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**KAREN FOLEY:** Good evening, and welcome back to the Student Hub Live. Well, this is our induction for students for the Open University law school and the Open University Business School. We've had a really fun day today, covering all sorts of things that new and continuing students need to know about studying business and law. And this evening's session is really dedicated to the law side of things. But if you're a business student out there, I'm sure there'll be a lot to inspire you, also.

So we have the next two hours with some law discussions. We're going to talk about "Learning Law Lightly." And then we're going to talk about "More than Courts and Judges." And then we have the Open University Law Society coming to talk to us about how students can get involved with them. And they're going to give us a moots demonstration, which I'm very much looking forward to.

So our Hot Desk is hot. We've had a turnover of people here fielding your comments, your thoughts, and your chat into the studio. Now I hope that you've been continuing to chat to each other, as you've been doing for most of the day.

The chat's function is fairly simple. All you do is write something in there- like where you are, what you're studying, what you had for dinner- and then press Enter, and your text will send. You can also tell us, where you are, what you're studying, what level, et cetera, by using the interactive widgets- the tools that will appear on the bottom left-hand side of your screen.

Now we've asked you quite a lot of questions, and it really gives us a sense of who's out there right now. So if you could let us know what you're studying, how you're feeling about starting your new module, two or three words that will explain why you're studying law- if indeed you are, if you're studying W101, and also which do you think is most successful in studying law. And we've given you a list of options there.

Now most of them are fairly self-explanatory. But for those of you who are new to the Student Hub live, just explain these word clouds very quickly. Now there are three options in these boxes. And we need three things. All your results [INAUDIBLE].

If you could only think of one or two things, that is fine, but just put a full stop in there, and your

results will submit. All of the rest, just click on the option that applies to you, return the form down, and that will send your results in. You can also then see what everyone else is saying as well. So an added incentive to contribute to that discussion.

Now the chat can move quite quickly. And there's a little pen button at the top right-hand side of the screen. So if you want to press that, you can scroll through and talk to each other using that.

There's also a way to change how the interface looks. So there are three different options. And if you click on the bottom right-hand side of the screen, you can say how big or small the chat and video go. So I think that's enough admin. Let me see how HJ and Kate are on the Hot Desk. How are you both?

**HJ:** I think we're doing really well this evening. We've got Kate with us today, so I'm really excited about that. Because it's been a while since we did the Open Justice event, which was really good. I watched that.

**KATE:** Yeah, no, it's great to be back, and I'm really pleased to be here with everyone. Looks like there's loads of chat going on in the chat pane. As Karen Foley said, the chat's moving really fast. So looking forward with chatting with you all this evening, and I hope you enjoy the sessions.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Great. Well, we've got a lot to get through, so we'll crack on and come back to you guys if and when there are questions that you want to put to our fantastic panel, who are Paul Catley, who's the head of the law school. And we've got Elena, who is a PhD student at the law school, and Emma Jones, who is a lecturer and a teacher from the OU law school. And we're going to talk about "Learning Law Lightly." So it's a non-threatening way of telling students not to panic, I'm assuming. Paul, how can students prepare for studying their first law module?

**PAUL CATLEY:** I think one of the first things to do is to think about when you're going to do your studies. So plan your week. Work out how what times you're intending to do your studies. And then you won't always manage to stick to that. But try to keep track of if you miss out on some times, then see if you can find some other time to fit it in.

But also, if you're living with someone, or you've got a family, or whatever, it's going to be a matter of negotiation. It's going to be something where you sort of need the rest of the family on the side, understanding what you're doing. That would be my sort of first thought about

starting to study with the OU.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Because students will have quite a lot on their plate in terms of W101. And sometimes they might be doing two modules. Sometimes they might start with one module, and then end up doing two modules concurrently as well. So time management, I'm guessing, is going to be quite a big thing, in terms of carving out that time, and then fitting it in, with quite a lot of reading.

**PAUL CATLEY:** It is. It's really important. And another thing to think about is when your TMAs- your tutor marked assessments are due- and when the final assessments are due. And to sort of, if you like, make a diary entry now to sort of note when those are going to be. Because it's important that you work through so that you're ready for those.

Now one of the great things of studying with the OU is you can be flexible. Most places, you'd have to go to the lecture at a particular time, go to a seminar at a particular time. With the OU you can go through the materials at your own pace. But you need to make sure that you're ready for those assessments.

