

[MUSIC PLAYING]

I'm joined by Marie, who-- from the career service and Owain from the faculty of business at the Open University.

And you'll see as well that we've got some widgets there we'd like you to fill in. So we'd like to know what sorts of roles are you interested in in the future.

These word clouds, by the way-- and we've you put the three options. And if you have just joined us, you need three things in there. So if you can't think of three things, just put a full stop or a cross so that your answers then send.

We've also got some multi-choice questions. So here you just open the widget and then select on the one that applies to you. When considering graduate recruits, what the most important factor? And outside of the legal sector and investment, which of these companies has the highest graduate salary?

So there are some widgets there. Have a go at it and we'll feed those into the conversation as we're going through and of course any questions that are coming through.

Now business is an interesting one, isn't it? Because, as I said before, we've got a lot of young students studying with the OU. But business also does attract a lot of people who may already be in professions wanting to upscale, add to their careers portfolio, et cetera.

Just so that we can tackle Beatrice's question then, Marie, any ideas about either end of the spectrum where age might be an issue in terms of getting placements, things that you might advise for students? Because unfortunately, it can sometimes be a factor.

MARIE DA SILVA: Yes. I would say in terms of placements, I suppose the challenges that most organisations who are offering placements-- so typically, say, years-- year-long placements, or a placement over a summer, et cetera-- are working on the basis that students are studying full-time. So often some of those placements might not match very easily or marry very easily with the working lives of many OU students who are studying part-time. So I think that's one of the challenges, that an employee would expect somebody who's looking to do, say, a year's placement with them not to be at the end of their degree but to be part of the way through.

Because often employers would expect a student doing a placement to then go back and maybe complete the final year of their studies before then being able to, say, apply to that same organisation to work with them so on their graduate scheme. So often they don't want people who just finished their degree coming in at that point. They want somebody who's still got a bit more of their studies to do before they're ready to apply to them.

KAREN FOLEY: Does age then-- it's a difficult thing, I guess. Because we try and be in this age of society where we're not meant to have discrimination. Leslie says she's in her 50s and she also has concerns about age as-- in terms of getting her placements.

MARIE DA SILVA: Yeah. I think in that sense then-- it's worth looking at advertised placements. But I think the advice that we would often give to students in Careers is to actually source your own. So use the networks that you have.

So if you're working-- it's not so much just the people you know, it's who they know. So tapping into other people's work networks. So whether that's through your work environment, through the OU. There's obviously a massive LinkedIn alumni network that OU students can tap into as well.

So we would really encourage students to source your own placements. Because then you're not competing with all of the other students out there, whatever ages they happen to be. You're actually targeting organisations that you want to get some experience with. And you're really then able to showcase to that employer what you can offer.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

MARIE DA SILVA: Because often for many OU students who are working and have got maybe significant amount of work experience behind them, that's a real plus to an employer.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

MARIE DA SILVA: Because they obviously know looking at somebody's CV or whatever information they're providing when they're contacting that employer that they've got a good understanding of the working environment. They know what's expected. And so they'll be able to hit the ground running.

So that's really what I would say is not-- obviously to look at sourcing your own opportunities.

And again, that's something that contacting us in Careers, we can give some advice on different ways to think about who's in your network, different organisations to approach. Because I think that gives more flexibility than competing with all of, say-- younger undergraduates out there.

KAREN FOLEY: So I guess this is one of the things where experience is something that is very, very valuable. And, Owain, we wanted to talk about leadership. And I had this big question about is leadership something that can be taught. So there's this whole mixture, I guess, of really utilising experience, and also how we teach business, and what sorts of things people can learn as well, irrespective of what age they're at at any one time.

So I wonder if we could just briefly talk about the business qualifications that students might be doing at the OU. And we wanted to have this case study because it's really, really interesting-- the leadership one. But you've also been involved in the introduction to business, the B100 module, which students would get in their first level. And let us know again if you're a business student and if you're studying one of these modules as well. Because students can do these business management degrees with us. And then we'll go through all of that process from level 1.

