frontline health workers.