**KAREN FOLEY:** So this is good for new students. But there are some students out there who are continuing. So what about existing students?

**PAUL CATLEY:** I think for existing students, it's very easy to forget what you've learned in the previous modules. So think about both the knowledge that you've gained, but also the skills that you've gained, and the feedback that you've been receiving for the work that you've been doing so far, and use that so that when you move on to your next module you're well-informed on what you've done before.

And certainly if you're moving from level 1 to level 2, there's a really nice set of reminders that have been created by one of my colleagues, which look at sort of 12 core things that you will have learned during your first year, or your level 1. That was designed for students who are graduate entrants who are coming direct into level 2. But it's a really useful tool for people who have done level 1 to then think, OK, these are the really essential things I should have picked up.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Emma Jones, you're a tutor as well as a lecturer. What advice would you give for people who are preparing to study law?

**EMMA JONES:** I think, as Paul said, being organised is absolutely key. But also being quite creative, thinking

actually when it suits me to study, and if it's at lunchtime, or if it's the first thing in the morning, or if it's in the evening. There's no one right time to study. You have to think about when works for you.

And I think a good thing to do before the module starts is to actually go onto the website for your module. So the W101 website maybe, or even if you're jumping up a level, say W202, the websites have changed slightly. The VLE looks a bit different. It's worth going on there and starting to familiarise yourself with it, and working out where you can find everything so you're comfortable.

And we've now got a kind of new page for the law school, which is law study home for our students, which has got lots of things that Paul was talking about, and lots of other resources on it. So a really good place to go and have a look before the module starts.

**KAREN FOLEY:** So these things about carving out your time, and time management, being organised, they're things that are common for all students. But I'd like to think about what's interesting about starting law. So Elena, could I ask you what's most inspired you about the subject?

**ELENA:** The subject of my research, or the subject of law generally?

**KAREN FOLEY:** Well, I guess law generally. But you're also doing a PhD. So that probably is going to have an impact on what you find most interesting.

**ELENA:** I think my background in law just started with the law, basically, because I moved from Romania to England. And I developed this passion for law from a different perspective, because with a different background, as I said, is I became more and more curious. So I doubled the work all the time, and did more reading.

I then did a master's, and planned to become a barrister. And it's not usually the case that you've got a straightforward idea of- or sometimes you might have a straightforward idea- of where you want to go. But for me, as it happens, I had the opportunity to start teaching while I was doing some bar exams, and developed a passion for teaching. Which meant that I also wanted to have a career in law, but in academia rather than starting practicing.

And that's where my PhD came in. My area of research is assisted suicide. And I actually applied for it at the OU because of the title of research. So I think law generally is something that you need in everyday life, and regardless of where you think it might take you, studying

law is always useful in any area. Whether you stay in law, in academia, or if you start a different career, law is always useful.

**KAREN FOLEY:** We were talking earlier about these transferable skills with the Careers Service, and about how it's often really important that students can identify when they're learning certain things. And I guess creating an argument and thinking about the extent to which something can be transferred to another setting is something that's fundamental when you're doing law.

**PAUL CATLEY:** Absolutely. I think that idea of being able to make a persuasive argument is essential to law. If you think of a court case, you've got two sides there who are both making the best use of the arguments that are available to them on behalf of their client. And that sort of ability both to think about what do I think, why do I think it, how can I persuade someone else that I'm right?

But also that ability to think, OK, if I'm representing this person, what are the arguments that I can marshal on behalf of this person? But also, what are the counter-arguments, and how would I respond to those counter-arguments? And that's something which, in a sense, in the mooted debate later on, you'll have the opportunity to see students using those sorts of skills, being given the opportunity to argue from one side, and doing that.

**KAREN FOLEY:** No, absolutely. No, I'm looking forward to seeing that, because it's one of those things that I think, irrespective of whether you're studying law or not, that whole idea of supporting points with evidence is something that all students will experience. And I think law teaches us particularly well.

We've asked you at home what you are doing, and we'd like to know why you're studying law right now. Let me just give you a little bit of feedback. So we've got most of our students here are at level 1- 81%. They're not new to the Open University, so the majority of them have been with us before. We've got 60 per cent of business students here right now. And most of them are studying part time with us. Thank you for filling all of these in. 36 per cent are studying W101, and 14 per cent already have. So there's a lot of familiarity with this level 1 module.