So, Owain, tell us then broadly in terms of what you're working on this leadership module what's that all about? And how might that be really attractive in terms of careers? Because I can see if you've got a qualification in leadership that might be very attractive to an employer.

OWAIN
SMOLOVIC-
JONES: Yeah. So should we start with the pathway then, I suppose?

So I think B100, which is the introduction to business and management, is fresh and different because it offers quite a holistic view about what it means to work in organisations. So you learn the normal stuff like human resource management, and finance, and that kind of thing. But you also take a more global look at global economies, and ethics, and economy and the relation between economy and business, which is brilliant foundation.

Because then you go on in year two to do a more in-depth look at business functions, which is the bread and butter really of being in a business school-- so your operations, your finance, and so on and so forth. And then after you finish that, as of October next year, you'll come to me and our team where you'll learn about developing leadership, if you follow the leadership

and management pathway.

And I've now completely lost the thread of what you asked me initially. But it was-- was it around-- tell me--

KAREN FOLEY: About why leadership is such a good thing--

OWAIN Yes.

SMOLOVIC-

JONES:

KAREN FOLEY: And whether or not it can be taught. Because I think this is a very interesting--

OWAIN That's a good question.

SMOLOVIC-

JONES:

KAREN FOLEY: --question here.

OWAIN And it's--

SMOLOVIC-

JONES:

KAREN FOLEY: Because you clearly think it can.

OWAIN Well, it's one of the most common questions about leadership. So I think actually this is quite
SMOLOVIC- an interesting time to be talking about leadership. Because we've got the general election
JONES: going on at the moment and the word "leadership" is popping up a lot at the moment.

And I'm worried that leadership is getting a bad name at the moment. Because it's being talked of in very sort of exclusive terms. This whole strong and stable thing tends to imply just leave me alone and let me get on with it. Leadership is for very senior, powerful people and let everybody else forgets about it.

No, that's the kind of view of leadership that started with Plato in ancient Greece. It's a very elitist view of leadership where it's something that the ordinary people better sort of stay out of.

So to answer your question simply, I think that this whole notion of you're born a leader or you're not is incredibly unhelpful, unhelpful in a couple of ways. Number one, it implies that

there's some kind of gene natural selection at work. And I think we can safely dispense with that kind of thing. It's very unhelpful.

And secondly, it positions leadership in the body of a single leader. So leadership become synonymous with I am the leader, leave me alone, let me get on with it. And then you look into things like personalities, things you're born with like height. We can already see how that's really problematic, right?

Because when people describe an archetypal ideal leader, they end up describing very male, masculine traits-- decisiveness, strength, height. And these are really unhelpful ways of talking about leadership. And actually they normalise a whole series of practises that are really unhelpful-- unhelpful for employees, helpful for organisations, and for society in general, I think. We need to reframe and re-discuss how we talk about leadership.

So in terms of this course, we take a very developmental approach. So by development, it's very different in a sense to education. So it's not just about learning facts, dates, and knowledge really. It's about interacting between the concepts you're learning-- different approaches to leadership-- and your environment.

So it could be a working environment if you're in work, if you're in a volunteer organisation. Or it could just be cultural stuff, so stuff you're noticing in the media, in the business pages of newspapers, or in the political world is fine too.

KAREN FOLEY: Because your own system, you ask the big questions about how come certain people end up in these positions of power, who has-- there are massive things that are underlying this. And so you can see how those thought processes and those skills will be so useful as well as the content and the way that you're structuring some of this in terms of having a lot of employability skills that would be very suitable irrespective of whether you wanted to go in leadership and management or just business more generally.

**OWAIN
SMOLOVIC-
JONES:** Well, I think the big mistake is to think of leadership as being the same as being a chief exec or at executive level, and that's just not true. So leadership for me is more about how you build direction and energy together in a team of people. That's not a warm and fuzzy thing. It can be quite hard. It can involve-- well, we can talk about communication later. But it can involve very hard conversations.

