

KAREN FOLEY: Welcome back to *The Student Hub Live*. Now, we've got a lot of level one students who are here today from a variety of disciplines. And the one thing, I guess, we all want is to graduate at the end. It's often our dream and something that really motivates us to keep going. Well, in this session, we talk about the graduate school and what they have to offer.

And I'm joined by James Bruce, Sarah Allman, and Helen Bowes-Catton, who are going to fill us in on the graduate school. We've also got Emily Yossarian on the chat desk. So do ask any questions in the chat also.

So James, what OU students use the graduate school, then?

JAMES BRUCE: Well, these are all postgraduate students. So they've already got an undergraduate degree. So to those level one students, when you get to the end, we are another option for you. So we support the students studying for PhDs and for EdDs as well.

KAREN FOLEY: Right. Excellent. And Sarah, what's your involvement with the graduate school?

SARAH ALLMAN: So my responsibility is to look after the core skills training provision for students studying STEM subjects, so science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. Excellent. And what about you, Helen?

HELEN BOWES-CATTON: We always joke that we're twins. My responsibility is the non-STEM students, anybody who is in art, humanities, social sciences. I'm in charge of their training.

KAREN FOLEY: Ah, OK. Excellent. So you provide training for people on campus, the students who do post-graduate research up here, the OU.

JAMES BRUCE: It's on campus, but it's also off campus as well. We've got quite a diverse body. We're perhaps not as big as the undergraduate population. There's about 1,000 students.

KAREN FOLEY: That's still impressive.

JAMES BRUCE: It's a good number. We're comparable to any other UK university. There's some studying with us full-time on campus. Some are actually studying part-time at a distance. And they come on to campus occasionally. And we also have a global network, what we call affiliated research centres, which again, have another couple of hundred students studying both part-time and

full-time. So our aim is to sort of connect them all together as one big, happy research community.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, wonderful. And it's so important to be able to do things like that, especially if you're doing post-graduate research, which can be very labor-intensive. You're often focusing on one really specialist area. And yet sometimes you can think, I'm doing this all on my own. I'm really sort of in it just to do my specific research. But community is so, so important for peer support and for bouncing ideas off people as well. So it's really important to get that sense of community.

JAMES BRUCE: Absolutely. And that's what we're trying to do. We've got an online presence with the graduate school network. But it's also recognising that-- so for, say, Sarah myself, we're academics who supervise students. We run sort of lab teams. It's a very team-based activity. And the peer support can be quite immediate. But as Helen will probably also comment in the arts and humanities, the PhD student can be something more of a lone researcher. And so the peer support is perhaps more tenuous. So they need to find different ways of connecting with their colleagues.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. And we heard from some students who are doing post-graduate research at the Open University in our opening session. So if you missed that, you can check out the catch up, which is available from yesterday. And that's on the Student Hub Live website.

Now, we've got some questions we'd like to know. We'd like to know which level you're studying. And we'd like to know whether you'd be interested in joining the graduate school network and also whether you're interested in postgraduate study with the OU and also whether you'd like to continue contact with the OU after you graduate. I appreciate a lot of you are at level one. But hypothetically speaking, it can be a really nice surprise to learn that you can keep studying forever and ever with The Open University, which indeed, a lot of people do.

So what's needed-- I know we laugh, but we--

[LAUGHTER]

Sometimes the idea of leaving-- I can't remember who it was yesterday, but someone in the chat was saying that they really love the Student Hub Live, and they really like talking to everyone. But they were finishing soon, and they didn't want to be a stalker. So then they found another module to do at post-graduate level. So they were very relieved.

[LAUGHTER]

JAMES BRUCE: That's good.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. So what is needed to do post-graduate research?

JAMES BRUCE: First and foremost, you need an undergraduate degree. So unlike the Open University undergraduate level where the entry is more managed and more flexible, we have slightly more stricter entry requirements. You need at least an undergraduate degree or possibly even a master's to get into the PhD programme. So you've already got some experience of study.

