TRANSFORMING THE ONBOARDING EXPERIENCE FOR FRESHERS TO THALES CIPHERTRUST PRODUCTS THROUGH A UX-LED EXPLORATION TO SIMPLIFY TECHNICAL PRODUCT UNDERSTANDING

A PROJECT REPORT

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE
OF

MASTER OF DESIGN
IN
INTERACTION DESIGN

SUBMITTED BY
AISWARYA MURALI (2K23/MD1D/01)

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
ASST. PROF. PARTHA PRATIM DAS

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JULY, 2025

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CANDIDATE DECLARATION

I, Aiswarya Murali, Roll No–2k23/MDID/01, student of M.Des (Interaction Design), hereby declare that the project Dissertation titled "**Transforming the Onboarding Experience for Freshers to Thales CipherTrust Products through a UX-led Exploration to Simplify Technical Product Understanding**" which is submitted by myself to the Department of Design, Delhi Technological University, Delhi in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of degree of Master of Design, is original and not copied from any source without proper citation. This work has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma Associateship, Fellowship or other similar title or recognition.

Place: Delhi **Aiswarya Murali**
Date: 24.07.2025

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the Project Dissertation titled "**Transforming the Onboarding Experience for Freshers to Thales CipherTrust Products through a UX-led Exploration to Simplify Technical Product Understanding**" which is submitted by Aiswarya Murali, Roll No's - 2K23/MDID/01, Department of Design, Delhi Technological University, Delhi in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Design, is a record of the project work carried out by the students under my supervision. To the best of my knowledge this work has not been submitted in part or full for any Degree or Diploma to this University or elsewhere.

Place: Delhi **Partha Pratim Das**
Date: 24.07.2025 **SUPERVISOR**

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24-Dec- 2024

Aiswarya Murali

Internship Letter

Dear Aiswarya,

Congratulations and Welcome to Thales Family!

We would like to confirm your selection for internship at **Noida** Centre, starting from **24th January 2025 (Friday)**.

During the internship, you will be going through a rigorous on the job training model at Thales. You will have to learn and perform the necessary activities as per the project and business requirement.

Permanent placement in the organization will depend upon your individual performance during the internship period and on the business requirement at the time of conversion.

Please note the details of your internship:

- Duration – 6 months
- Stipend – INR 25,000/-
- Location – Noida Office

We wish you all the best for your successful career at Thales.

Sincerely,

Thales DIS Technology India Pvt. Ltd. ★ Noida

Saurabh Kumar

Head HRBP, Noida Engineering

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Place: Delhi **Date: 24.07.20**

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1. ABSTRACT

Starting a job in a company is both exciting and overwhelming, especially if you are working in a field as complex and technically advanced as cybersecurity. At Thales, the interns currently find themselves navigating complicated terms, technical landscape and high expectations. Apart from administration onboarding, it is important to understand the technical cybersecurity terms This graduation project focuses on addressing the need of a user centered onboarding experience tailored for interns in understanding Thales's flagship product, Ciphertrust Manager. By conducting user research, identifying key friction points and developing experience driven design intervention, this graduation project aims at developing an onboarding experience that overcomes the gap of technical complexity and user accessibility.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 About the project

The beginning of an internship or a new job is very critical, it sets the tone for everything that follows. It defines how you see and how confident you are with your role and how well you integrate with your team. At Thales, a global leader in cybersecurity and advanced technologies, interns/ freshers tend to find themselves lost in the world filled with specialized tools, sensitive data and complex systems.
While the current onboarding process covers the basics, it often leaves interns/freshers to figure most things out themselves. For products like CipherTrust Manager (one of the major products of the company) the learning curve is steep and the documentation is too dense. For this project, I asked the question, " How can we make that first experience better? How can we guide interns into this complex world in a way that feels clear, supportive, and even enjoyable?"

2.2 About the company

Thales is a global technology leader working in defence, aerospace, travel and digital security sector. Headquartered in France, the company operates in 68 countries globally and works for clients ranging from national governments and military to critical enterprises like hospitals and banks.
With a strong focus on innovation and technology, the company aims at providing high tech designs and solutions to governments,critical industries and enterprises globally to make our lives safer and secure.
In India, Thales has been trusted in both defense and digital transformation. For example , the company provides advanced avionics and radar systems for Indian Airforce Aircraft like Rafale.

Additionally, it has contributed to smart city initiatives and secure digital identity systems in AIndia. These services help in supporting critical sectors like banking, government and transportation services.

2.3 About the team

In the realm of cybersecurity, Thales CipherTrust plays a pivotal role by providing advanced data protection and encryption solutions that help organizations secure sensitive information and ensure regulatory compliance.

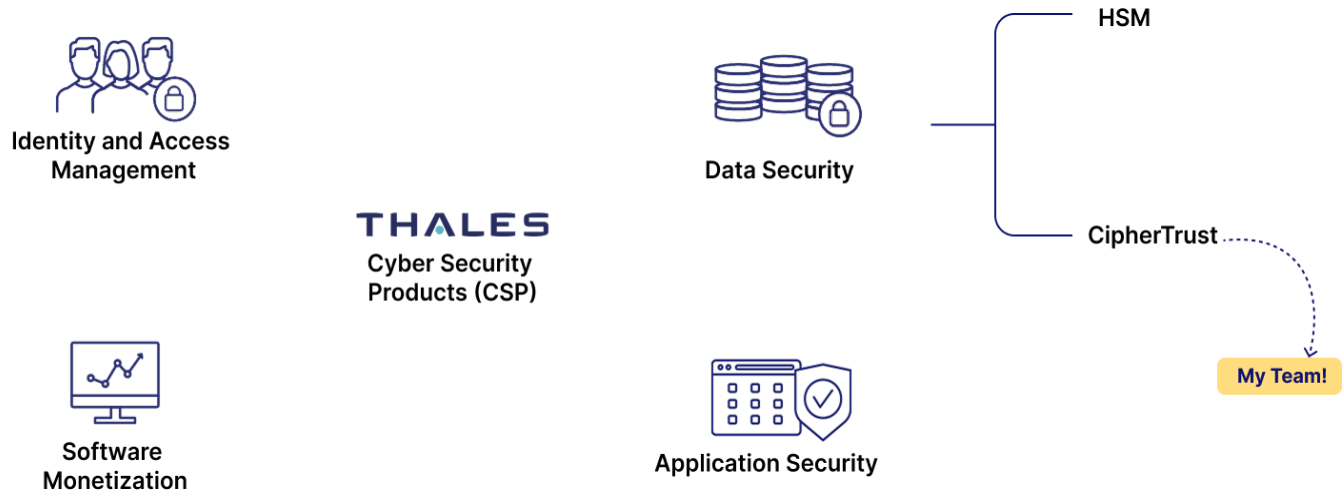

Figure 1: Team structure of Thales Cyber Security products

2.4 About the platform

Thales' CipherTrust Data Security Platform (CDSP) is a comprehensive suite designed to safeguard sensitive data across various environments, including on-premises, cloud, and hybrid infrastructures. The platform integrates data discovery, classification, protection, and centralized key management to streamline compliance and enhance security.

Key Feature :-

- Centralized Key Management- Securely manage keys across various systems
- Data discovery and classification- Identifies sensitive data wherever it resides and classifies it by sensitivity and risk
- Access control and policy management- Enforce rules regarding who can access or edit data
- Tokenization and data masking- Replaces sensitives data with tokens or masks, preserving structure without releasing sensitive content

- Secure analytics –Enable analysis of encrypted data without decrypting it.
- Compliance reporting and auditing- Maintains logs and generates reports for audit supporting compliance with standards like GDPR, HIPAA and others.

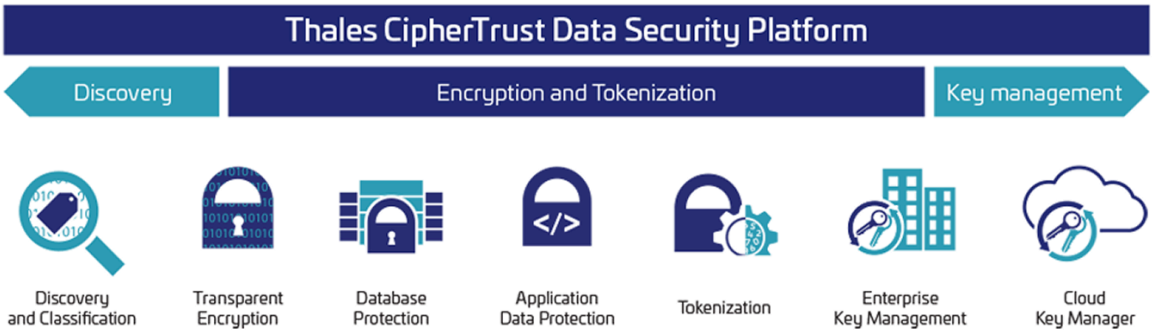

Figure 2: Thales CDSP features.

2.4.1 Products under CDSP

1. **CipherTrust Manager - Core**

   CipherTrust Manager is the centralized management console of the CipherTrust Data Security Platform, used to manage encryption keys, policies, and access controls across a wide variety of data protection solutions. It simplifies data security operations, ensures compliance, and helps enforce security across hybrid and multi-cloud environments.

2. **CipherTrust Transparent Encryption (CTE)**

   Encrypts files, folders, and volumes without changing existing applications or workflows. It provides:

   - Granular access controls to enforce who can access what
   - Logging and monitoring for visibility into file-level activity
   - Support for structured and unstructured data across physical, virtual, and cloud environments

3. **CipherTrust Application Data Protection (CADP)**

   Offers APIs and SDKs to integrate data encryption at the application level. Developers can:

   - Encrypt sensitive data before it's stored
   - Maintain control over encryption keys
   - Use tokenization or format-preserving encryption if needed

3. CipherTrust Tokenization

Helps replace sensitive data (like PANs or SSNs) with non-sensitive equivalents (tokens). Offers:

- Vaultless tokenization
- Policy-based access
- Can preserve data formats for legacy systems

4. CipherTrust Database Protection

Protects sensitive data stored in databases using column-level encryption. Key features:

- Compatible with Oracle, SQL Server, DB2, and more
- Transparent to applications
- Strong access control with centralized key management

5. CipherTrust Cloud Key Manager (CCKM)

Enables centralized management of encryption keys used in public clouds, including:

- AWS, Azure, Google Cloud, Salesforce, etc.
- Brings visibility and control over bring-your-own-key (BYOK) and hold-your-own-key (HYOK) scenarios
- Helps meet cloud compliance requirements

6. CipherTrust KMIP Server

Implements the KMIP (Key Management Interoperability Protocol) standard to allow third-party systems (like VMware or NetApp) to securely communicate with the CipherTrust Manager for key retrieval and storage.

7. CipherTrust TDE Key Management

Specially designed to manage Transparent Data Encryption (TDE) keys for databases like:

- Oracle TDE
- Microsoft SQL Server TDE
- Offers centralized lifecycle management and audit logs

8. CipherTrust Secrets Management

Manages and protects application secrets, credentials, and configuration files, particularly useful in DevOps environments. Supports automation tools like Kubernetes and Ansible.

3. Problem introduction

3.1 Background

Many interns face a challenge during their initial week at Thales. They want to contribute and learn, but the tools are too advanced for them to understand. The existing resources are too scattered or too technical for a beginner to understand. This disconnect leads to

- Uncertainty on what to focus on
- Reduced confidence in asking questions
- A slower start in contributing to real projects

The issue is not the lack of resources but the misalignment with the need of someone starting out.

3.2 Problem Statement

For the research project our initial problem statement is as follows-
“New joiners and interns face challenges in effectively onboarding to CipherTrust Manager and its connector products, hindering their ability to quickly understand platform usage and integration.”

4. Scope

The scope of this project are-

- Simplify Onboarding Experience- Improve the initial journey for interns by making the onboarding process more structured, user-friendly, and engaging.
- Accelerate Product Understanding- Equip interns with the necessary knowledge of Thales' cybersecurity products and services to become productive faster.
- Create Reusable Onboarding Assets- Develop scalable onboarding tools (like templates, guides, interactive walkthroughs) that can be reused for future batches.
- Onboarding Platform- Bring all onboarding resources, tools, and communication into a single, cohesive platform for a seamless intern experience.
- Enable Feedback and Iteration- Set up feedback loops to refine the onboarding experience continuously based on real intern insights.

5. Goal

In Scope:

- User research with interns
- Journey mapping of the current onboarding process
- Identification of friction points and knowledge gaps
- Redesign of onboarding touchpoints (documents, tools, flows)
- Prototyping and usability testing
- Final deliverables: Design system components, wireframes, high-fidelity mockups

Out of Scope:

- Technical implementation of onboarding systems
- General HR onboarding (e.g., payroll, policies)
- Onboarding outside the cybersecurity domain or other teams

6. Design process

This project followed a design-led process that drew from both Design Thinking and User-Centered Design. Design Thinking provided a flexible, human-centered framework for reframing the onboarding problem and generating innovative concepts. Meanwhile, principles from User-Centered Design ensured that the final toolkit was grounded in the specific needs, behaviors, and feedback of interns who are the primary users

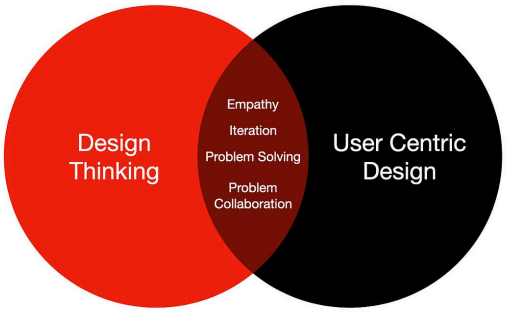

Figure 3: UCD and Design thinking go hand in hand

7. Research

To get a better understanding of the problem, I conducted several primary and secondary research methods like shadowing, observing, user interview and mapped out my observations.