But lots of these practises and skills, actually once you sit down and analyse your own

thinking-- your own identity in some senses-- and your own ways of relating to people and speaking, actually pretty much anyone can develop this stuff. It might not be very comfortable. And in fact, it shouldn't be comfortable-- leadership should be quite uncomfortable. But all these skills but how to step up into leadership as a practise between people I think is really crucial for organisations and your employability basically.

KAREN FOLEY: From a Brownie leader to a world leader, there are so many ways in which you can see that people could take some of these and make sense of some of those skills that they were developing.

**OWAIN
SMOLOVIC-
JONES:**

KAREN FOLEY: OK. So let's look then at some of the more general things that one might do then with a business management degree. Because, Marie, you've been-- you're again specialising in the business area. And we've asked students about roles and things that they'd be interested in doing in the future and also attributes. It seems to me that there's quite a lot of focus here, especially in business, about the attributes that would be useful for employers to have from a business perspective. Do you think that's more pronounced in this sector?

MARIE DA SILVA: I think it's pretty much common across all sectors. It's part of what employer is looking for. They want somebody who has the skills, the competencies to do the role that they're recruiting them for, but equally who's going to be a good fit for their business.

So sometimes the attributes-- it's so true if somebody has got a positive attitude to work, and is resilient, can manage themselves, all of these sort of areas. So it's a mix of skills and attributes. Those are all combination of things that employees would be looking for.

KAREN FOLEY: But whereas before when we were looking at degrees in sports and fitness it was a lot more about the experience and things, here there are various different things going on. And we asked people at home which-- when considering graduate recruits what's the most important factor for employees. Should we see what they said?

MARIE DA SILVA: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. So the results are in. And 63% of you said attitudes and aptitudes were the most important with a spread across the rest for the university they attended, degree results,

relevant work experience. Marie, what do you make of that?

MARIE DA SILVA: Well, that is very interesting because students are spot on. Because those statistics actually came from a report that the CPI did with Pearson looking at educational nationally across the UK. That was particularly the sort of information that was gathered regarding the graduate sector. And actually students correctly said there that attitudes and attributes were the key factor that employers were looking for.

Actually second factor was relevant work experience. So the university that student attended and the cost of degree were further down the list. So I think that's a real positive. Because if many OU students have work experience behind them, then that whole attitude to work, understanding of a workplace what's required, they're going to be in many ways at an advantage to students who have a lot less work experience when they're coming into the job market straight from university.

KAREN FOLEY: And is that something that OU students might have a lead in? Because a lot of them have often been in or had some work experience, those who are mature students who may be doing this for a second career?

MARIE DA SILVA: Yeah. So I definitely think that's a positive. But the key thing is as well from our perspective, from the feedback that we get from employers and from interaction we have with students, is that sometimes students can downplay that experience and not appreciate the skills and what they've gained through what they're doing.

So that's a big part of our role really, to help students actually articulate all the great things that they have done, the experience they've gained in a way that it's relevant to the employer and the organisation that they're applying to. Because I think that particularly comes into play if somebody is changing sectors.

So it's often easier to think, well, I've worked in this sector, this isn't now the sector-- if they're, say, moving into business, this isn't now the business sector, so surely that's not so relevant, the employee won't be interested in that. But there are an awful lot of transferable aspects that a student can demonstrate to an employer to show that effectively they do have all the skills that they're looking for. So that's something that we would work really keenly with students on to try to help them appreciate that.

KAREN FOLEY: Owain?

**OWAIN
SMOLOVIC-
JONES:**

Yeah, I think that's really important. So it's this old thing, isn't it, where it's the old archetypal bloke will look at a job description in a newspaper and say, brilliant, I can do 70% of that. And then a more modest woman will look at the job ad and go, oh, crikey, I can't do 30% of that. It's a different mindset.