KAREN FOLEY: And what about the project area? I mean, some universities will advertise for PhDs. So you're actually applying to work in a specific programme. Some of them, like the EdD, I guess, you're sort of creating your own area for study and almost coming up with a proposal. Can you talk us through those two options?

JAMES BRUCE: Yes. The first option, where it's sort of advertised, that's probably more typical in the sciences, the STEM area. We often have active projects. And we are recruiting students to work on those projects. And we define the proposal and the question with them. Whereas in the arts and humanities, the student's more likely to have proposed an idea. They want to work with the right academic supervisor to develop and explore that idea themselves.

But it's not completely hard and fast. That's the distinction. You can get students who will come, perhaps as a result of their studies through the undergraduate. They've got an idea, and they really want to investigate this question. And so I'm-- myself-- and I won't speak for Sarah-- but if a student was coming to me saying, look, I really want to this area of chemistry, if I could accommodate it, I'll do my best to try and fit them in.

KAREN FOLEY: I used to think that was definitely the way to go and be a lot easier if you had a nicely defined research proposal with some funding and access to contacts. Sarah, is it the easier option in your opinion? And then I'll ask you, Helen, about the other perspective.

SARAH ALLMAN: I think, certainly for STEM subjects, as James has said, quite often the proposal is defined either by the funder or by the supervisor. But it doesn't mean that we certainly are not open to people approaching us with ideas. Certainly, my latest recruit to the group-- and I always ask my students when they start what their longtime aspirations are post-PhD. And he said in his interview that he wanted to get a job in the pharmaceutical industry. So we took the project

that we had, and we adapted it to fit him. So he ended up with a slightly more pharmaceutical-focused project, because it fits his needs as well.

Because the PhD belongs to the student. The sciences-- we supervise the science, but at the end of the day, they're going to walk out with a PhD. So it has to suit them. And it has to be useful for them, post study.

KAREN FOLEY: And I've seen a lot of STEM students-- in fact, we've had some at the Student Hub Live who are working in the laboratories here on campus.

SARAH ALLMAN: Yes.

KAREN FOLEY: And what about from the other perspective in terms of the more student-driven initiative, Helen?

HELEN BOWES-CATTON: Yeah, we do see more of that in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, although we do also have-- and you will see advertisements for particular projects that we [INAUDIBLE]. But we do have a lot of students that come in with a burning idea. And often we'll work quite extensively with a student to help them develop their proposal before application, before interview. Because, yeah, it's more of a kind of iterative working out the proposal process.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. Well, I'm going to take a quick trip to our Hot Desk because we've got your wonderful colleague Emily on there and also reintroducing Claudia, who has come back to feed your comments in from the chat. Welcome both.

CLAUDIA: Hi.

EMILY: Hi.

KAREN FOLEY: What's everyone talking about?

EMILY: Well, mainly they're talking about how addictive OU study can be. And you get caught up in it.

KAREN FOLEY: It's the biscuits.

EMILY: We've got Andrea, who's just been doing OU study for 18 years and counting, just started her MEd, so you see the process of people through the university. And last night I welcomed a new research student, who did her undergraduate and her master's and has just started her PhD with the OU. So you really see that you can journey all the way through.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. Claudia, how are things with you?

CLAUDIA: Yes. We've had a lot of people commenting on how long they've been studying with the OU as well and they are happy to end up with an undergraduate degree. But you know, you can carry on. You never know. And we've also got Ronald who's 72 years old. And he's just looking forward to getting his undergraduate degree.

And we've had also a few comments around people saying, well, they're the ones studying, but they've actually got a partner that is also studying as well. So they're just having sort of a hand over from a family.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes, this was a very good tactic that we discovered the other day in the chats with trying to make-- well, not make-- trying to enable your family to understand what time pressures you were under with OU study. And a lot of people were saying, well, actually, I got my partner to go into a MOOC, and that soon sorted them out. And in fact, they then go on to do some OU study. And OpenLearn was another good distractor task for people who weren't so sympathetic to assignments and a lot of material and the importance of quiet and biscuits in your studies.

