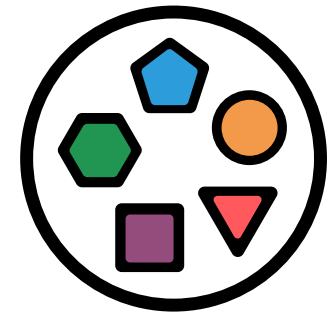


# Inclusive Design Framework:

Exploring Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion  
in Designers' Career Lifecycle



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# Introduction

Achieving equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the workplace and its reflection in the work we do throughout the design profession requires addressing challenges at every career stage. To support this effort, we are developing an Inclusive Design Framework based on real experiences of product (physical and digital), and service designers in the UK.

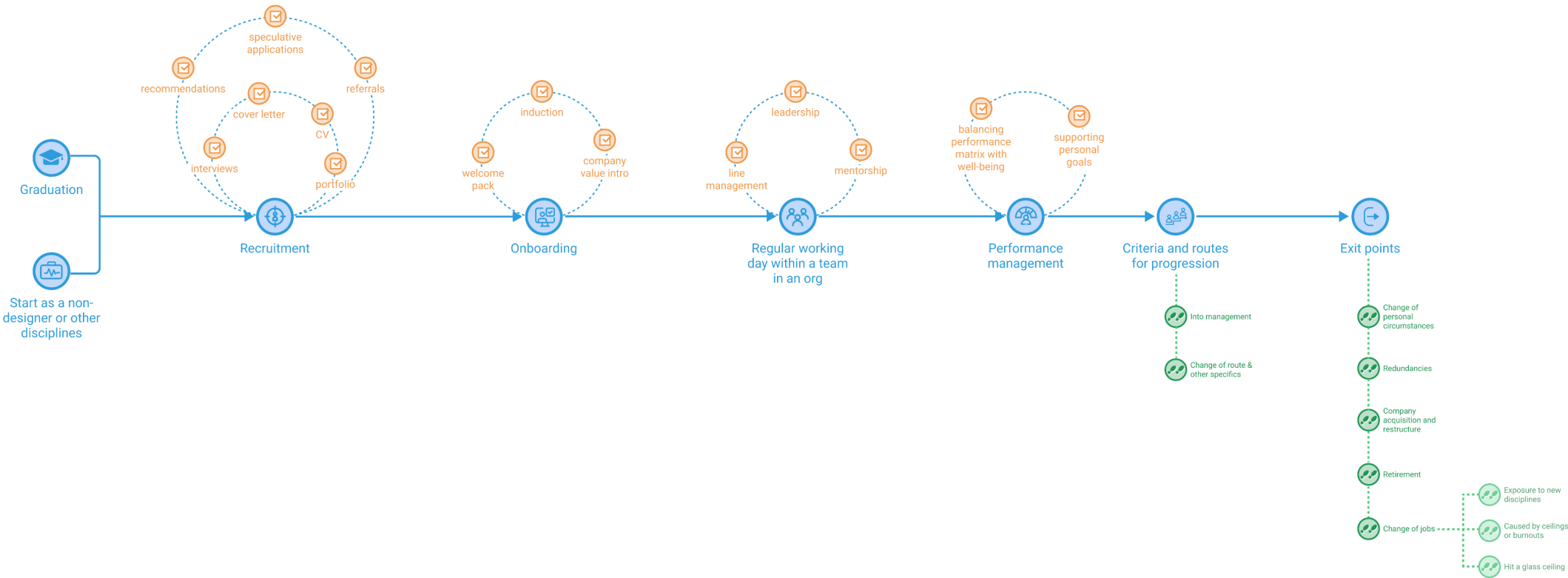
Grounded in qualitative interviews and co-design workshops conducted in 2022-2023, our research engaged over 30 designers across career levels, industries, backgrounds and demographics. By capturing their diverse narratives, we mapped the designer career lifecycle from education to various stages of employment. At each transition, we explored how EDI issues intersect and impact experiences.

This document represents an initial step toward the final framework - a journey map synthesizing the career stages and EDI challenges faced by designers. It outlines key milestones, barriers and strategies to foster inclusion through education, recruitment, career growth and workplace culture change.

The following maps are a step towards realizing this vision for inclusion.