So I think what we're going to try to do in B208 is get students to reflect a lot about how the practises they're learning are actually key employability practises. And so at the moment the plan is that we'll-- the final assignment will actually be some kind of covering letter where they'll have a chance to bring out a lot of these skills and practises they've developed and to try to push them out of that unhelpful modesty really.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. No, absolutely.

So we've seen from some of the other talks about skills being embedded in the curriculum design-- so through assessment, through activities, and of course through the extracurricular options with the career service that the students can get if they want to enhance those even further. But these skills seem to be so important in terms of developing them. What are some of those skills that one might generate from doing business? In particular, I guess, we've got a lot of level one students here. So for those students, what are some of the things that they may already have generated and that they can look to get more of in the future?

**OWAIN
SMOLOVIC-
JONES:**

Yes. So I think at the OU we do the bread and butter business functions. So if you come to us and you study with us, we'll do HR, we'll do finance, we'll do marketing, we'll do strategy. But also I think you'll come out of the OU a more rounded person inside organisations. You'll come out quite savvy about the ethical issues that businesses deal with, you'll come out understanding the role of the organisation you might work in in a global economy-- because, gosh, everything is global at the moment, Brexit or not, let's not talk about that, eh.

KAREN FOLEY: No, no, no.

**OWAIN
SMOLOVIC-
JONES:**

And hopefully you'll come out as a more rounded leadership practitioner as well.

We use the word "critical thinking" sometimes. So critical thinking isn't just about criticising stuff. It's about questioning yourself actually and also the things you're seeing in relation to

concepts and the world around you. So I think we produce a much more rounded student. And I think that's something that employers-- and actually if you want to run your own business at the end of this-- gosh, why not-- or you're in a volunteer organisation, I think these are really key aspects for you going forward.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. I know that a lot of people are interested in the entrepreneur route as well, which again is another key pathway that students would look for.

Are there any skills, Marie, that employers are least happy with or things that students may need to really focus on like right now? Things change over time and things become of increasing importance. What's happening right now?

MARIE DA SILVA: Yeah. And I think one thing that is constantly something that's raised by employers-- and really business students shouldn't have any issues with this-- is many employees look for business acumen and commercial awareness. And that really should be bread and butter for business students.

But I think one of the key things is it's not an area that you can-- before you're going for an interview with an organisation or whatever, or putting in applications, that you can start doing last minute research to try and get up-to-speed on that. I think the key thing is it's very much an area where students need to be continually following organisations or following sectors or areas that they have a genuine interest in and what's going on sort of globally, nationally, regionally again.

So if you're pursuing that interest-- whether that's through social media, whether through press, TV, whatever means you're using on a regular basis-- then when you come to face any application questions or any questions as part of an interview or an assessment centre process, you're much more prepared, because you've generally sort of followed what's going on in that sector. And that's a way of demonstrating your interest in how commercially aware you are.

And again, any experience that students have within their existing workplace-- if they're looking then to change-- again, of understanding what the needs of the business that they're in, and how that works, and the priorities, et cetera-- so being able to draw on those experiences too. So I think that's one of the skills that often is really key and expected. And as I say, should be an easy one for business students. But again, it's something that you need to develop over time.

KAREN FOLEY: And that you can't fudge. Yeah, absolutely. OK, let's take a quick trip to Sophie and HJ on the Hot Desk and see what people at home have been talking about.

HJ: Some-- well, were talking quite-- there's a few different themes that we're talking about. I think one of the big themes we're talking about is different work experience at the moment and how people are complementing their degree. So Leslie, who herself was saying worried about age and getting experience is doing some volunteering at the Merseyside Mental Health Foundation-- so doing things like IT, web development, marketing, and fundraising. So there's lots of different skills she's gaining while doing some good as well.

SOPHIE: She says the OU is really good to complement that because it means that she's got the time to do both-- the flexibility with an OU degree and being able to do some volunteering work, which is really nice to hear. We've also had-- oh, Leslie, like you said, she's also the one who has some similar problems with her age. She's 56 and she has some concerns with her IT and computing course. And Alex, one of the advisors, actually put a really good webinar up about age and studying. So that might be a good one to have a look at.