So generically, we all love studying. But what inspires people to embark on research? Because there are different types. There are theoretical types of post-graduate study and also research-based types. What motivates people to embark on a research project?

JAMES BRUCE: I think it's a burning passion or enthusiasm at the start. There's a particular topic, a particular question, that you really want to work out and investigate. And that would apply across the board, I think. Sometimes it might have been drawn from your studies. You find a particular area that you really want to unpick more and more of. And as you go further up through the levels of undergraduate, you start to get closer to the edge of what the contemporary knowledge is. And so that can often inspire you to want to know more.

KAREN FOLEY: What about people at home who were just saying, we're really addicted to studying, actually, and we want to just keep going. And you sort of get more interest. And maybe they don't have that burning desire to focus on something specific. They just say, I love studying. I love the idea of getting into different methods, into different areas. And I just want to keep going with that.

HELEN BOWES- That was more my experience, actually. I think I came in-- I knew for ages I wanted to do a

CATTON: PhD, because I wanted to kind of write more, read more, and think more, and have more excuses to buy stationery. But I didn't know for a long time what it was I wanted to do.

And actually, it was when I did my master's and then did the dissertation for my master's, that really allowed me to sort of think through what it would be that I'd like to study. Because I sort of knew that I wanted to do things around language and how language is used to construct the world. But I didn't really have a question for a long time. And that took a long time to develop.

KAREN FOLEY: So how did you develop it?

HELEN BOWES- I think mostly through doing my master's, keeping reading, keeping studying, doing the
CATTON: dissertation for my master's, which was focused around language and discourse, and then just kind of-- yeah, it just all came to fruition, really, during that dissertation. So I think you don't necessarily have to have this burning thing you've always wanted to investigate since you were six. You can kind of be like, I just really like this. I'll keep going. And it'll come to you. Or you'll see a great funding opportunity, and there will be something-- come and apply to faculty of arts and social sciences. We've got this PhD. And then you can tailor your work towards that.

KAREN FOLEY: OK so we asked students whatever they were studying. 75% were at level one, 19% at level two. We don't have any post-graduate students here right now. But 92% would be wanting to continue contact with the OU after they graduate. And 72% said that they would be interested in postgraduate study with the OU.

I think it's very common, right at level one, to have this idea that you can continue in a certain direction, even though six years or three, if you're doing it full-time, can seem like a long time away. The potential is often really exciting for people to be able to study with The Open University. 18% said that they would be interested in joining the graduate school network. So we'll talk about that in a little while.

But then generally in terms of thinking about the level of students who are here right now, what advice can you give students who are just starting out in their studies with the idea that they would like to continue to post-graduate levels? Is it important to, for example, start getting a glossary of ideas together? Start keeping a research journal? We were talking about that the other day, and we had some great examples. Any things that people could sort of bed down early?

Or one thing, actually, I was talking about, which I've got in my to-do list, is learning how to use referencing tools. Because actually, it's been a bit of a bugbear. And I don't have the time to figure it all out. So I'm still doing it all by hand. But had I known, I would have started that much earlier. So is there any advice that you can give students who are thinking about going on to do post-graduate study right now at level one?

JAMES BRUCE: I think developing good study habits in terms of being organised, because the further up you go, the less structured things become. So even toward the end of your undergraduate, there's often modules that have projects associated with them. And the projects themselves require you to be more self-organized than you might be with the traditional modules. And certainly once you get into the post-graduate and to the PhD, you almost have to come up with your own structure. So the earlier you can acquire those sorts of habits, the better.

And perhaps I'm slightly biased, having been at the OU for so long. But I think the OU study does, in some ways, breed that kind of mentality and approach into people, as opposed to more conventional university courses.