7.1 Secondary

To understand how the current workflow is to onboard interns to the platform, I went through all the available resources/ platforms that Thales has to offer. The following observations were made-

Tools	Thales Website	Thales Documentation	Confluence	ChatGPT
What is it	Provides a high-level overview of Thales' mission, product range, and areas of expertise.	Public site offering detailed, customer-facing documentation for all Thales products.	Internal wiki tool by Atlassian housing detailed documentation on backend processes and internal workflows.	Centralized access point summarizing info from various sources (except Confluence)
What do users do?	Explores company background and product ecosystem to build foundational understanding.	Searches for product-specific features, specs, and usage details relevant to ongoing tasks.	Navigates implementation notes, engineering decisions, and team documentation during onboarding.	Uses AI to quickly extract concise summaries, definitions, or clarifications across platforms.

Table 1: Available resources/platform for intern onboarding

Users usually follows the following workflow to understand the products is

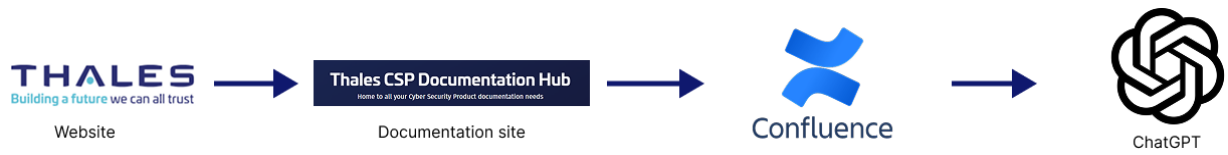

Figure 4: Workflow of interns through existing resources

Following this workflow , an intern can get a gist about the products and what it does but still has a lot to understand so that they can contribute efficiently to the team

7.1.1 Insights

The following insights were noted

- The information is scattered along multiple platforms
- Finding a particular information in the documentation is very difficult

- While searching for information on ChatGPT, the AI can help understand the information in simple terms but details regarding several backend can't be found.
- Confluence search is not effective when looking for a particular information.
- Confluence is not updated.

7.2 Primary

To identify the core problems, I conducted interviews and observation sessions with the interns. The following high level questions were prepared -

- How is the experience so far?
- What have you learned?
- Where were you confused?
- Who did you reach to solve your queries?

I also asked them to show their workflow for observation purposes.

7.2.1 Insights

The following insights were gathered

Figure 5: Insights collected after user interviews (the names have been changed due privacy reasons)

8. Affinity mapping

After gathering the insights, I clustered them to find the common problem area.

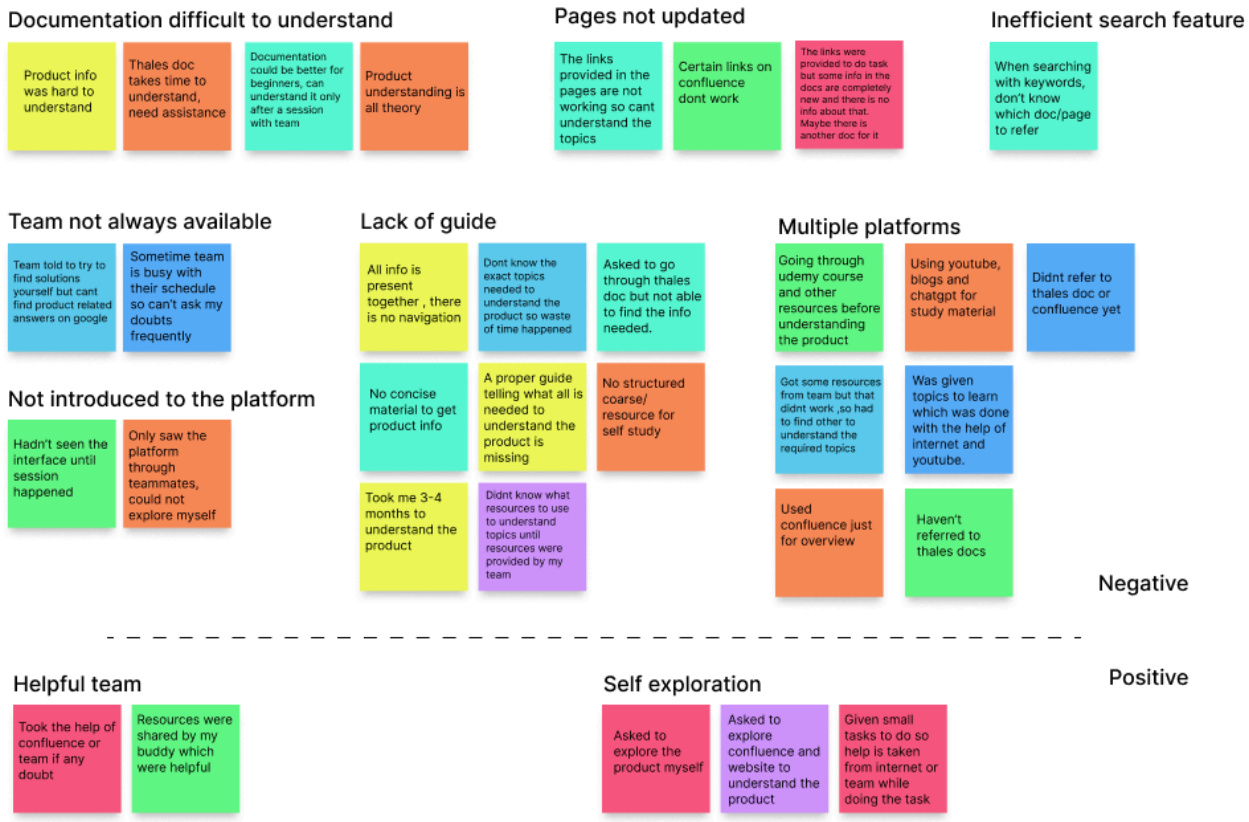

Figure 6: Clustering insights based on common themes

9. Journey map

To develop a meaningful and user-centered onboarding solution, it was essential to gain a comprehensive understanding of the intern experience while interacting with the CipherTrust Data Security Platform. The decision to create a journey map was driven by the need to visualize this experience holistically—capturing not only the tasks performed at each stage but also the thoughts, emotions, and challenges that interns typically face.

The journey map served as a critical research tool to identify pain points, moments of confusion, and opportunities where design interventions could add value. It provided clarity on the gaps within the existing onboarding process, such as the lack of role-specific guidance, overwhelming technical content, and over-reliance on mentorship.

By mapping the end-to-end journey, I was able to empathize more deeply with new users and translate those insights into the design. This foundation ensured that the final solution was grounded in real user needs rather than assumptions.

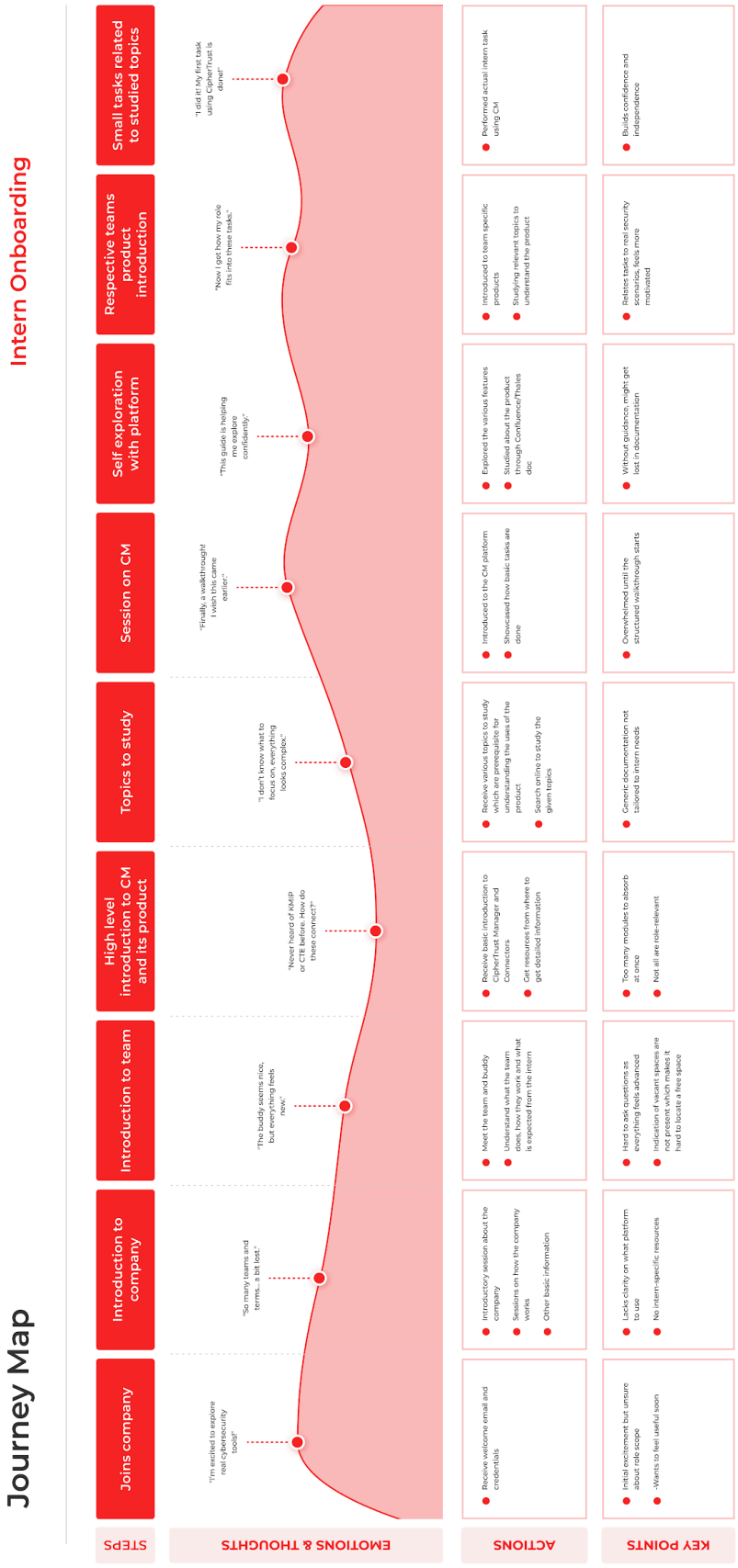

Figure 7: A journey map of existing intern onboarding to CipherTrust products

10. Pain points

After conducting research and gathering insights, I was able to map out the main problem areas. These are listed in the table below along with the severity level(based on how frequently it was mentioned/noted, 1 is lowest and 3 is highest)

Pain Point	Description	Severity level
Confusing Documentation	Product documentation is difficult to understand, especially for beginners. Users need team assistance to interpret it.	2
Outdated or broken pages	Many Confluence links are broken or lead to outdated or irrelevant content, creating confusion and delay.	2
Inefficient search	The search feature doesn't help users find relevant documents easily when using keywords.	3
Lack of onboarding support	Interns had no early exposure to the product and limited access to team help, leaving them unsure how to begin or explore the platform.	1
Missing Learning Guide	There's no structured path or curated learning guide. Users are unsure where to start and what to focus on.	3
Scattered Learning pattern	Interns relied on multiple external sources like YouTube and blogs due to lack of centralized internal resources.	3
Table 2 : Pain points identified with severity score		

This identification helped to focus on certain pain points while coming up with a solution

11. Redefining problem

By analyzing the pain points, I was able to define the core problem and identify opportunity areas that shaped my design direction. These led to the following 'How Might We' questions:

1. How might we create a structured, beginner-friendly learning path to help users understand CipherTrust step by step?
2. How might we help users quickly find the right documents, even when they don't know the exact keywords or titles?
3. How might we centralize learning resources so users don't have to rely on scattered external platforms?

From this I could define the opportunity statement

"There's an opportunity to enhance onboarding by centralizing resources, simplifying search, and providing a clear, beginner-friendly path to help users navigate and learn CipherTrust with ease."

12. User persona

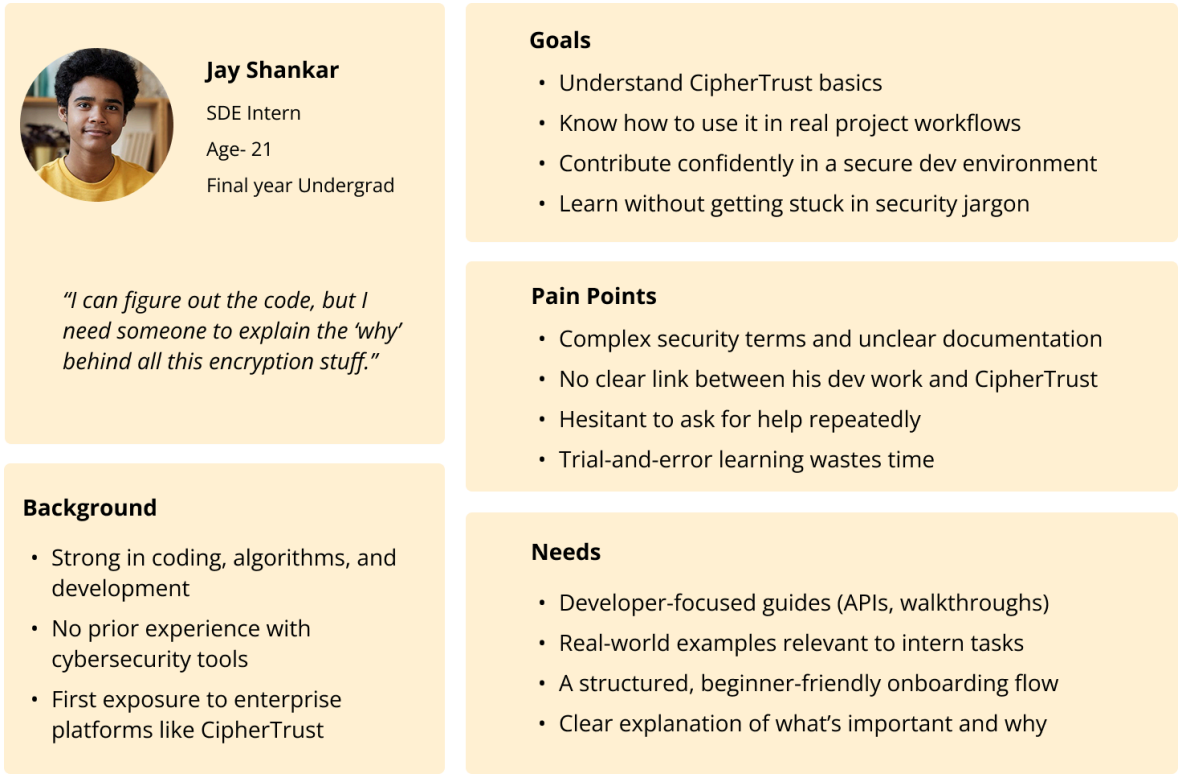

Figure 8: User persona of targeted group

13. Ideation

After understanding the problem statement and the needs of the users, I went ahead with some ideations on what could be the best solution. Few ideas and why it did or didn't work are shown below

