

# Curriculum Redefined: Developing an innovative, imaginative and sustainable approach to education

Dr Pam Birtill

Institutional Academic Lead for Assessment and Feedback

[P.Birtill@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:P.Birtill@leeds.ac.uk)



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**



<https://bsky.app/profile/diervilla.bsky.social>

LinkedIn



# Curriculum Redefined

- 10 year curriculum transformation project
- £40 million investment
- The Leeds Curriculum: Your Programme, Your Future, Our World
- Overarching goals
  - To develop a sustainable, decolonised, effective curriculum that is shaped by staff and students
  - To create an environment where all students can thrive





# CURRICULUM REDEFINED - Shaping the future together

Together we will build upon our existing strengths to create a curriculum that is:



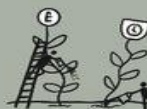
People and community centred, preparing students as impactful global citizens



Innovative, adaptable and iterative, with Leeds recognised for excellence in teaching and learning



Inclusive, diverse and committed to closing awarding gaps



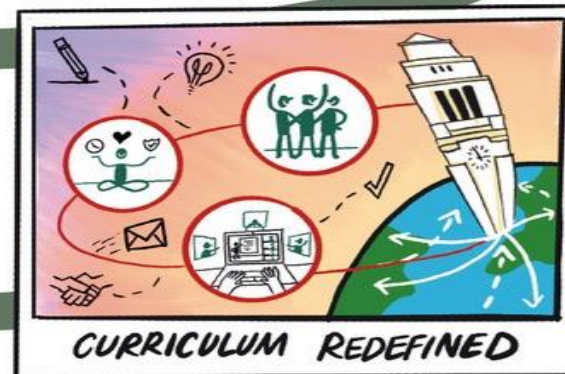
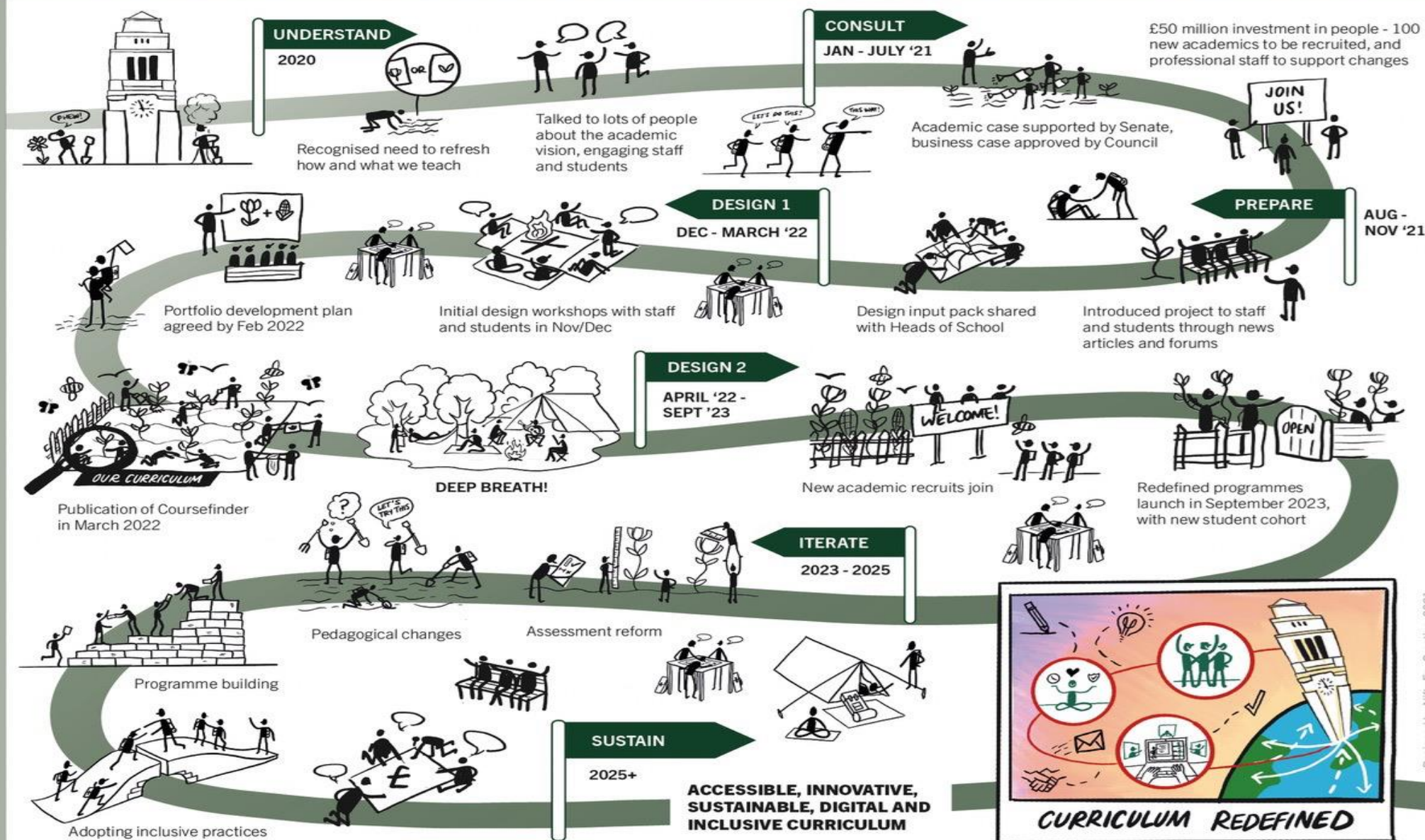
Sustainable academically and financially, with improved workload for staff and students