HELEN BOWES-CATTON: That's right. You do become quite self-reliant, just through the process of doing an OU degree, I think, in a way that perhaps doesn't happen in quite the same way in more traditional universities.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. I know some of my students have gone off to universities, typical universities, and done post-graduate studies. And they have been like, I never knew I had it so easy at the OU, because everything was together. We've got a great library. We've heard about how you can research and things like that. And that is one of the key benefits of doing post-graduate study, again, at the library, is the incredible wealth of material that is freely available to students.

But what sort of things do you think students might start picking up now in terms of the social sciences aspects and also in terms of STEM subjects as well?

HELEN BOWES-CATTON: I think it's probably just all about doing the things that you enjoy and just kind of perfecting your study technique and getting to know your area and just following your interests, really. Because I think if you're interested and engaged and motivated, you're going to be fine. You don't necessarily have to have a great plan on day one.

But if you know that you want to continue studying, then there's oodles of opportunities for you to continue doing that. So it's just about working out-- I think it's a little bit of self-knowledge as

well, working out what works for you. And I think an OU degree is a really good way of practicing those skills fairly early on so you learn what time of the day is best for you. You learn how to juggle work and family already, which are really key skills for postgrad students. Yeah.

SARAH ALLMAN: And I think certainly for STEM subjects as well, one thing that I always advise people to do is to read the general literature and media around things and then question it. Sort of ask yourself why is that happening? Why do people react in that way? And so that allows you to keep up to date with a lot of the recent developments in science that are kind of picked up by the media. And that can often give people just that little bit for something to run with, which is quite nice.

KAREN FOLEY: We learned about that yesterday when the library did the session on how to look at fake news with trusted content. So that was really, really good.

SARAH ALLMAN: Those sorts of critical reading skills are, I think, important by social science and science subjects for that ability. If you start deconstructing everything you're given, even if it's a news report or something that you've read in a magazine, then that's a really good first start to how to approach research.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Now, I want to talk about what the graduate school do. Because in addition to having all of these students, you do a lot of things for students on campus, which I think is really nice for students to know about so that they can keep motivated in their dreams to do post-graduate study with us. What sorts of things do the graduate school do?

JAMES BRUCE: We do a range of activities. So a lot are focused on-- so we've just actually had our induction for the new--

KAREN FOLEY: Yes, I've seen people wondering around.

JAMES BRUCE: --PhD students, yes. So we organise. We help them get started. So we give them sort of essential information they need to know. But we also had a welcome reception yesterday evening. So it's that sort of social aspect. And then later on in the year, we'll have a point we will get them ready for the probation milestone and that sort of thing. But we publicise events. So we encourage the students to organise social events.

We've hosted afternoon teas. We had a summer barbecue this year for the PhD students, which was great on campus. Quite like to try and do something that covered all the four

nations. So if we could do a live link up with some kind of summer event across the whole community, that would be quite fun to try this summer. We should be able to do that sort of thing.

And so we work quite closely with the student body, again, sort of responding to what they want and seeing what we can do to help them. We're providing them with some more specialist training into how they can use their mobile phone to sort of capture and blog their way through their research. So one of my students is getting quite interested in live streaming from the chemistry lab so she can sort of film the experiments that she's doing and provide a commentary on them. And so again, we provide training courses for people to learn how to make the most out of that and what apps are available and out there to do that sort of thing.

KAREN FOLEY: And you're active on social media as well at the graduate school?

JAMES BRUCE: Yes, yes. There's a Twitter handle [INAUDIBLE]. And we're on Facebook as well. So a lot of the news and activity that we're doing, those are the channels that we will broadcast on. And we would love hearing feedback, positive and negative. All feedback is welcome.

KAREN FOLEY: Because you get immersed in your subject, don't you? And so it's nice to be able to pick up on those news streams in your down time using social media and those things. And we've been talking about that as well in our studies.