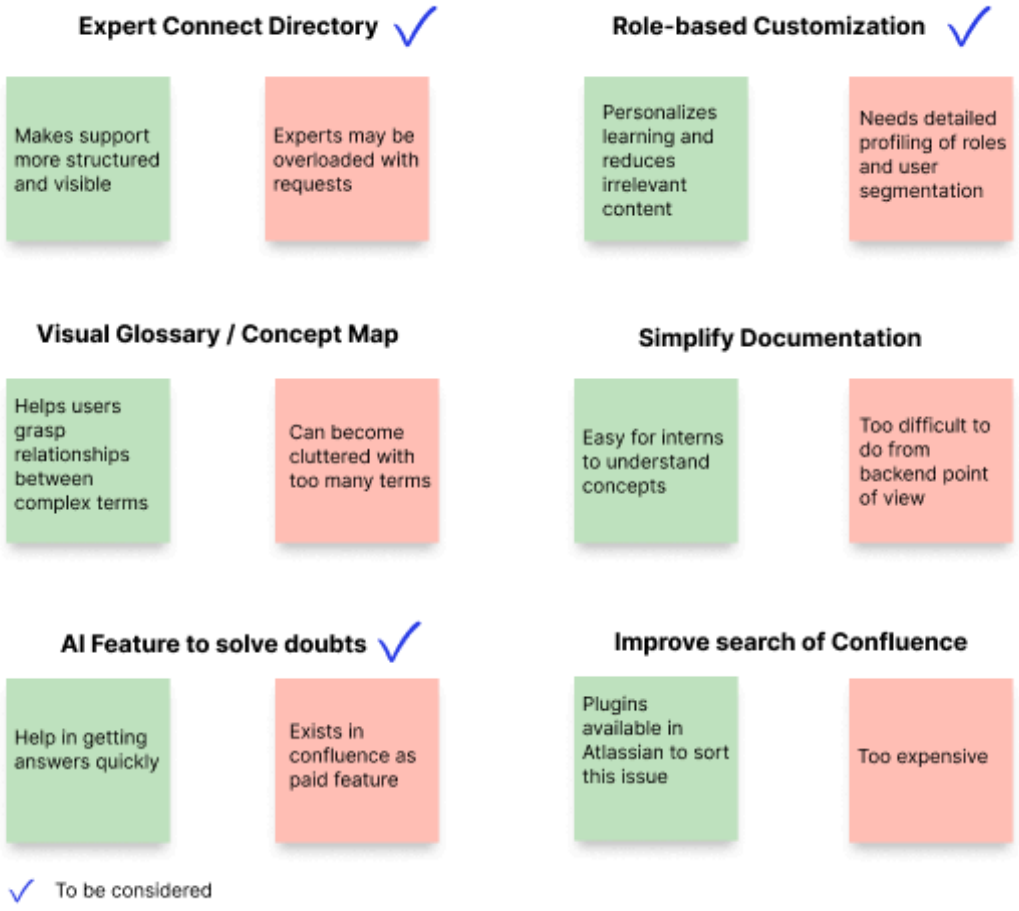

Figure 9: Ideations

14. Solution

After understanding the user problems and pain points and understanding the pros and cons of the various iterations, the following solution was developed.

14.1 Workflow

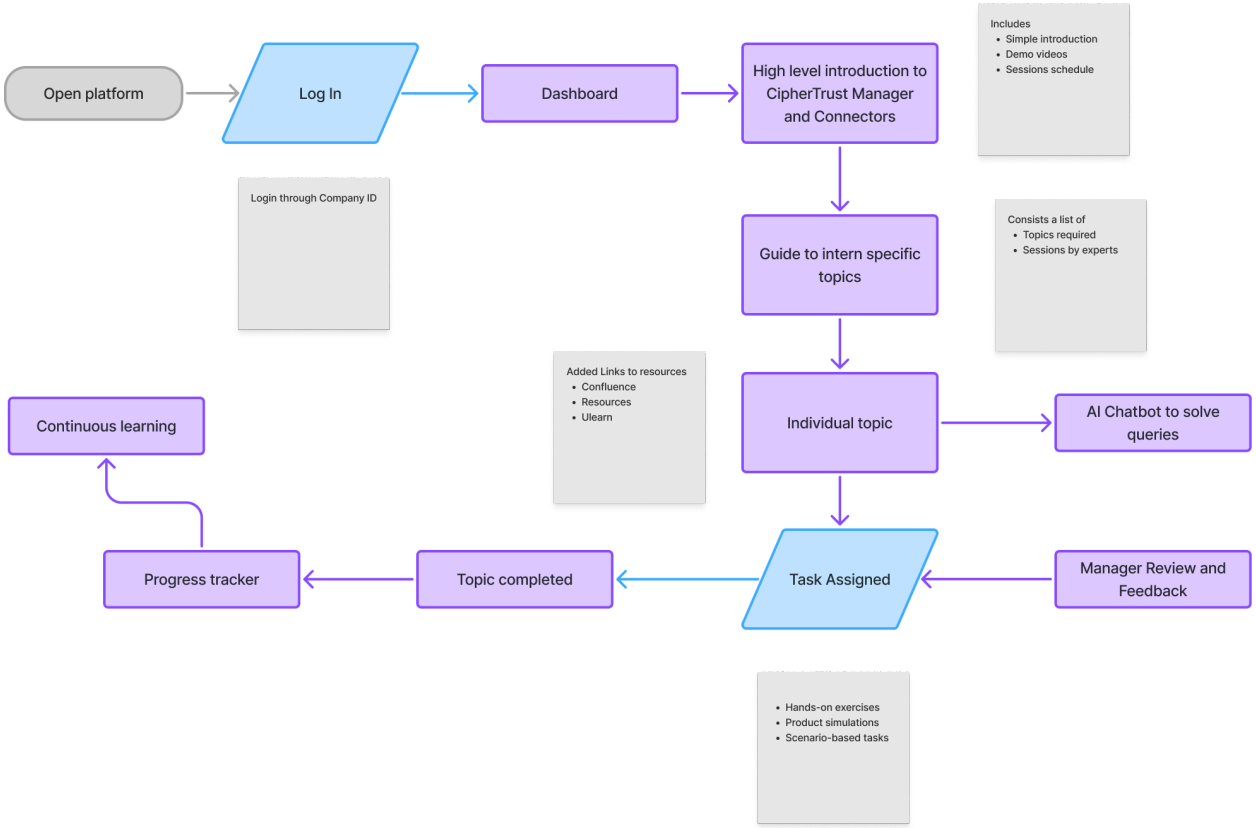

Figure 10: Workflow for a person who is new to CM

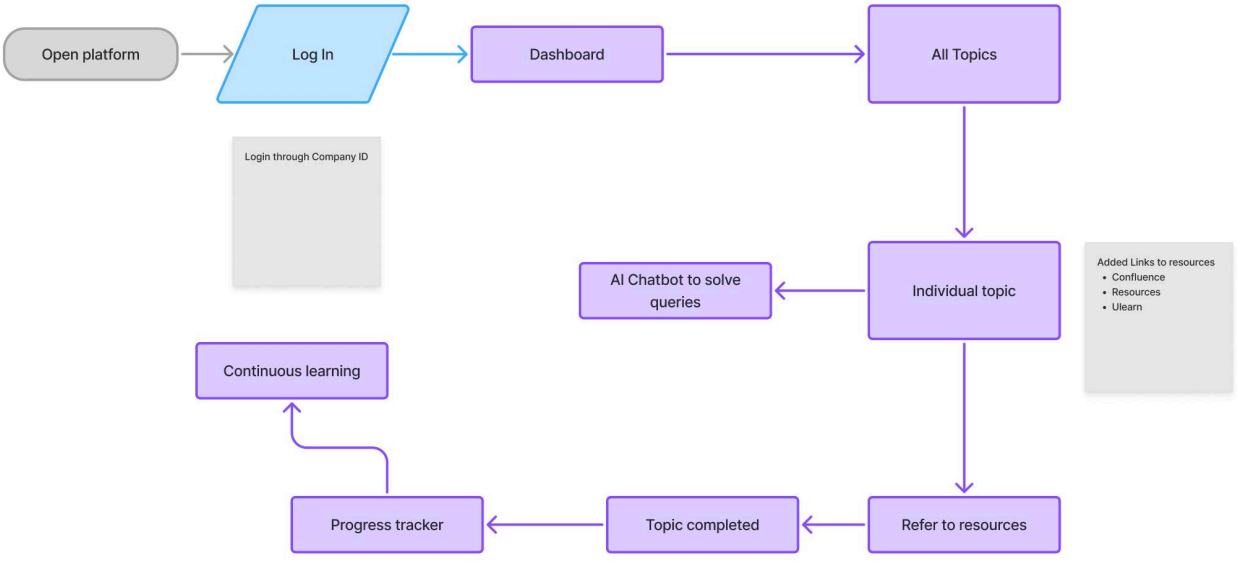

Figure 11: Workflow for a person who is revisiting to learn more about CM

14.2 Information architecture

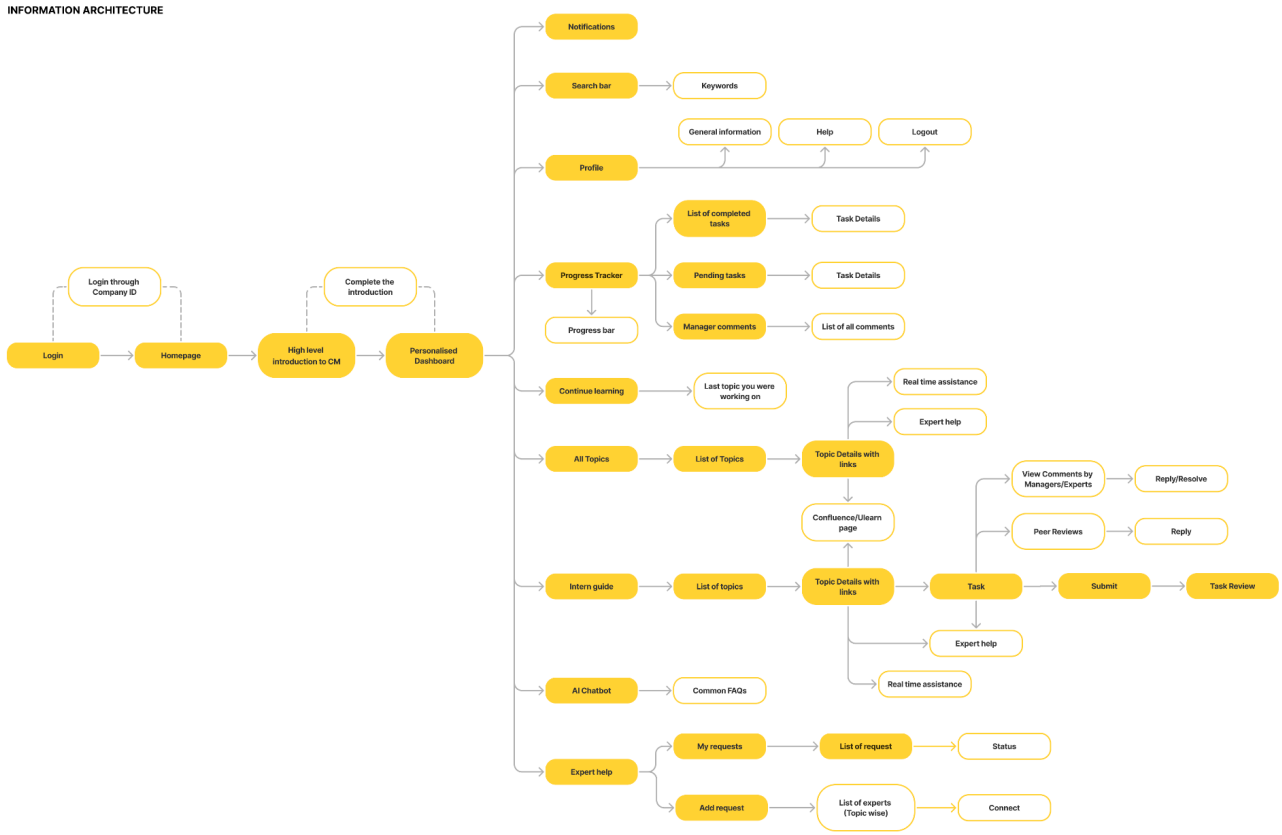

Figure 12: First draft of information architecture

14.3 Design system

The design system matches that of the Ciphertrust Manager to maintain connectivity of the platform.