We did also have Mark, who was the guy who was studying with the military. He has an NVQ level 5 and he was wondering about credit transfer and whether he can get any credit for previous study. So I have just popped the link in there to the recognition of prior learning team. So if you do have any questions, they're probably the people that you need to speak to.

HJ: I think what we'd be interested to know from the chat is-- because we've got this thing about talking about gaining extra skills and experience-- if there's anything that you guys would point to in particular for business students that could be doing alongside their degree to perhaps gain more experience in these skills that may be seen as a bit weaker in industry.

KAREN FOLEY: Apologies, Leslie. Leslie is a he, not a she. Sorry-- text has its limitations at times, though it may be fun.

Any feedback then in terms of things that are happening at home?

MARIE DA SILVA: Well, I think I would definitely say that volunteering is an excellent way of developing skills. Because again, often volunteer organisations are very happy to have somebody coming in who's got some experience understanding of-- whether it's marketing or HR may be involved in recruitment of volunteers and training, in those areas. So any-- anything like that that

students can get.

Because I think as well, it's often very flexible. The organisations will offer whatever hours-- will work with whatever hours a student can fit in. So we definitely encourage students to pursue that, either looking at the national website, do-it.org, where they can then search for vacancies in their local area or going onto the local volunteer bureau to get a sense of what's available locally. So definitely something to-- that will help with enhancing skills and experience.

And also trying out new things. Because I think it's quite interesting if somebody, say, is changing career or-- and hasn't worked previously in the business sector, then a chance to maybe try out some of the skills they're learning in marketing in an actual working environment will help in a sense see whether that's something they really want to pursue.

KAREN FOLEY: And a lot of companies, can be very grateful-- like you say, if you make your own areas, you use your initiative, you go and say, I could do x, y, and z-- because this is a local thing-- let me come in and give you a hand. A lot of employers would really welcome--

MARIE DA SILVA: Yeah, yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: --that support. Owain, what's your advice?

OWAIN
SMOLOVIC-
JONES: Yeah, I was actually going to do a shameless plug for the-- for a free voluntary sector leadership course that you can find on OpenLearn Works-- actually there are two of them, an introduction and a collaborative one. And actually that's quite a good nibble at leadership. And it seems that you're going to be in some kind of volunteering capacity, so it gives you a chance to volunteer and learn about some leadership stuff for free, essentially. You can find the on OpenLearn Works.

Obviously there's a note of caution here in the sense that I'm a critic of unpaid internships. But if you're doing it out of free choice because you're enrolled in the OU, it's a fantastic way, of course, to practise some of these things.

KAREN FOLEY: And see, again, what sorts of environment might be interesting to you.

OWAIN
SMOLOVIC-
JONES: What might suit you, yeah, absolutely.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. Now the job market is changing a lot. And I wanted to move the focus to talk about graduate opportunities. Because we've had a question on our widgets about outside the legal sector and investment banking which of these companies has the highest graduate salary, listing some very prestigious companies-- KPMG, Unilever, Aldi, and GlaxoSmithKline.

Now graduate salaries and indeed apprenticeships, the labour market is changing in terms of support that universities and the government are offering to fund things. Let's see what people at home said in terms of who they thought had the highest.

So Aldi is way in the lead here with 63%, 25% GSK, and 13% for KPMG. I know the answer to this, Marie. And I also know that our viewers have access to the internet.

[LAUGHTER]

MARIE DA SILVA: Yes. So they may have seen the vacancy online.

KAREN FOLEY: Now how much is this job and where do we all go?

[LAUGHTER]

MARIE DA SILVA: Yeah. Well, as I said doing the question there, traditionally the investment banking sector and most of the legal employers tend to offer the highest salaries. But if you're looking at outside of those two areas, then Aldi in recent High Fliers' graduate trends survey was the next highest paid with a starting graduate salary of over 42,000 going up to about 70,000-odd after four years. So they are-- and their close competitor, Aldi, is about not too far behind, about 37,000. So these are for graduate management-- store management roles. That's nationwide.