Claudia, do you have some questions on the Hot Desk?

CLAUDIA: Yes. Andrew just sent us a question saying if the application process is different for distance learners and for those applying to work on site at Milton Keynes Campus?

KAREN FOLEY: That's a good question because you mentioned interviews.

JAMES BRUCE: The application processes is the same, in fact. And the interviews are either done face-to-face on campus-- so that gives them an opportunity to come and see the campus, because even if you're working part-time, it's good to actually meet your supervisory team face to face. But we've also used Skype as a means of interviewing people. And again, I've interviewed students who are going to come from overseas to join my laboratory, and we've done interviews via Skype. So it's a mix. That's the only difference. But otherwise, the selection process is the same.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, James, your graduate school cover a lot of areas, but there are other areas like master's

qualifications that students can find out about and if they've got an undergraduate degree can enrol on as well. So could you just briefly mention where the distinction is between the graduate school and other areas of postgraduate study?

JAMES BRUCE: Certainly. So we, at the moment, cover just the PhD and the EdD. So they are pure research degrees. The university also has a taught master's programme. And that aligns with each particular faculty. It'll have--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

KAREN FOLEY: --growing massive, then.

JAMES BRUCE: It is. It is. And I think that is quite a good pathway. So if you've done an undergraduate degree, you might want to leap straight into a PhD. But the taught master's, particularly if you just want to continue studying and you're still wanting to sort explore what you're interested in and where you want to go, the taught master's is an excellent programme to continue to sort of work your way through and then use that as a stepping stone to a PhD or an EdD.

KAREN FOLEY: [INAUDIBLE] and if you're interested in those things, we've had some Student Hub Live programmes about things like the MA creative writing, the MA in psychology, and the various aspects of social sciences. So you can check those out on the catch up and also on our YouTube channel, which is Student Hub Live. So if you're interested in finding out more about the taught master's programmes, you can have a look there.

OK. Let's take a quick trip to Emily on the Hot Desk as well, because Emily, you are very involved with the graduate school. Tell us about your involvement.

EMILY: Well, I am the manager for the graduate school network, which is the website that brings together all the things that research students need to know at the university. But I'm also very involved in promoting what our research students are doing in getting their research out there, using our social media, may need to do that. But just amplifying what they're up to.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. And why is it so important for a university to really capitalise on what students are contributing to the general area?

EMILY: We are our students. So it's just very important to see what the upcoming researchers are working on.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. And also I guess it's the range, because sometimes when I look at these things, you can be really surprised at how diverse the student body is who are studying at postgraduate level, what sort of things they're doing.

JAMES BRUCE: Absolutely. It crosses the breadth of the sort of research activity in the university. And they are essential to our research activity. They're very much the-- I often see them as the real drivers, because they bring in fresh ideas to the areas of research that the university is focusing on. And it's very much about-- it contributes to the social mission of the university in terms of-- the impact of a PhD or an EdD could be far reaching beyond the lifetime of that particular degree. So you could see your work going on beyond that. And it's contributing to making the world a better place, I like to think.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, absolutely. Now, you've been doing a G for Graduate School Initiative, because whilst there are common aspects to doing post-graduate study, of course, we're all individuals. And everyone's approaching their own research and their own study, even, from very different perspectives. So why have you started doing this project, and what drawings have you got to show us?

JAMES BRUCE: Well, this is an Instagram project that is part of the OUphabet Project that the OU's doing, where they're highlighting particular parts. And we asked that we take the letter G for graduate school, again to show the mission of what the graduate school is about. And so we've got a series of animations. And these are actually the original artist's drawings that will make up the animations.

So the first one is a loudspeaker. And that represents the graduate school, because we are the voice of the PhD students and the EdD students and making sure that their success is broadcast and acknowledged. And then the following images are all supplied by students, what inspires them to their research. So I'll hand over to Sarah to talk through this one.