Figure 13 : Colours, text and iconography used

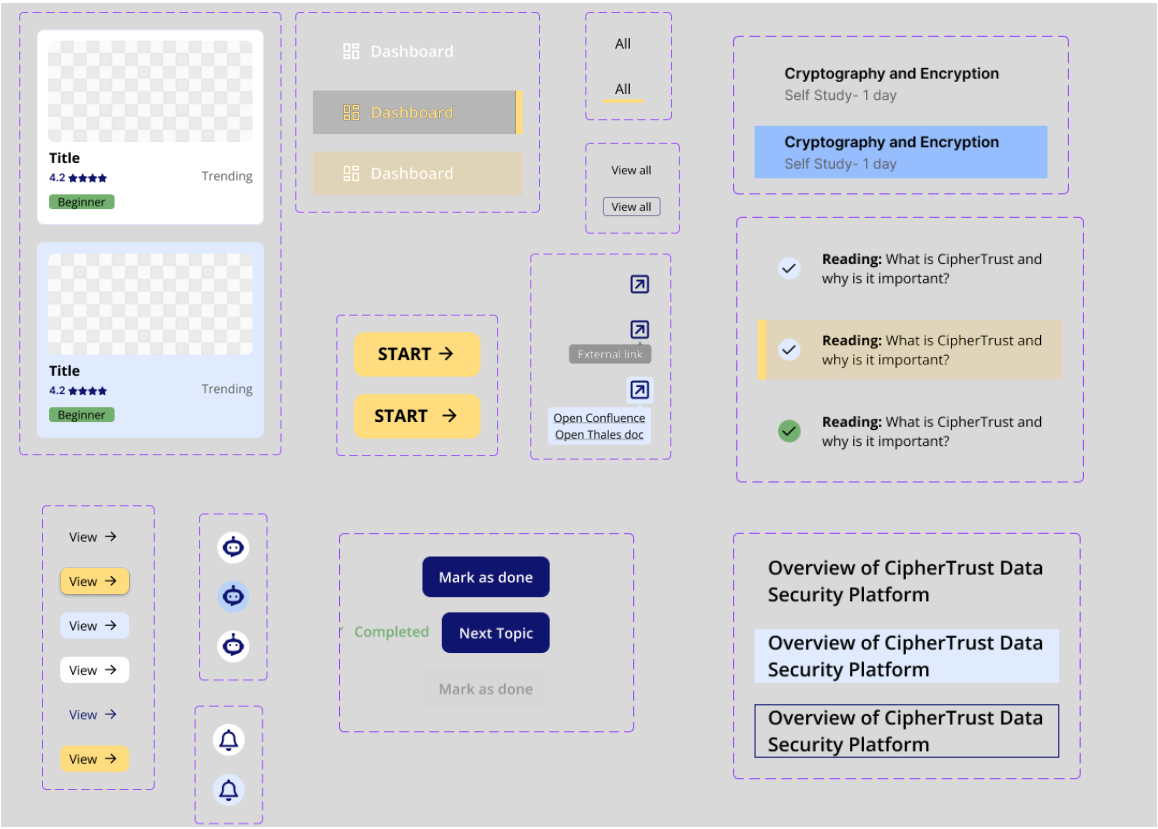

Figure 14: Components used in the Design system

14.4 Low fidelity

To start with how the platform will look like , I started with some rapid sketching of key screens to explore layouts and user flows without the distraction of the visual design elements.

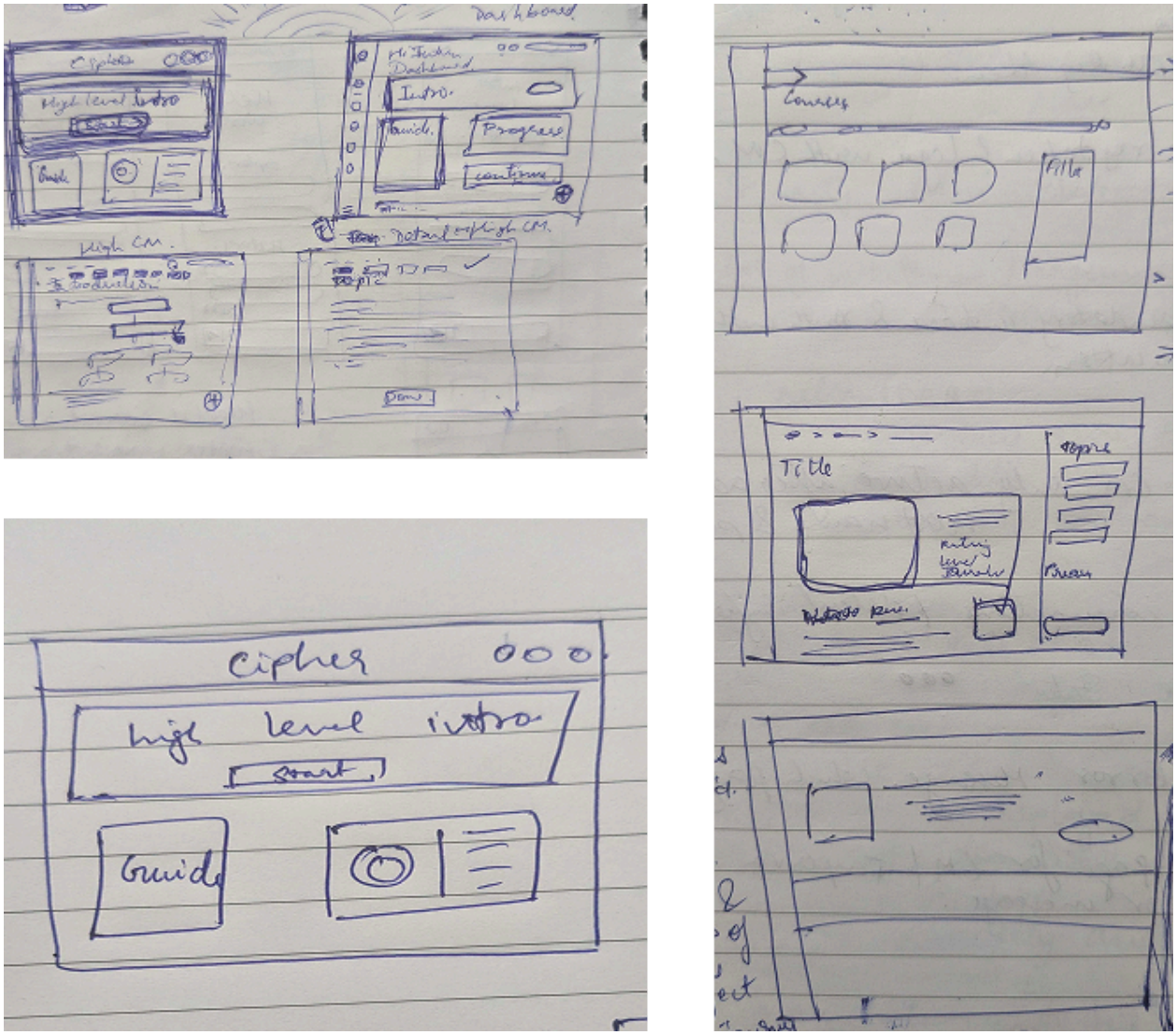

Figure 15 : Few sketches done as part of low fidelity design of screens

14.5 Medium fidelity

After having a rough idea about the contents of the screens, I started transforming initial sketches into structured digital wireframes to enhance clarity and understanding of the user workflow.

Figure 16: Medium fidelity screens made on Figma

15. User testing first draft

To make sure that the solution is in going in the right direction, i conducted an user testing session with the users to get their feedback and whether or not the solution meets their expectations
The following points were gathered from this session

- There is no requirement for messaging features within this platform, as two existing platforms (Microsoft Teams and Slack)already support communication. Providing the name and email ID of the respective expert would be sufficient.
- The filter by ratings can be removed, as topics are completed out of necessity rather than for enjoyment.

- Tasks or tests within topics are needed only during the intern onboarding phase, and not for all topics throughout the platform.

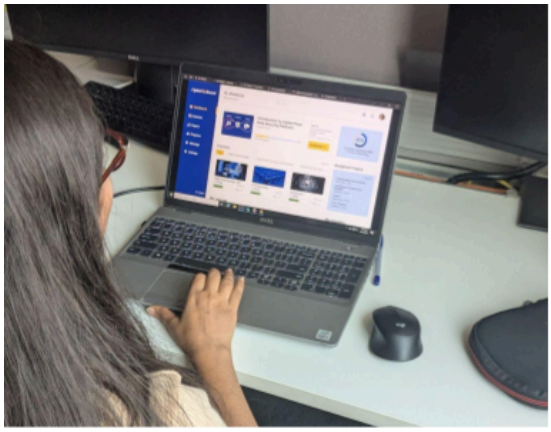

Figure 17: User testing for first draft of UI with other interns to get feedback

15.1 Feedback implementation

From the feedback collected, there were some changes done on the information architecture and some UI changes

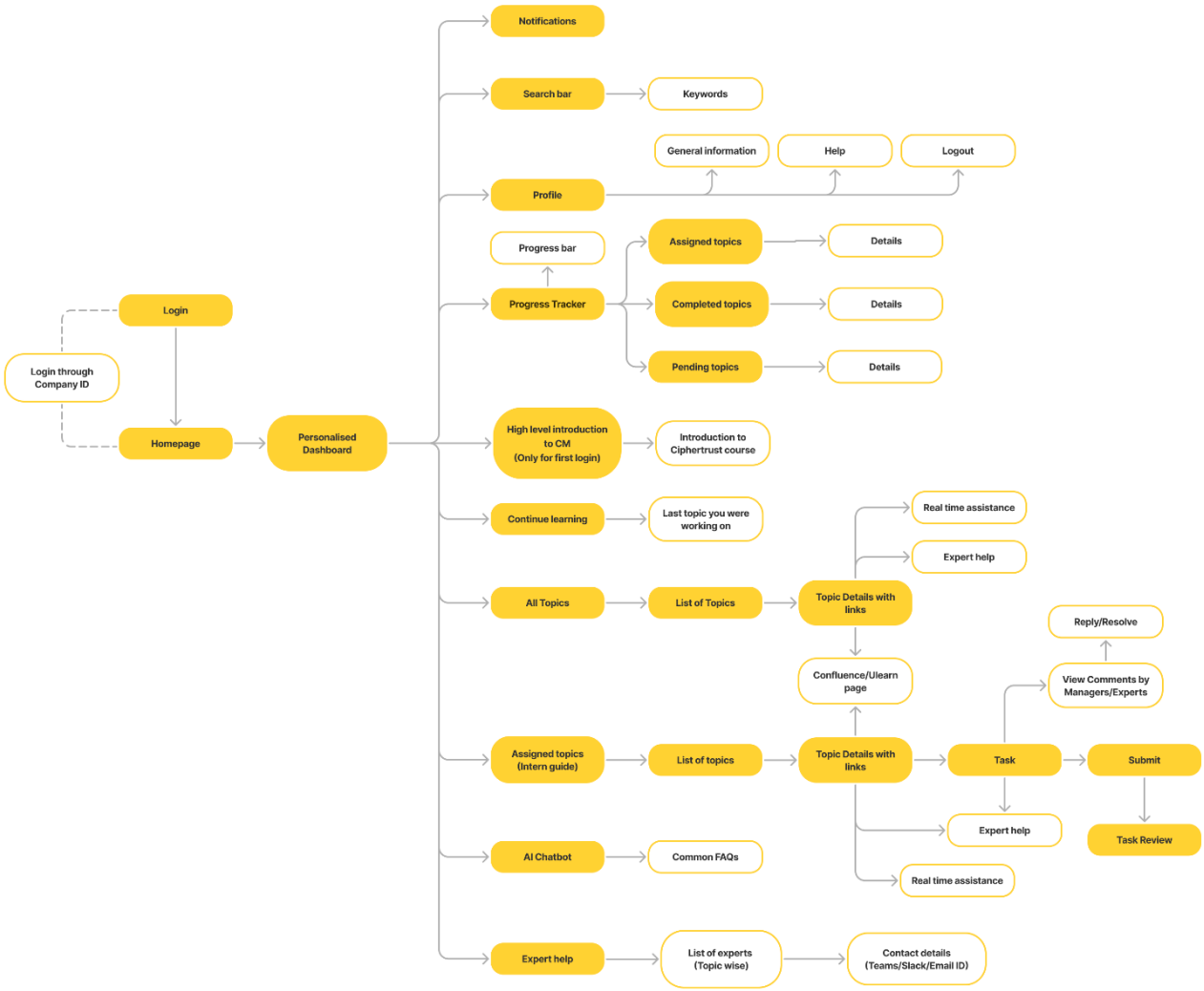

Figure 18: Updated Information architecture

16. Final design- CipherOnBoard

From the wireframes made, I added visual design elements to create polished, brand aligned screens that bring the experience to life. After conducting user testing and modifying the screens, I present the final design.

Introducing CipherOnBoard, a learning platform for interns and new joiners to understand CipherTrust Data Security Platform

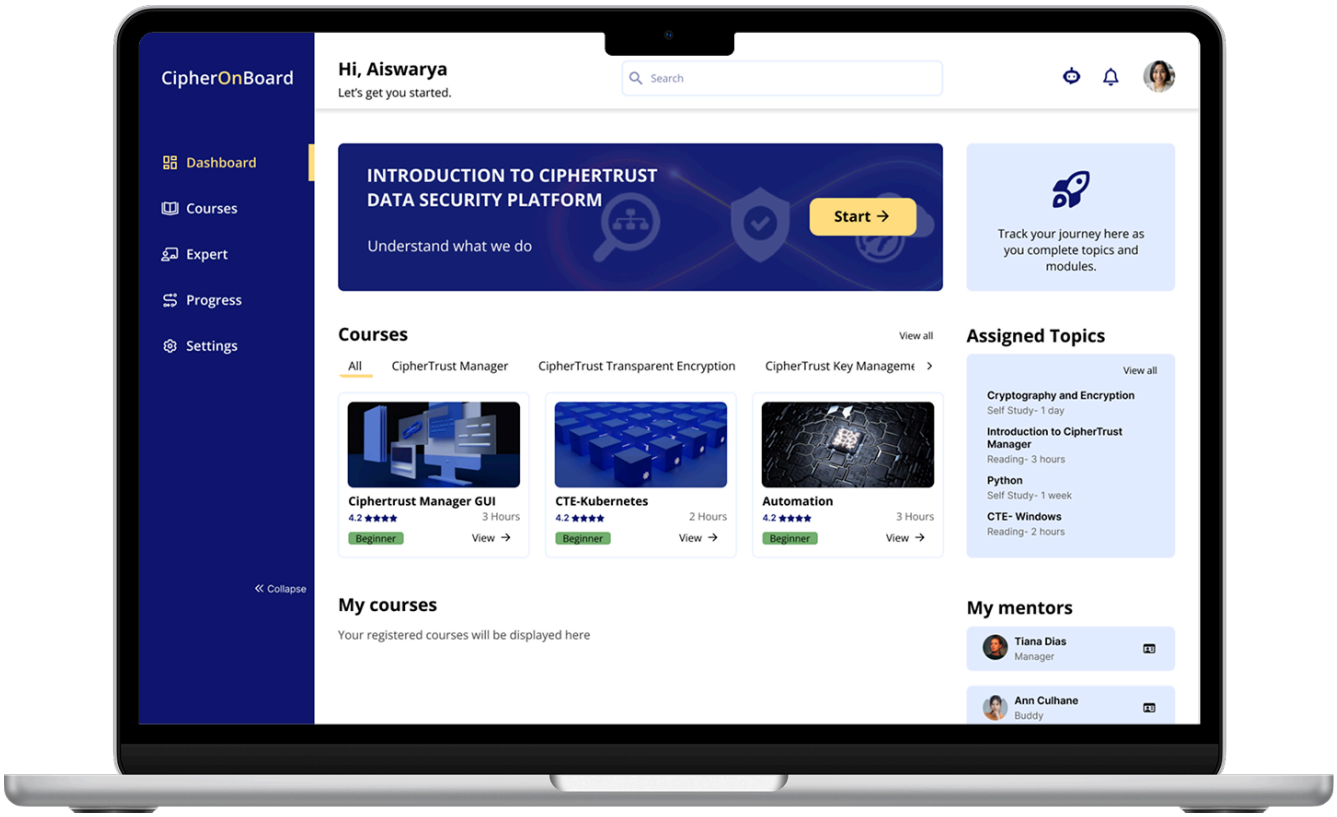

Figure 19: CipherOnBoard

16.1 Screens

Introducing CipherOnBoard, a learning platform for interns and new joiners to understand CipherTrust Data Security Platform

Dashboard (initial)

The initial dashboard serves as the entry point for interns when they first begin their onboarding journey with the CipherTrust Data Security Platform. It is designed to provide clarity, structure, and motivation, helping users feel oriented and confident from day one.

