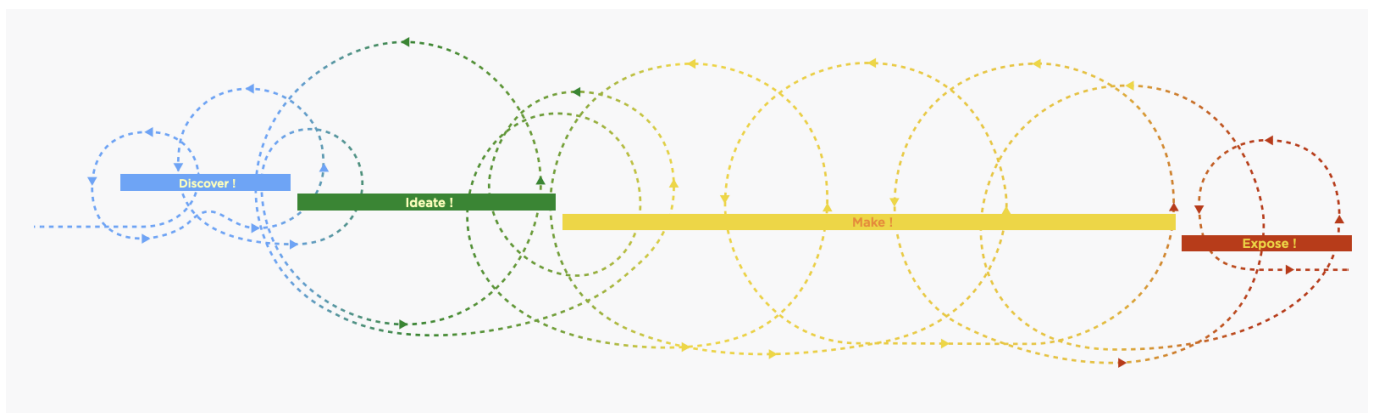


Archetypal Phases of the Design Process

[Link zur deutschen Version.](#)

Design processes can be structured very differently depending on the discipline, project, and task. Within the study program, we use the four archetypal phases **Discover!**, **Ideate!**, **Make!** and **Expose!** as a shared framework to structure different activities within a design process and to make the individual working process more transparent. These phases are explicitly not intended as a rigid or linear sequence, but as an iterative process in which individual steps overlap and may be repeated several times. Insights gained from experiments, prototypes, tests, feedback, or reflection can at any point lead to questioning earlier assumptions, conducting additional research, developing new ideas, or modifying existing concepts. The design process should therefore be understood less as a fixed sequence of individual steps and more as a repeated movement between **understanding, developing, testing, and reflecting**. In simplified form, this process can be described as **Discover! → Ideate! → Make! → Expose!**, while continuous loops of **Make → Test → Reflect → Iterate ∞** occur especially during development and can lead back to earlier phases whenever necessary.



	Discover! Understand and contextualize	Ideate! Develop possibilities	Make! Make ideas visible and testable	Expose! Communicate process and result
Goal	Understand the task, context, needs, problems, and opportunities.	Develop different ideas and solution approaches and open up the solution space.	Develop selected ideas further, test them, and make them tangible and assessable.	Structure and communicate the design process and its results in a clear and understandable way.
Focus	Observe, research, analyze, identify relationships, and consolidate insights.	Explore, vary, combine, question, and select.	Develop, prototype, test, reflect, and iterate.	Select, document, present, explain, and reflect.
Possible methods	Research, observation, analysis, interviews, mapping, problem definition, design challenges	Brainstorming, brainwriting, mind mapping, sketches, storyboards, scenarios, simple models	Sketches, models, mock-ups, experiments, prototypes, scheme design, detailed design, testing	Presentation, documentation, critique, feedback, posters, process visualization
Result	A well-founded question or a clear starting point for the further process.	Different possible solution approaches and a reasoned selection for further development.	An increasingly concrete design or prototype that can be tested and developed further.	A comprehensible representation of how the initial question, process, and result have developed.
Iteration	New insights can at any time require additional research or a redefinition of the problem.	Insights from prototyping and testing can at any time trigger new ideas.	Make → Test → Reflect → Iterate ∞ ; return to Ideate! or Discover! if necessary.	Feedback and reflection can raise new questions and trigger another iteration.

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