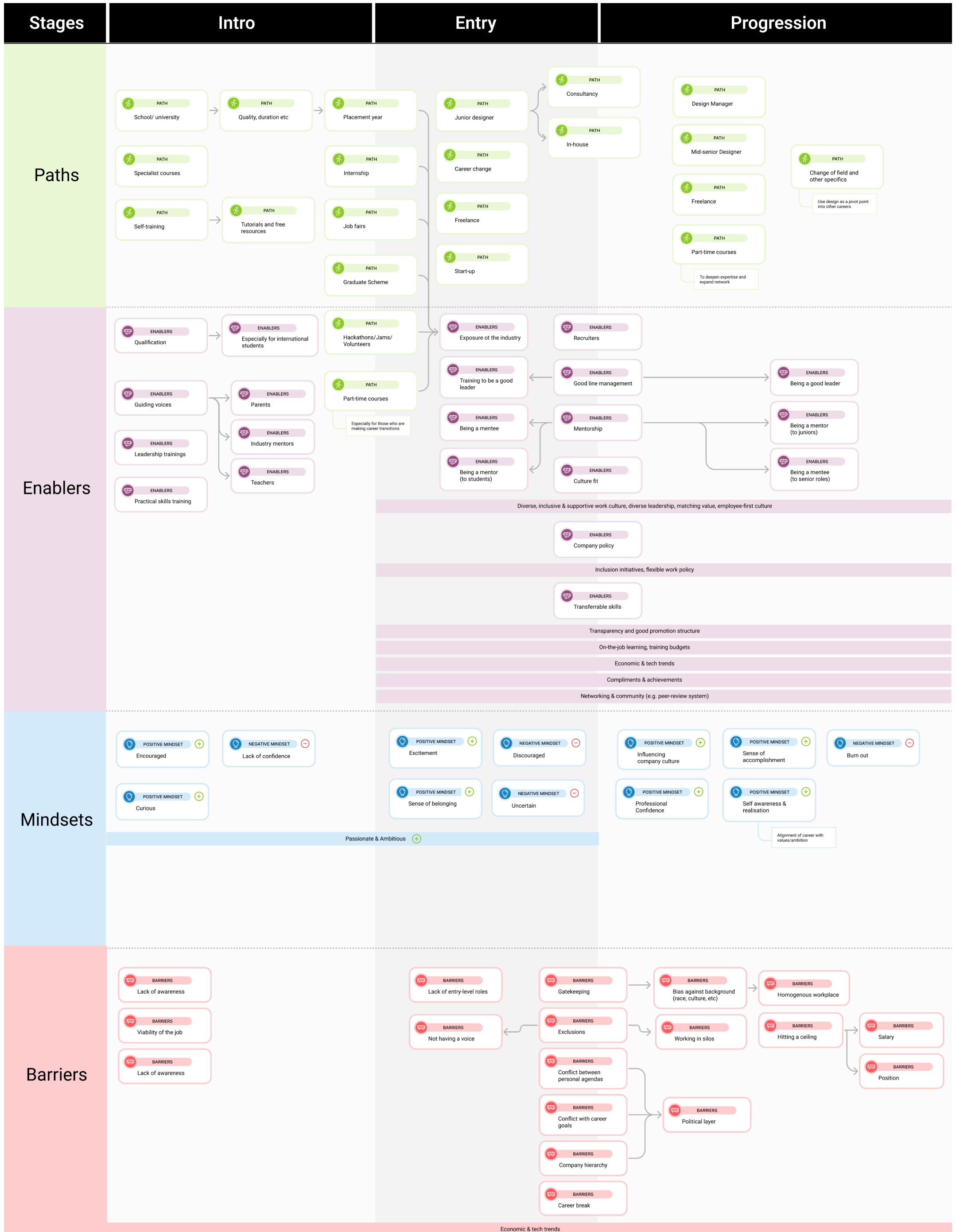
# Elements of a designer's career journey

This map visualises the designer's career journey. The core (blue) represents the stages of progress, while the opportunities and factors that accelerate growth are highlighted in orange. Additionally, it depicts the setbacks in both personal and professional life at exit points or key transformational factors (green).



# Synthesis of designer career journey map

This map visualises the synthesis of core insights from interviews and workshops with 30 designers. It provides a comprehensive overview of their journey, from initial stages to progression, highlighting key enablers for growth and acceleration, supportive mindsets for navigation, and encountered barriers at different stages.



## **Summary & next steps**

This initiative forms a crucial part of a research project led by Dr. Silvia Grimaldi, Veron Lai, Yini Zheng, Meghana Shailendra which explores the profound impact of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) on company culture and its reverberation on the products created.

The next part of the research is a framework outlining some tools, processes, strategies and policies that can help individuals, managers, and senior leadership make a significant difference and enable organisational change, followed by two research papers.

Our hope is this framework will help the next generation of designers navigate their careers with greater equity, paving the way for a more inclusive design profession that reflects the diversity of our societies.

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank all the participants from the workshops and interviews for sharing their experiences and insights that helped our research initiative and the building of these maps.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about this research, please feel free to get in touch with Dr. Silvia Grimaldi at [s.grimaldi@lcc.arts.ac.uk](mailto:s.grimaldi@lcc.arts.ac.uk).