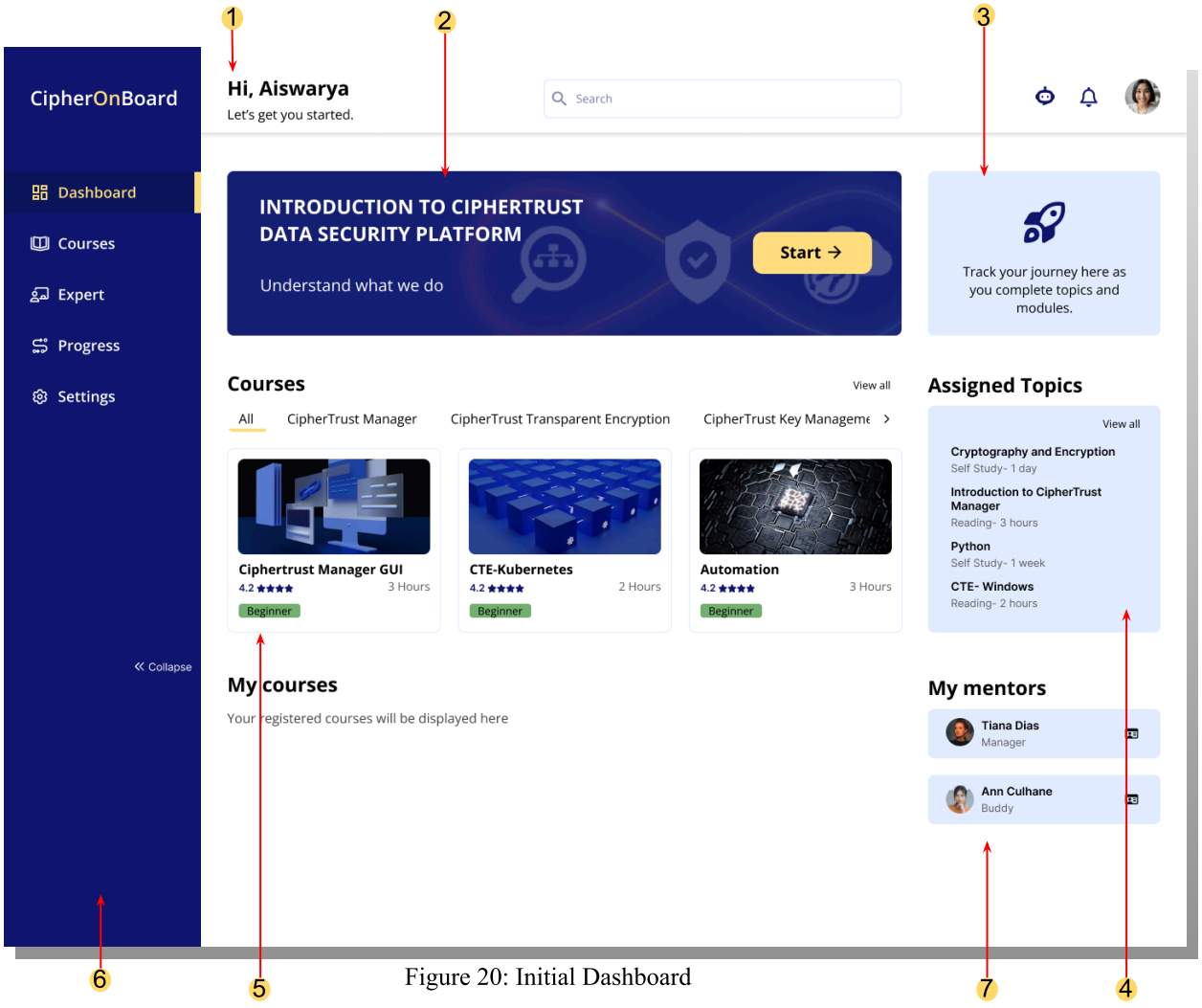

Figure 20: Initial Dashboard

Key components

1. Welcome Section- A personalized greeting that includes the intern's name, their role (e.g., cybersecurity intern), and a brief introduction to what they'll be learning. This

section sets the tone and helps reduce initial anxiety.

2. Course banner- An introductory course about the CipherTrust to provide high level information to all interns before getting into their specific role.

3. Progress Tracker- A visual indicator (e.g., progress bar or checklist) showing how much of the onboarding journey the intern has completed. This creates a sense of achievement and motivates continued learning.

4. Role-Based Learning Path- The core feature of the dashboard. Based on the intern's role, a curated learning track is displayed (e.g., for interns, the focus might be on CTE basics, key creation, and understanding encryption policies). This eliminates unnecessary content and makes learning more relevant.

5. Quick Access to Key Modules- Shortcuts to essential areas within the CipherTrust Manager, such as CTE (CipherTrust Transparent Encryption), Key Management, DDC (Data Discovery and Classification). Each module is briefly described, so interns know when and why to use it.

6. Navigation Tab- A quick access point to all features available in the platform

7. Mentors - Easy connection point to intern specific manager and buddy

Personalized Dashboard

The **personalized dashboard** is the central component of the CipherOnboard experience. It is tailored to each intern's role, learning needs, and current progress.

Key Components

1. Quick access to ongoing course- Provides a shortcut to directly access the ongoing course upon platform launch, ensuring interns can continue from where they left off without extra navigation.

2. My course- Offers a dedicated shortcut to view all saved or enrolled courses, enabling interns to manage and explore their learning materials efficiently.

3. Collapsible side panel- The side panel can be collapsed to maximize the main content area, enhancing focus and visibility. *(Refer to Figure 22)*

4. AI Chatbot- Persistent quick-access button for the AI chatbot across all screens, offering instant assistance, guidance, or answers to user queries.

5. Notifications- Centralized hub for alerts—displays reminders for deadlines, comments, and newly added courses to keep users informed and on track.

6. My Account- Provides quick access to the user's profile settings, preferences, and personal information.

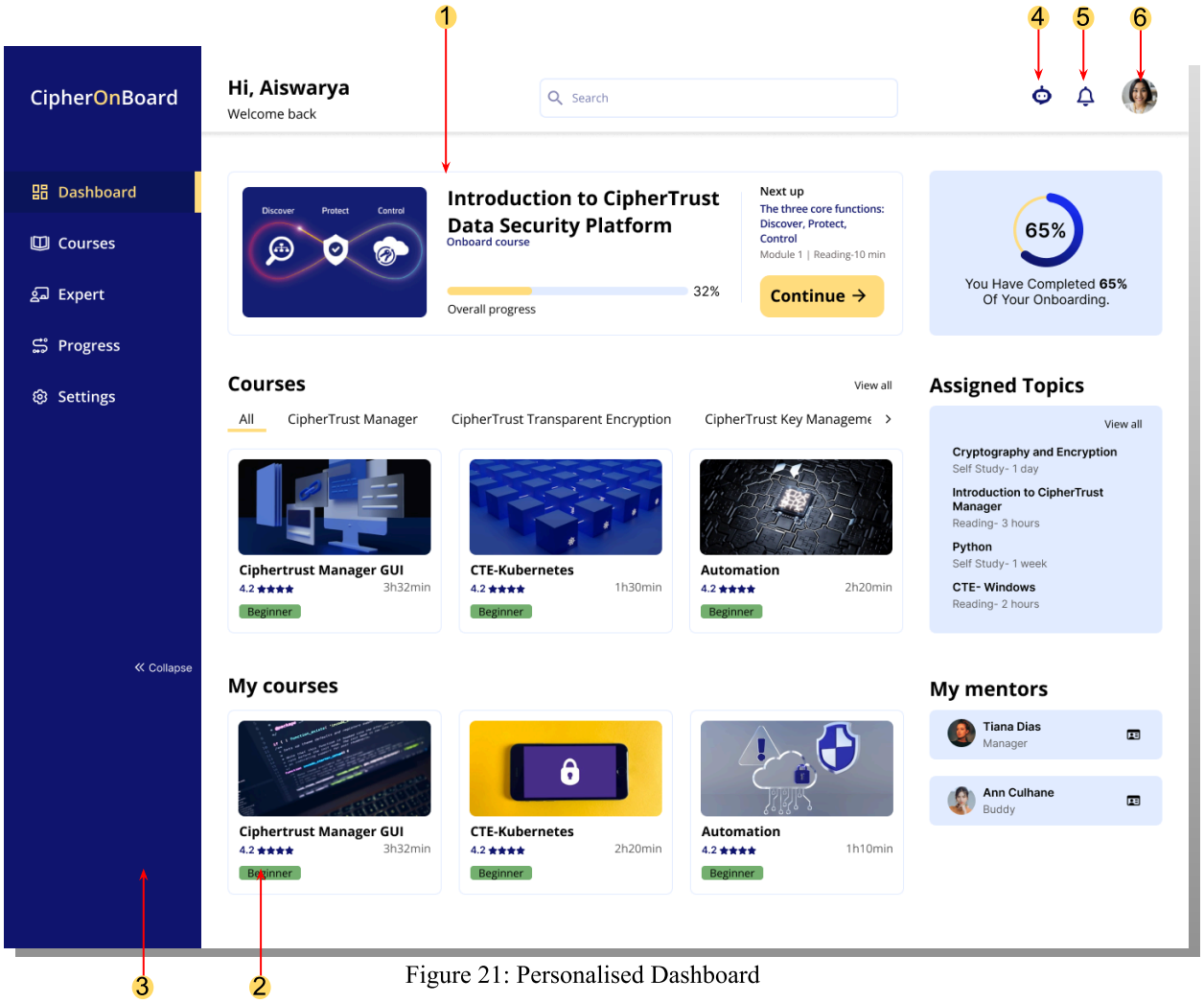

Figure 21: Personalised Dashboard

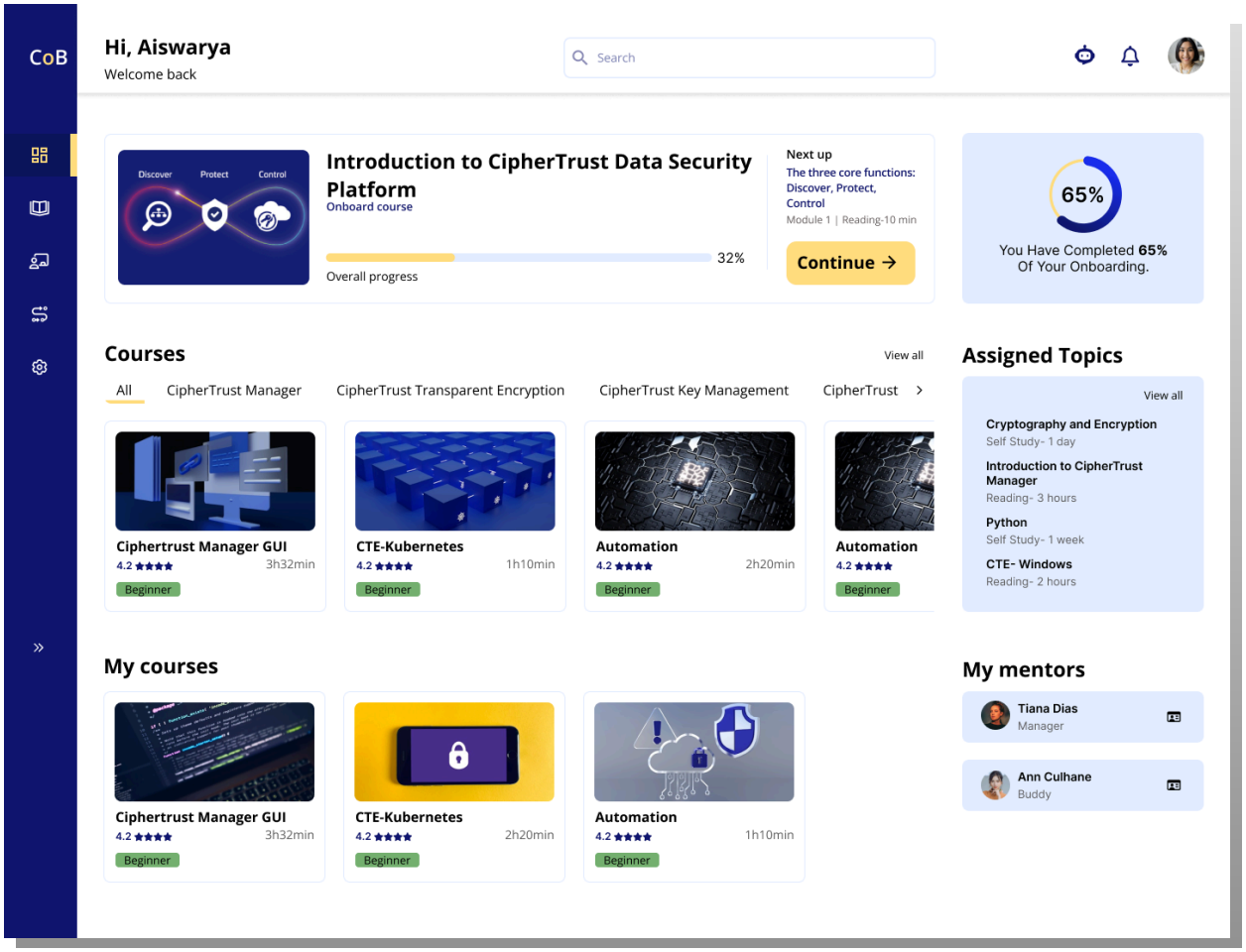

Figure 22: Personalised Dashboard (closed navigation)

AI Chatbot

An integrated assistant designed to help interns navigate the platform efficiently. The chatbot can answer questions related to various course topics as well as provide support for understanding the CipherTrust Manager. It saves time by offering instant access to relevant information, links, and resources, eliminating the need to manually search through the entire platform.