And I think some of the Aldis, possibly they'll have logistics roles as well. So they take on trainees-- graduate trainees-- in both general management and logistics.

So again, if it's an area students are interested in pursuing, the salaries are there. But that's not typical, I would say, of all employers.

KAREN FOLEY: No. But it does demonstrate the point very well that it might be-- I bet no one goes and says, I'm going to do a degree in business management because I want to work in Aldi. But again, it's about really thinking about whether you enjoy those skills, whether you enjoy being in a dynamic team.

You've got things like the logistics. There is actually a lot that one could do and a lot to

generate as part of a massive company.

So how would you say people might conceive some of those things, then, in terms of thinking I like these skills, or I like this area of study, or I like this company? Do students tend to really focus on I want to work for a blue chip x, y, or z? Do they have those ideas when they come to you for advice or is it a little bit more broad in terms of areas that they're interested in-- for instance, HR, accounting, et cetera?

MARIE DA SILVA: I think that's one of the things with studying business. Basically, you can work in any sector-- so public sector, commercial sector, not-for-profit. You have options across the board, really. So you're looking at HR, marketing, et cetera, whatever sector. And again, you've got large multinationals, to SMEs, to startups. So again, those opportunities to use your skills are totally across the board.

So I think obviously the big graduate employers have a lot of money, big marketing budgets, do a lot of promotion. So their schemes and their opportunities are often very visible to students. So some students will explore what's out there and be interested in those companies simply because their opportunities are much more visible to them.

I think one of the challenges are that an awful lot of changes are within the SME sector. And that's much harder for students to get a sense of what those jobs are, what these organisations might be like, how their career might develop within those organisations.

So again, I know our employee engagement team link up with a lot of chambers of commerce and areas like that to try and get a sense of-- and get opportunities which we then put on to our vacancy site from a range of employees, not just to be graduate employees, and try and get in touch with a range of organisations so, again, we can give information to students about what's available in terms of job opportunities.

So I think it's really-- that's something that students-- we would encourage students to really think about. Part of it is the role, when they're thinking about what they want to do, the skills that they enjoy using and want to use predominantly in a role, but also the type of organisation they want to work for or whether they want to run their own business. Because I think those factors are equally important.

And from an employer perspective, they're looking at is this person going to be a good fit, are they going to stay in the organisation. Because graduate equipment is extremely expensive.

So the time and the money that goes into that, they want to get people who are going to stay with their organisation and go on predominantly to leadership roles within their company.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. OK. I'd like to end this session by talking to you a little bit both about futures. And Owain, you're working on something that will come into play next year in terms of a level two module that students can engage with. But just sort of broadly then in terms of areas that people may want to go in or explore, what's your advice in terms of thinking about how they could take these careers forwards in business? Anything hot that you think is something that's more of a trend?

The business school have a really great LinkedIn network and alumni network, so perhaps a tie-in with those opportunities there. But anything students could do right now in both your opinions to really enhance and build things along the line?

**OWAIN
SMOLOVIC-
JONES:** Yeah, it's a good question. And who knows what's going to happen in the economy in the next few years? Lots of big question marks. And of course the other huge thing looming, which is talked about a bit at the moment but nowhere near enough, is automation of workplaces, what that means for future employees and for work in the future.

So I think the key is to focus on the kinds of skills that will never go out of fashion or the kinds of skills that will always be needed. So communication-- I know the people watching have flagged that, but communication and how to generate, I suppose, leadership through active conversations, interesting ways of running conversations, that kind of thing-- which we'll be doing on our courses-- is really, really vital, I think. But also thinking work, how to critically analyse and find good information but make sense of it as well conceptually. These are broader, more bread and butter organisational business skills that I think will be more enduring really. Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, I guess business is one of those quite fast moving sectors. You mentioned the CSV option that people could look at for volunteering.