SARAH ALLMAN: OK. So this is one that's come out of the School of Life, Health, and Chemical Sciences. And Emily, who's the student that was responsible for this one, works on circadian rhythms and sleep patterns, which is quite good at the moment, given we've just had a Nobel Prize awarded for studies in that. Her motivation for study when we asked her was that she likes sleeping, but also she'd done shift work herself as a nightclub worker when she was doing her studies.

And she was kind of interested in what she'd observed in how shift workers behaved and how

their ability to carry out tasks changed. So her entire PhD project is based around analysing shift patterns and translating that, hopefully, into better working conditions for people.

KAREN FOLEY: I had some people from sports science on yesterday to solve this whole biscuit problem that we've been having, been debating whether or not biscuits are good for study. And they told us that there were these various rhythms and that power naps were really good. And that's why I think HJ is gone. Because he's certainly not here. He was power napping on the Hot Desk yesterday. So it's good to get some sort of support in so he can go and do his naps. OK, what's the next one?

JAMES BRUCE: This one is another image from a PhD student. And I'll pass over to Helen to comment on this one.

HELEN BOWES-CATTON: Yeah, this is from a student in the faculty of Wellbeing, Education, and Language Studies. And she's actually doing a study of hospice care and end-of-life care and how that can be improved. So she was sort of saying that beds are-- she's chosen the bed as the focus of this picture, because the hospital bed or hospice bed during the last days of someone's life is a place where they are. The place where that bed might be, it might be a home. It might be in a hospital. It might be in a hospice.

And so she's really interested in ways that we can improve end-of-life care for patients and to allow people to keep living right up to the very last day of their life. She actually won our poster competition last year with an amazing poster about her work. And she's going into hospital, [INAUDIBLE] and finding out more about how they can be more inclusive.

KAREN FOLEY: It's amazing. And Instagram is such a visual thing. We were talking earlier about different learning styles and visual learning and just sort of thinking here about how loaded these pictures are in terms of the content and how much they convey.

JAMES BRUCE: One of the things that fascinated me was you ask a PhD student to draw an image of what inspired them, and it's easy to fall into preconception of what you think they're going to draw. And it's quite surprising what some students do draw for their inspiration. And some of it's going right back into childhood experiences.

So [INAUDIBLE] I find quite appealing, because some people know right from the word go they're going to do a PhD. Other people uncover it as they go through their studies. But it's actually some memory right back in their past that's actually surfacing and driving them on.

And I think that's wonderful. And the graduate school wants to be able to encourage and sort of pull all that sort of thing out.

KAREN FOLEY: I've got some very creative people, but if you don't want to draw us a picture, then put something in the chat box about what inspired you to start your OU studies. And it's a really good idea to keep hold of that for when the going gets tough and you can remember, really, what's motivating you. What's the last image, James?

JAMES BRUCE: This is the final image, another one from a student. And I'll pass this one back to--

KAREN FOLEY: It's a very good drawing.

JAMES BRUCE: Beautifully done. I'd like to say I drew them but no, we've had an artist who's put this animation together, which will be appearing very soon. But this is actually from one of Sarah's PhD students, so I'll let Sarah talk to this one.

SARAH ALLMAN: I actually really like this image, solely because it's nothing to do with her PhD whatsoever. But what it really does is it shows-- she was communicating her motivation to do a PhD or her motivation to study. And it's all about curiosity. It's about when she was younger. She was in her grandmother's garden. And she picked up rocks, and she'd see bugs and slugs and all sorts of things moving. And that's what made her, then, go on to study biology and then now coming to the laboratory as a PhD student. So it's very much rooted in her childhood experiences.

KAREN FOLEY: Wow. So some really diverse things. What are you doing on Instagram with this then?

JAMES BRUCE: So this will be released as part of the OUphabet initiative that the university is running. And I think it will be coming out in the next month, the letter G. And so what you'll see is a series of these images being drawn. And it'll, again, convey the breadth and variety of the types of research that the PhD students are doing at the OU and also what their various motivations and inspirations are.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. So how can people find out more about post-graduate research at the OU? What can they do to investigate some of these options?