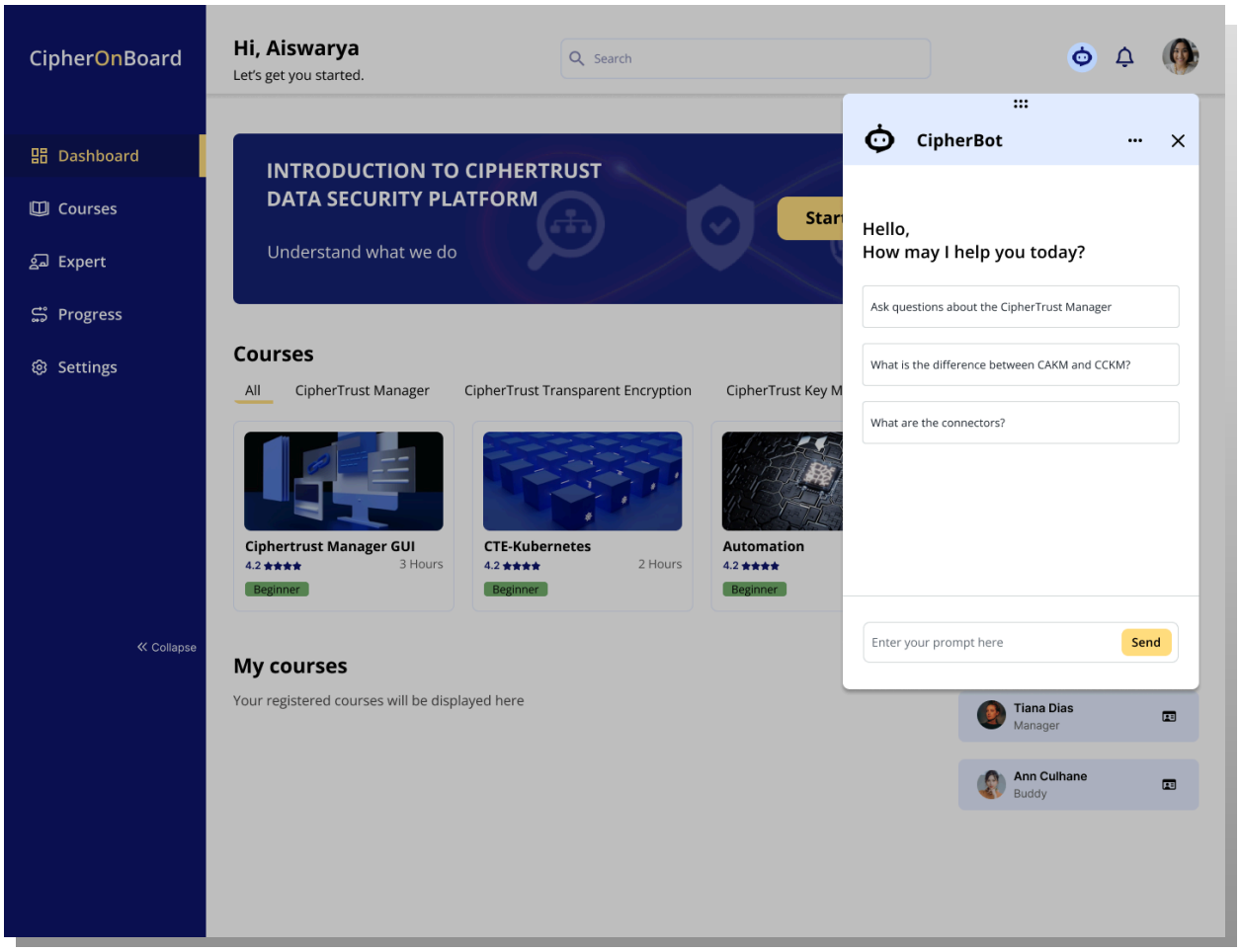

Figure 23: AI Chatbot

Explore Course

A centralized hub showcasing all available courses on the platform. Users can browse and discover new content, with filtering options based on topics or categories, making it easier to find relevant courses aligned with their interests or learning goals.

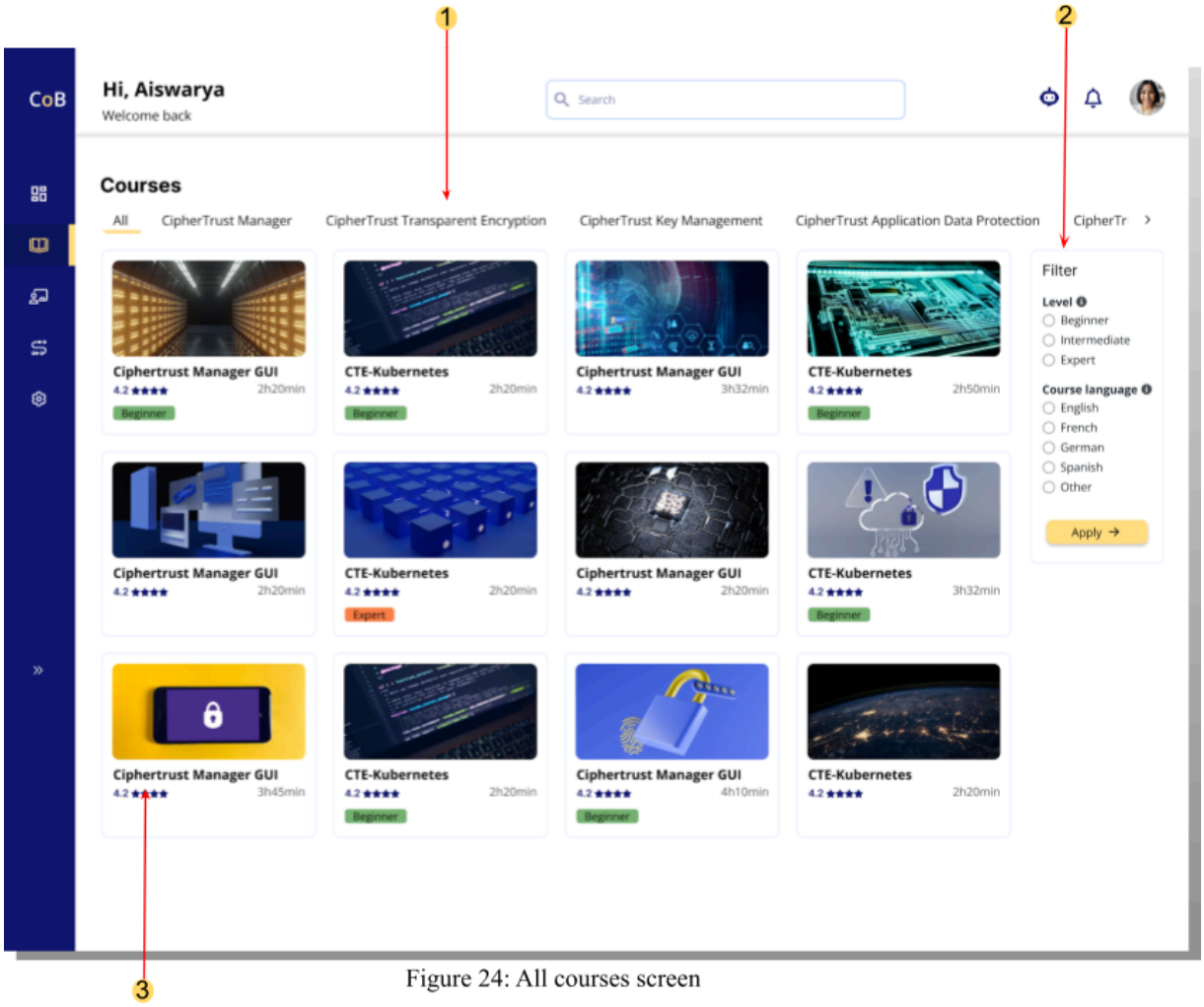

Figure 24: All courses screen

Key Components

1. Topic tabs- Horizontal tabs that allow users to quickly view courses grouped by specific topics, streamlining the discovery process.

2. Filter- Customizable filters to narrow down courses based on parameters like difficulty level (e.g., beginner, intermediate, advanced) and language, helping users find the most suitable content.

3. Module card- Each course is represented as a visually distinct card displaying essential details such as the course title, duration and topic, allowing users to scan and select relevant content at a glance.

Course Detail screen

The Course Detail Screen serves as a dedicated space where users can explore and engage with all the information related to a selected course. It provides a comprehensive view that helps interns understand what to expect, assess relevance, and take action, all in one place.

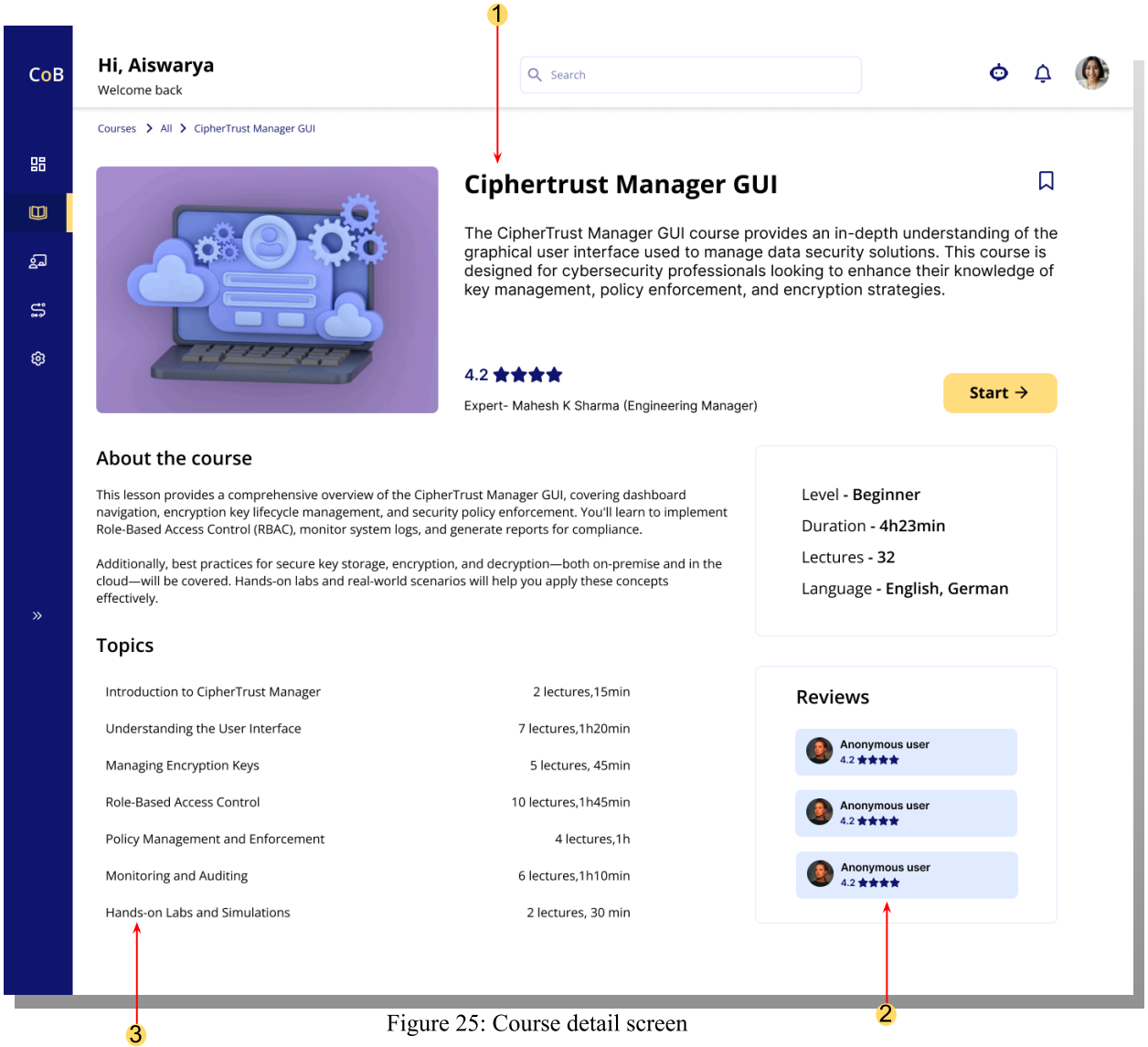

Figure 25: Course detail screen

Key Components

1. Short Introduction- This section provides a brief summary of the course, outlining its purpose, key learning outcomes, and intended audience. It helps learners quickly understand what the course is about and whether it aligns with their goals.

2. Reviews- Displays ratings and short comments from learners who have already completed the course. This feedback helps new users evaluate the course's quality, content clarity, and overall usefulness before enrolling.

3. Topics Included- Lists the key topics or modules covered in the course, usually shown as a bullet list or tags. This gives learners a clear idea of the subjects they'll explore and the skills they'll gain by the end of the course.

Module screen

This screen presents the content of a specific module within the course. It offers a concise explanation of the topic, allows learners to mark their progress, and provides easy navigation through the course using the sidebar and navigation buttons.