**OWAIN
SMOLOVIC-
JONES:**

KAREN FOLEY: And Marie, you mentioned some of the webinars. And I know that the business school do a lot of webinars. And also MOOCs, the Massive Open Online Courses, where you can upskill for

things that are changing. Things like supply chain management, for example, are things that you may want to have a bit more specialist skill in, depending. What would your advice be then?

MARIE DA SILVA: Well, I think one of the key things is being flexible and adaptable because--

KAREN FOLEY: Which we know that your students can do.

MARIE DA SILVA: Which of course they--

[LAUGHTER]

Yeah. Because again, we don't know what's going to happen. You mentioned Brexit earlier. We have no idea realistically what impact that's going to have on the graduate job market.

So it is being able to adapt to changing-- a changing working environment and the fact that we're going to have to be working longer. And there's so many different factors coming into play.

But I think one key thing comes out is that having a higher level of skills will hopefully make you more employable. So the higher level of skills you have, the more opportunities hopefully that will be there for you within your working life.

But just the other point I would make is just that need to continually upskill and train as you were mentioning about MOOCs and other ways of doing that. And I think, again, OU students are very well-placed. Because if they have made-- they're making career changes or coming into-- back into study a bit later in their life, they're showing that they have that willingness to learn and to upskill, which again is a key thing that employers are looking for.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. Excellent.

Well, thank you both very much for joining us today. And don't forget that you can find out more information about how to engage with the careers advisory service, which is on your student home page, the career section. And there are a whole range of ways to get in touch with them. And I know that there are links in the chat and links on the Resources page of the website if you'd like to take the opportunity to have a check-in about your career and see what you're doing.

And also do check out OpenLearn. Because irrespective of whether or not you're studying

business, there are some really key skills in there that can be very useful for a whole range of students.

So let's take a quick trip to the Hot Desk because our next guests are going to come in the studio very soon and we're going to be taking a look at criminology. Now Sophie and HJ, how are you and how's everything going?

SOPHIE: Very well, yes. We've been talking a lot about graduate positions, and jobs, and things like that. We were discussing-- because you want to go into-- is it civil service?

HJ: Yes. We were talking about the civil service fast stream and the different graduate options for different employers.

SOPHIE: Yeah. Which is quite interesting. It's quite a strict regime with those graduate programmes and very difficult to get into.

HJ: Yes. I think one of the main things about graduate schemes-- and I think one of our careers advisors pointed out-- is a lot of these schemes don't actually say what degree you need. It's more about the skills that you gain. So same with the sports and fitness degree-- someone would be very well-placed to work in somewhere like the civil service because they know how to motivate people, work as a team. They've got the IT skills.

And going off what Karen said as well about-- I think [? Stewart ?] said that Aldi is the place to go.

SOPHIE: Yes.

HJ: That's what we've got to look for. But definitely--

SOPHIE: Diana says she works for a company they run quite a good graduate programme. And you rotate through departments every two or three years, which is similar to the Commonwealth Office in the government, which seems to be a running theme for quite a few of them. And she says that business seems to be making more of their graduates now more than ever, which it definitely seems the case that there are graduate positions popping up all over the place at the moment.

And Dee was saying that she had some offers. I think it was from-- was it Lidl and Netto which is amazing, well done. But she's got another two years left of her degree. So hopefully those

two years will fly by and you'll be in a job no-- really soon, which is really nice.

HJ:

And our educational advisor expert in the chat, Alex, has posted a great link for prospects, which has loads of great job profiles and says what kind of skills and experience you can get. So there's all these fantastic links being posted.

If you have any questions that we missed on the last session, remember just email us studenthub@open.ac.uk. And also head over to the Careers website after because they do things like one-on-one consultations. And they've got lots of great advice. And they're all friendly and helpful.

SOPHIE:

We'll put that link in the chat again because it's-- I think it has been in there a bit little while ago. So we'll put that back in.

And obviously any questions for our next session-- any criminology questions or general careers questions-- do let us know.

[MUSIC PLAYING]