Driven by creativity, joy and purposeful practice



Accessible, and digitally enabled and enhanced



Come think with us...

# Redefining the Curriculum – key objectives

- Rethinking the what, the how and the why of what we teach (and how we assess)
- Simplifying and streamlining programme structures
- Developing inclusivity and flexibility
- Embedding sustainability
- Developing Access and Student Success for all
- Focussing on Student Futures and Opportunities



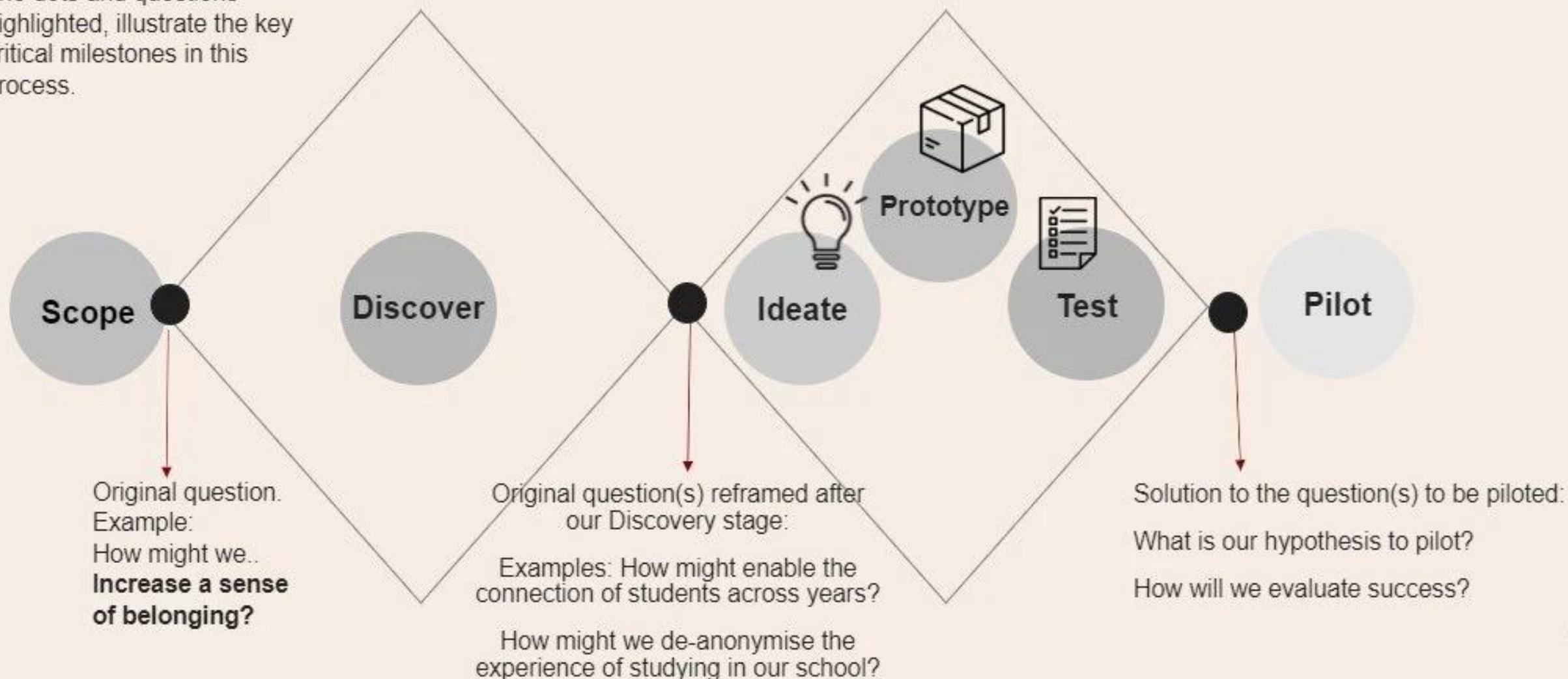
# The Leeds Approach

- Whole institution curriculum transformation at scale and at pace
- 75 new academic staff
- 800+ students involved via workshops & feedback
- Project management support and collaborative working
- New approach to programme approval and quality checks
- People-centred design
  - Learning Design Team
  - Academic Design Consultants
  - Design Sprints
  - Co-creation with students