Key Components

1. Link to external resources- A quick-access icon that opens a list of external links relevant to the current topic such as documentation, tools, or reference articles, to support deeper understanding.

2. Topic Navigation- A visual indicator that helps users track which topics have been completed, which are in progress, and what's coming next, making it easier to navigate the course structure.

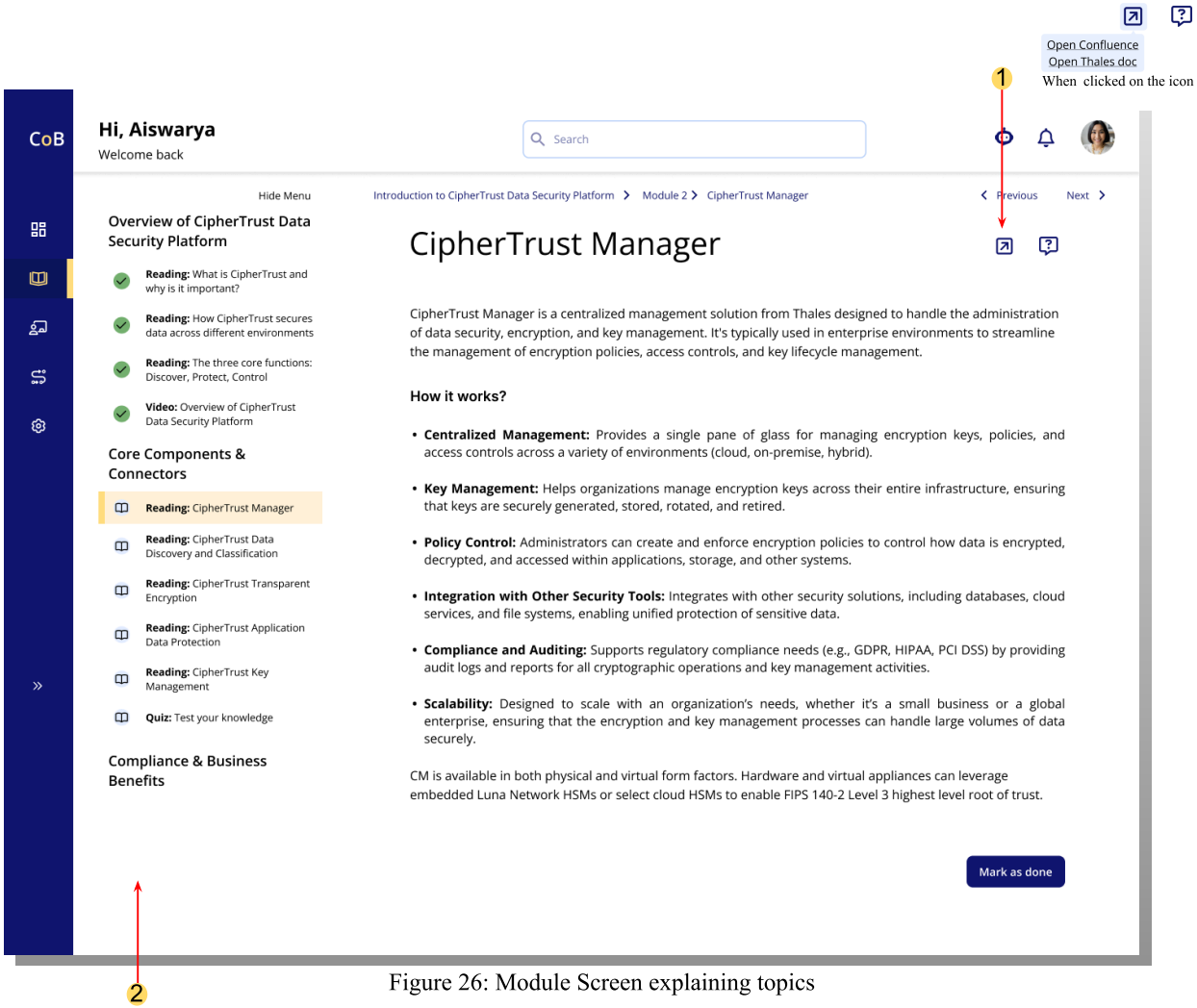

Figure 26: Module Screen explaining topics

Test Screen

This screen introduces a practical task-based quiz to help learners apply what they've learned in the module. It provides details about the task and a way to begin the activity.

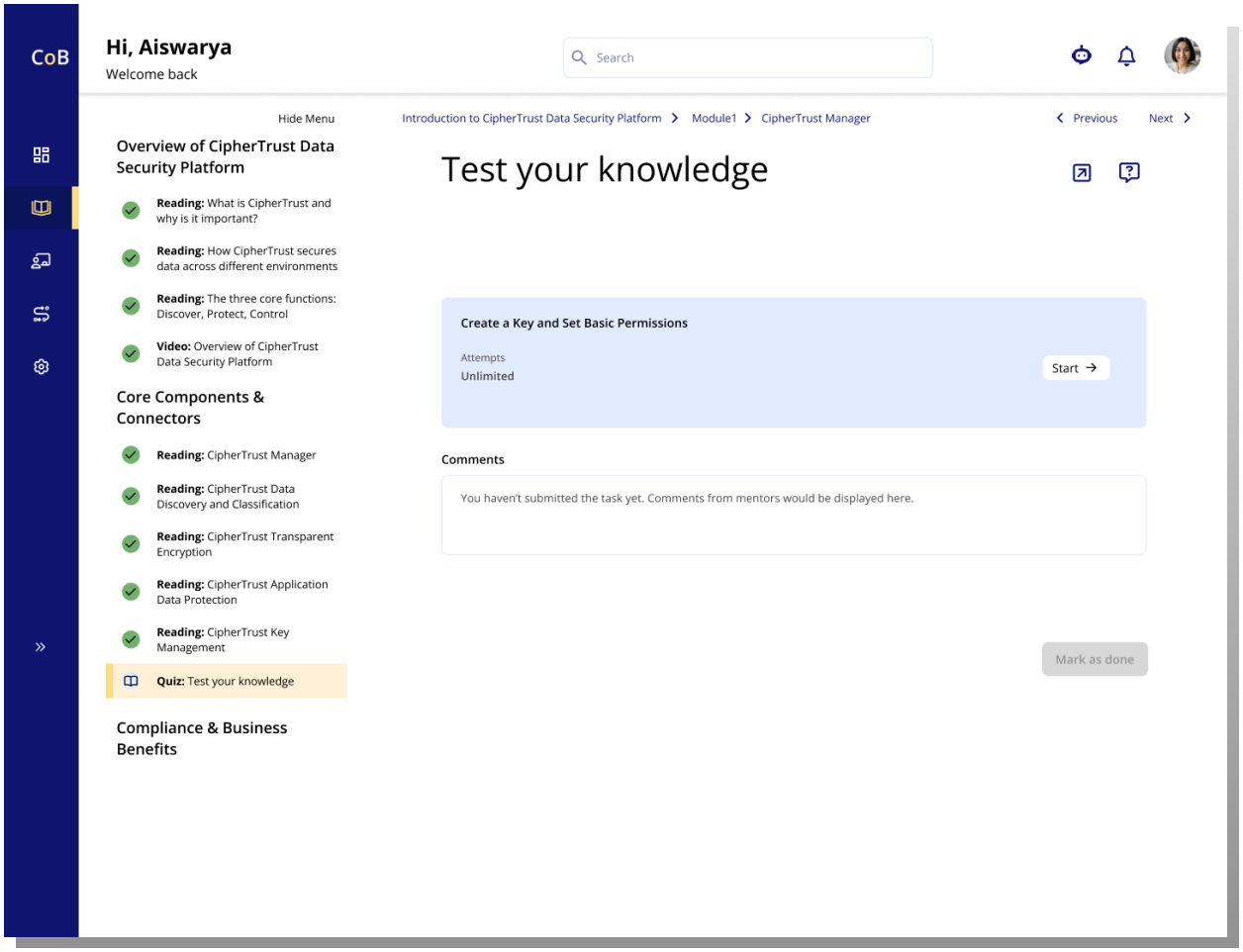

Figure 27: Test Screen

Task Submission Modal

This modal appears when the learner starts the quiz. It presents the full task description along with a submission area for entering answers or uploading files.

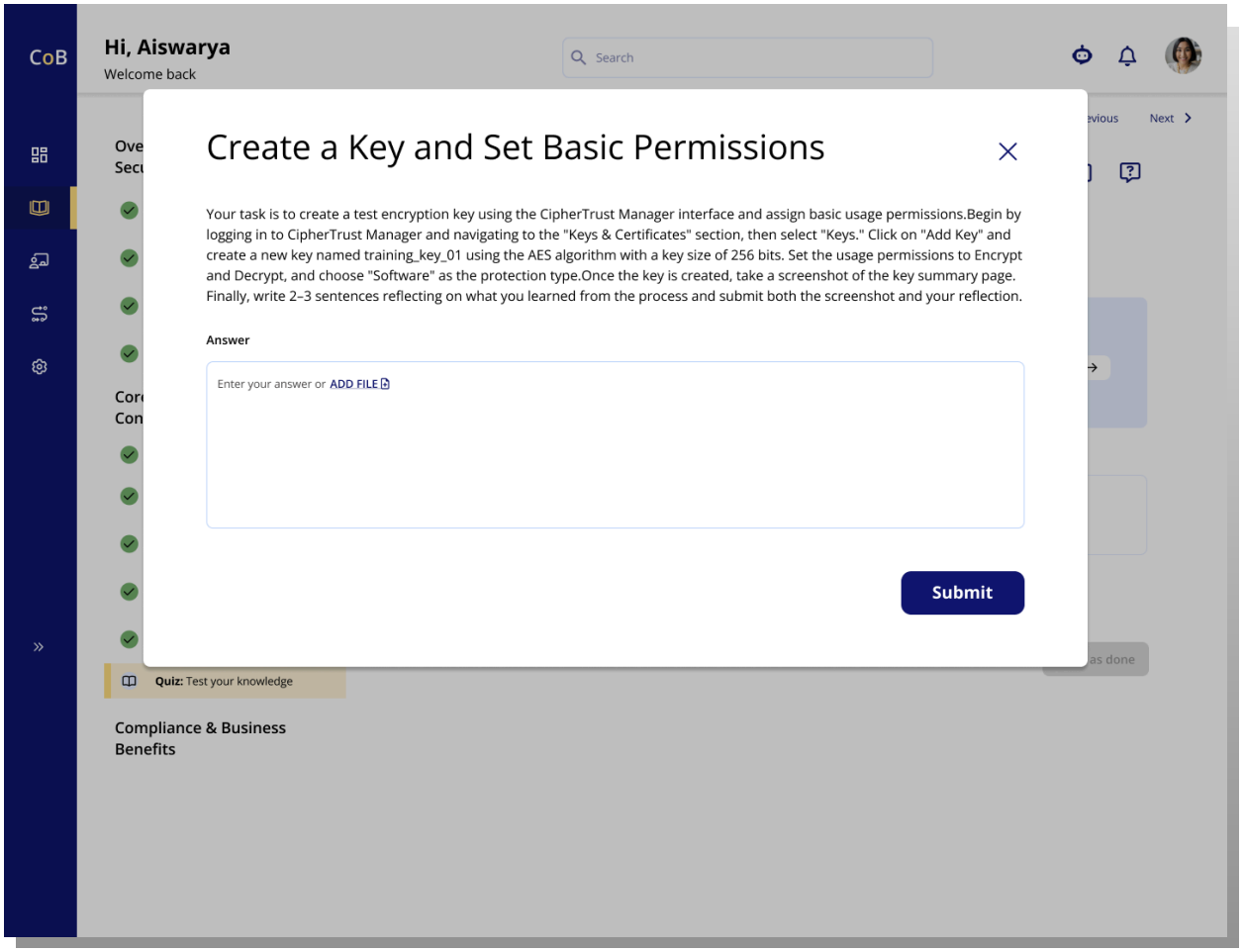

Figure 28: Task submission modal

Mentor feedback view

This version of the quiz screen displays mentor feedback after the learner has attempted the task, enabling two-way interaction.

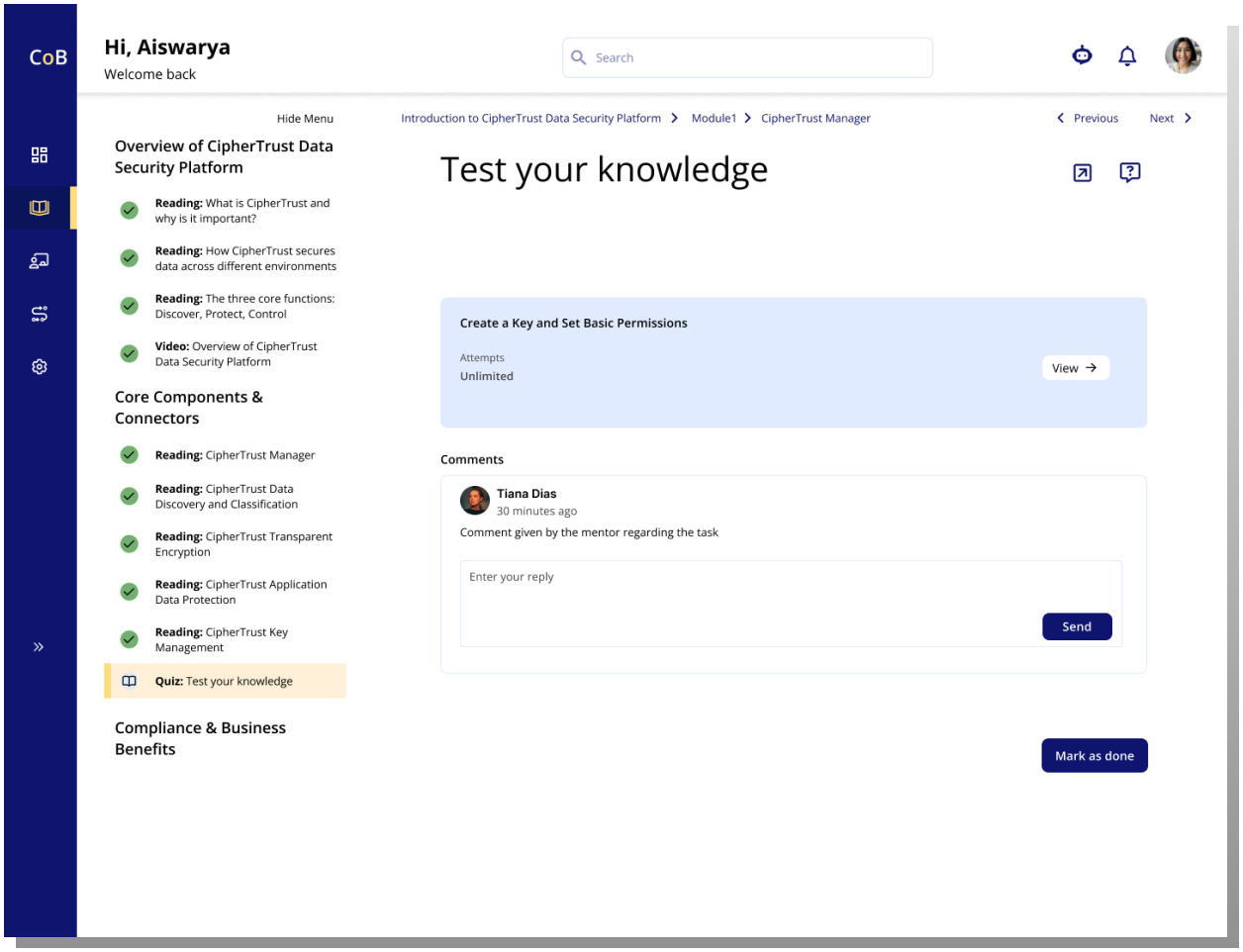

Figure 29: Mentor feedback view

List of experts

This screen provides learners with access to domain experts associated with the product. It helps interns or freshers know who they can reach out to for guidance, mentorship, or topic-specific queries related to CipherTrust.