JAMES BRUCE: Well, first of all, they could certainly look at the graduate school network websites. But they should also talk to their tutor. They should talk to their school and their faculty as they go further through their course, particularly if they are taking the various project options that the

qualification might offer. If that's uncovering a desire to go on for the postgraduate study, that's the point of contact to talk about. And that may explore, say, the postgraduate master's options and that sort of thing.

KAREN FOLEY: And is it a good idea for people, even if they're not at a stage of considering postgraduate studies to connect with you on Facebook or Twitter--

JAMES BRUCE: Absolutely.

KAREN FOLEY: --to get a gist of what's going on.

JAMES BRUCE: Certainly, if you follow us on Facebook and Twitter, you'll see a lot of the activity that's going on. So you'll get a sense-- we would like to think we give you a sense of what life as a researcher is like, the successes and the failures, the setbacks, because research is like that. And it mirrors studies. Sometimes when you're working through your undergraduate degree, there'll be moments when you get it. And there'll be moments when you don't get it. And as you said earlier, you've got to power through it. Research is like that as well. And the highs are great fun, but you also learn to get through the lows of it as well.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, absolutely. OK. So we've got the Facebook and the Twitter. And Emily will have put the links for those in the chat box. Let's take a quick trip to the Hot Desk, Emily and Claudia, to get your final thoughts.

CLAUDIA: Oh, we're having a little chat about people wondering what they would draw as their inspiration for what they're studying. And I think we got to the discussion that most of us would probably just draw stick figures.

[LAUGHTER]

These are just so amazing.

EMILY: But I would say that yesterday when we had our new research students on site, we asked them to draw their own images. And it was amazing, such talented artists, and a few stick figures.

KAREN FOLEY: Interesting that people are at the heart of it, I guess, because if we're talking stick figures, we're talking people. But we've seen lots of other inanimate objects as well here. So I wonder if people have found that it's a person or if it's them. It would be interesting to ask people

about that, Claudia and Emily.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

CLAUDIA: This is somebody saying, Jane, saying that her grandfather's cabinet, she would draw, with lots of drawers and doors.

EMILY: She said it inspired her curiosity. She wanted to know what was in them.

KAREN FOLEY: Wow. What was in them?

EMILY: I don't know. We'll find out.

[LAUGHTER]

KAREN FOLEY: We need to bring back our cabinet of curiosities here, actually, which we had for an arts hub once, which was fabulous and had all sorts of things, including some lovely shoes. But yeah, we're looking at various sources and how they inspire people and how as artefacts some of these can be really interesting sources of academic study as well.

OK, well, thank you very much for coming along. Is that all you wanted to cover? I mean, we've covered an awful lot here and given people lots of ideas. And they're very keen on joining the graduate school and continuing their studies.

JAMES BRUCE: It's great to have the opportunity to come on and tell people about what's perhaps one of the OU's better-guarded secrets, that it's got this thriving research community of students. And we want to--

KAREN FOLEY: Or drawing.

JAMES BRUCE: --celebrate their success. And so yeah, we'd encourage people to follow us and connect with us and keep up with what we're doing. And if they've got any questions or they've got anything that they want to know more, then please do get in touch with us.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Well, thank you very much Helen, Sarah, and James for coming along today. We're going to have a short break now. And we're going to replay one of our sessions-- what is it like to study with the OU? And this is with Georgina and Matt, who are coming along a little bit later in our tutor Q&A session.

So we want any questions you've got about any aspect of OU study, anything you aren't sure

about about your tutor. Keep those coming through in the chat. We're just going to replay the video for you, but we'll still be active on the chat for half an hour. And then we will be back with some more from the OU Students Association. So I'll see you live at 1 o'clock. Bye for now, and thank you for watching.

[MUSIC PLAYING]