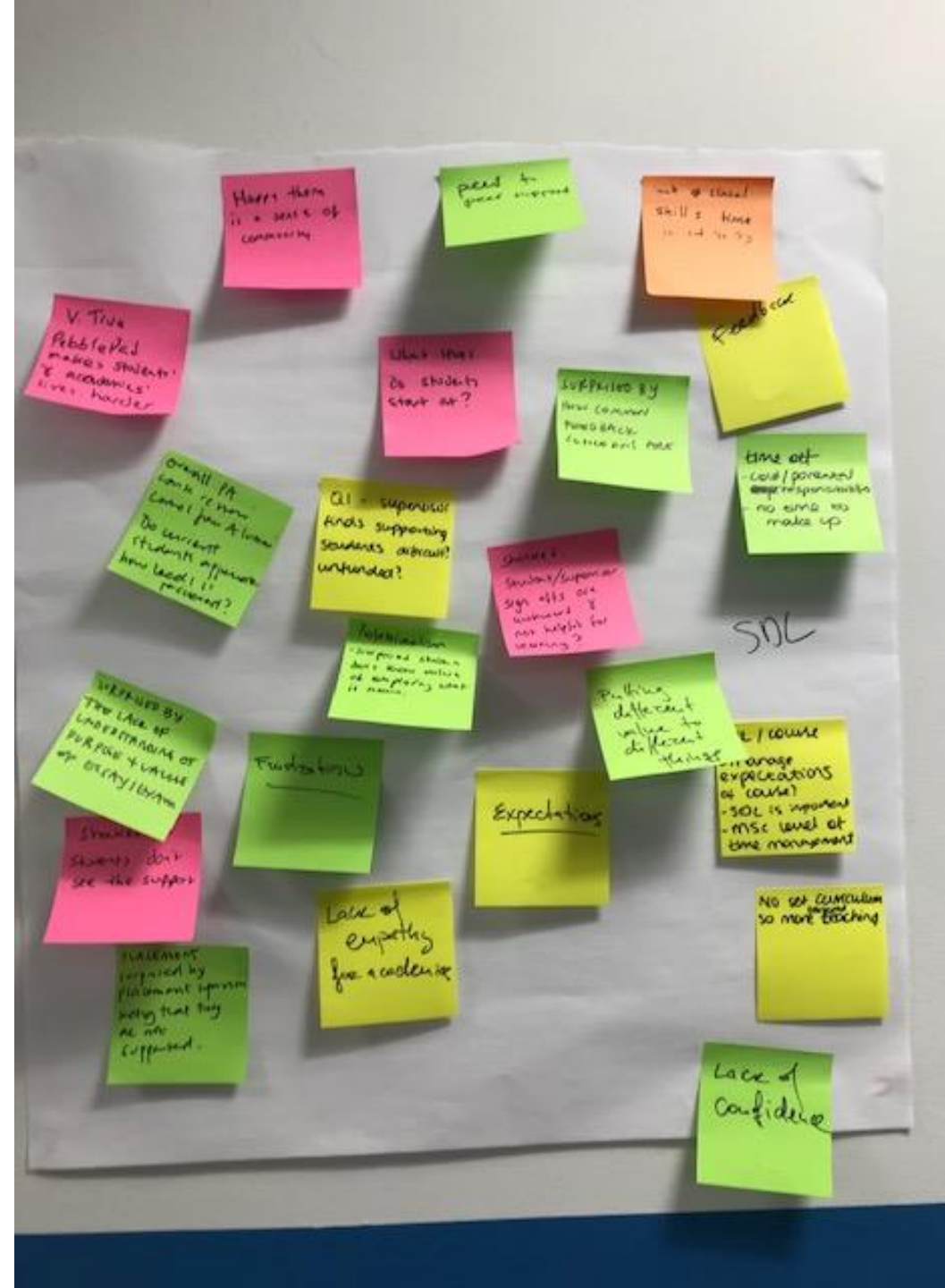
## The process presented visually

The dots and questions highlighted, illustrate the key critical milestones in this process.



# Re-imaging Assessment

- The importance of ideating in design-led thinking
- Who are we designing for? What outcome do we want?
- Role of the imagination in thinking about what assessment could look like
- Global changes to teaching and learning
- Assessment for learning
- Assessment literacies



# Why now?

---

- University of Leeds is a research-intensive university, with an increasingly diverse cohort of students
- Assessment needs to be **inclusive**
  - We (as most UK universities do) have awarding gaps, where ethnically-minoritised students and mature students get lower grades
- Assessment needs to be **efficient**
  - Student mental health crisis
  - Staff workloads
- Assessment should be **effective**
  - Should be aligned with learning outcomes and provide genuinely useful experiences for students
- Assessment should be digital by default
  - Enables efficient and inclusive practices



# Key enablers

- Assessment academic leaders in each school
- Assessment Design Framework
- Assessment SharePoint with resource bank
- Pedagogical conversations to support culture change
- Embedding digital technologies in assessment and feedback practices and processes
- Team working across academic, professional and third space staff



# Outcomes of our approach

A programmatic approach to assessment

- Assessment design considered at a programme level
- Programme assessment mapping and flexible specification of assessment

Ensure an assessment diet that allows students to demonstrate their learning and skills

- Encouraging a range of assessments while reducing overassessment

More authentic assessments

- Working in partnership with careers, to surface the skills developed and evidenced in assessment

All programmes are required to specify their competence standards

- A sector leading staff training programme that centres understanding of disability on student experience.

# Radical change

---

Synoptic (programmatic)  
assessment

---

Pass-fail assessment

---

Competence based  
approaches

---

Increased flexibility through  
changing QA processes

Thank you!