Key Components

1. Topic tabs- Horizontal tabs allow users to select specific topics of interest to view only those experts relevant to that area.

2. Filter- Customizable filters to narrow down experts based on geographic location to know who they can directly contact

3. Expert card- Each card includes their name, designation, profile picture, brief bio, relevant topic tags, and contact details allowing users to reach out directly for support.

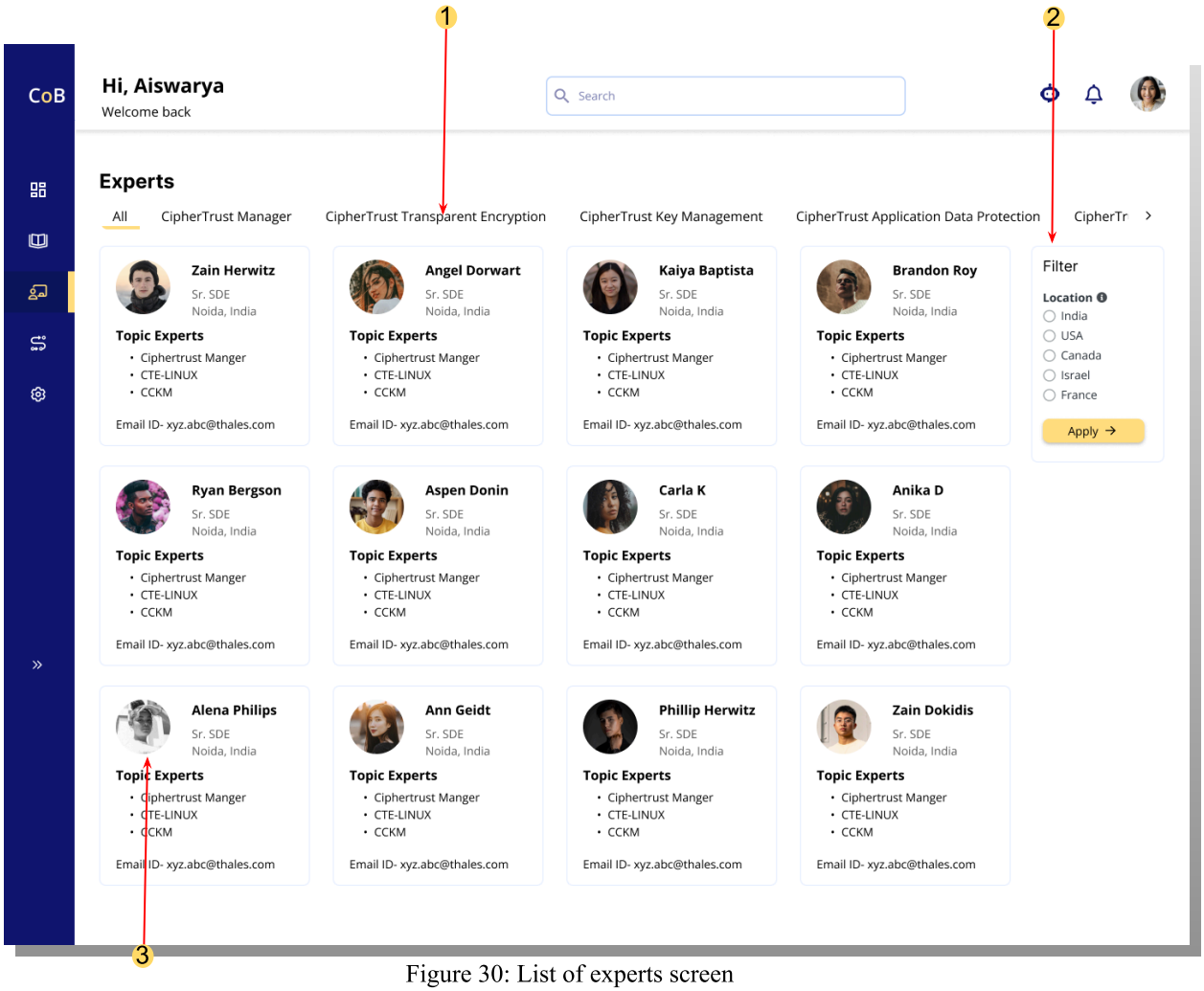

Figure 30: List of experts screen

Progress Page

The Progress Page gives users a clear and organized view of their learning journey, helping them track how much they've completed and what remains. It supports self-paced learning by making progress visible and actionable.

Key Components

1. **Overall progress indicator**- Shows a percentage or visual bar representing total course completion.

2. **Hours spent**- Tracks the total time the user has dedicated to learning, giving them better awareness of their effort and helping managers assess engagement.

3. **Module wise breakdown**- Users can see the status of each section, marked as completed, in progress, or assigned.

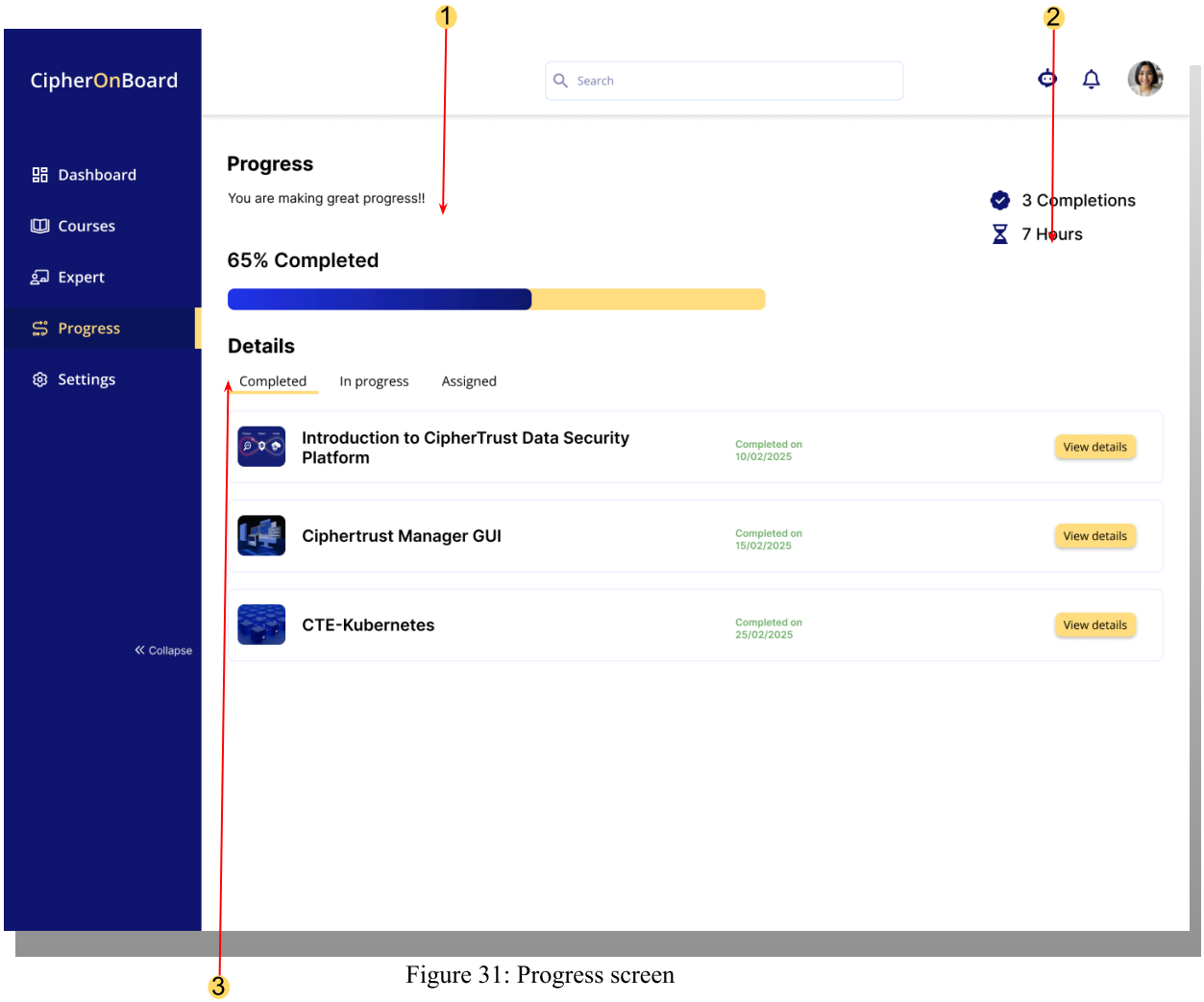

Figure 31: Progress screen

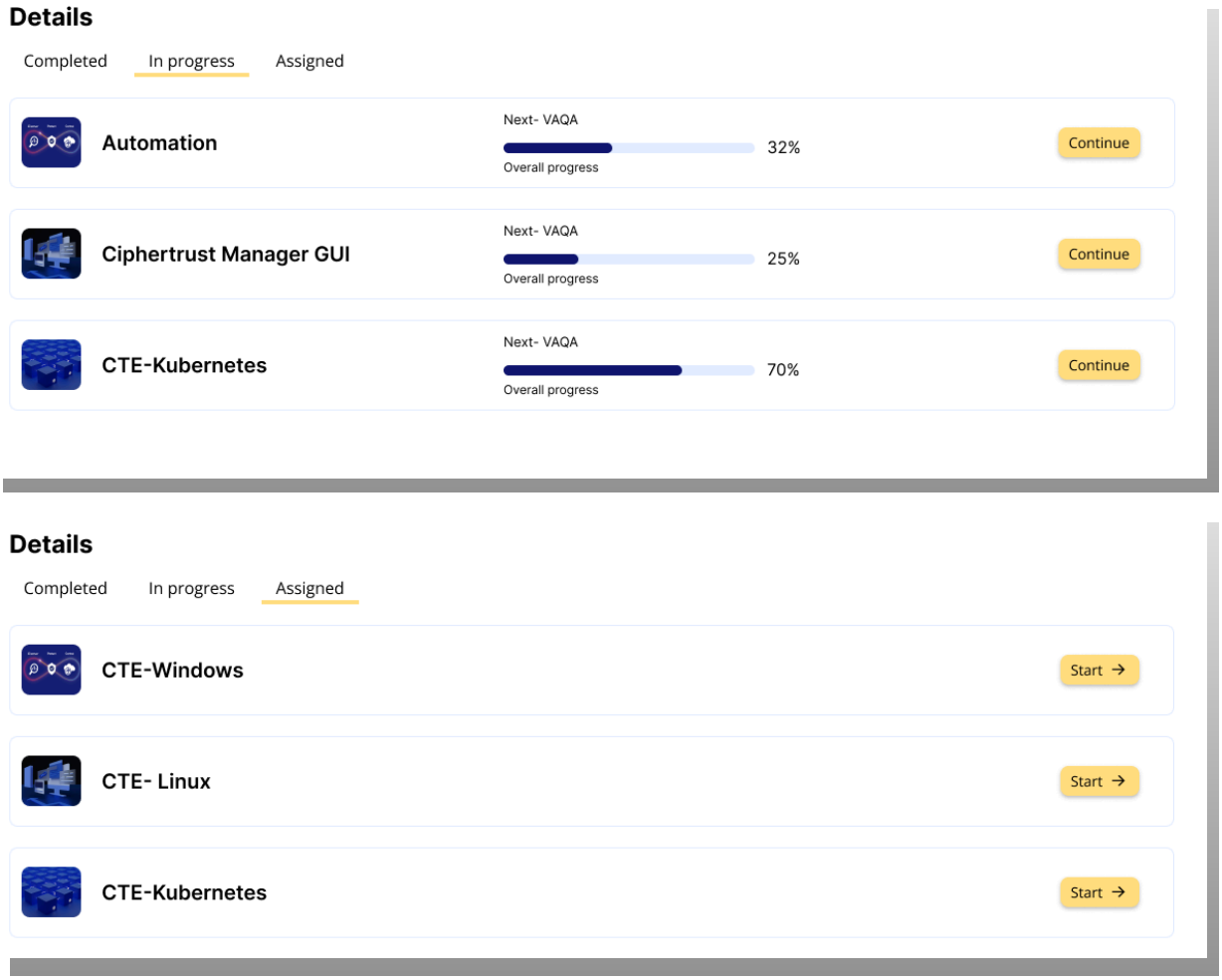

Figure 32: Module wise progress

16.2 Prototype

Scan the QR code to view the prototype

Figure 33 - Prototype link

17. References

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