And we also asked, what was important in terms of studying law successfully. And 50 per cent said enjoying the topic. So I think maybe we've inspired people at home to think about that. And that was followed by enjoying a debate. So again, people might enjoy the moot for that, and then being motivated. So thank you for filling those widgets in for us at home.

So who's who in the law school, then? What are some of the key things that people need to

know about? I mean, we've mentioned tutors. We've mentioned the study planner. But what sorts of things do students need to know that are essential for their studying, bearing in mind we've got a lot of students here who are continuing as well?

**PAUL CATLEY:** Right. Well, I think, in a sense, this is maybe something which Emma Jones, as a tutor, can explain probably better than I can.

**EMMA JONES:** Well, as you said, we have tutors in really for students. That's normally going to be your first port of contact- point of contact- if you've got any questions, any queries, if there are anything that you are unsure about.

But there's also a lot of other people involved in the law school, and it's a community. And there are other people there to help you. So we have a law student support team. So if you feel like you're going to need extra support sessions; if you know something's gone wrong, and you need some more sustained help in some way, your tutor will be able to refer you to the law student support team for that additional support and guidance.

We also have a fantastic library at the OU, and the law resources are just brilliant. And basically any article, any piece of legislation, any case you want to find, you can find it in the law library. And the best thing is 24/7 web chat. So you can always just sit there, whatever query you've got any time of day or night. And I just love that.

And we've also got the academics who are there, who obviously the chairs of the modules, they prepare the materials. And so that they're all involved. Kind of even if you don't always come across them, they're there.

And we have our Open Justice Centre, which is about developing pro-bono activity. So practical legal activities that students can be involved in. And at the moment that's really level 3 students. But we are hoping to kind of evolve that, so more and more students will have those sort of opportunities. So it's not just about one person. There's a whole community and the law school.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yeah. No, absolutely. And many other central service as well. I must just give a plug for their fantastic IT help desk who do help so often. And also you've mentioned the library. And they've got some really nice, specific databases that law students in particular will engage with.

**EMMA JONES:** Oh, and I should just say the Open University Law Society as well, because they do a fantastic amount of work. They just send out newsletters and all sorts of brilliant things.

**KAREN FOLEY:** No, they're great, and I'm looking forward to meeting them later. So thinking about studying law, and this whole sort of idea then, that some of our students perhaps are going to level 2, et cetera. Can we talk about things that maybe are challenging in terms of studying law? So does it get more difficult? It's probably a silly question, but what are some of the challenges as you start progressing?

**PAUL CATLEY:** I think one of the challenges is just the way the law works, and thinking that what you've got to do is build your arguments around acts of Parliament and around cases. And I think that is one of the real joys of law. I think the cases are fascinating.

But it's very much about thinking, OK, is there a case that is similar to this? Because we have a system of precedent where similar cases will be decided in the same way. So that if you can argue that this case is the same as the previous case, you're well on the way to being able to get that outcome.

But one of the arts of it, one of the real fun things, is the ability to distinguish cases, to identify material differences between two cases, so that you can then argue that, in fact, the courts shouldn't follow that previous precedent, because this is a different situation.

**KAREN FOLEY:** But there are some things that are unprecedented. I mean, Brexit, for example, is one area that is very topical right now. And equally, there are all of these complexities around precedence, and the fact that it's a very unusual situation.

**PAUL CATLEY:** And I think that's a great illustration, also, of how the law impacts on our lives. We've got this whole system of European Union law. And now the question is, well, what happens next?

A decision has been made to leave the EU. But what about all that legislation? That legislation which is, for example, giving employment rights to people? Is that just going to become part of English law? How do you do that? This is all sort of uncharted territory, and it's something which the government is having to get to grips with.

And the sort of question of how should it do that? Should these go through Parliament as acts of Parliament, or should Parliament give that power to ministers to make delegated legislation to sort of fill in the gaps when we've left the European Union? And I think that sort of idea of seeing the relevance of law as you study it is one of the real joys of it.

**KAREN FOLEY:** So what happened with Brexit? Did you all sit there in the law school and go, no! You don't

know what you're letting yourselves in for!

**PAUL CATLEY:** It was even more exciting, in a way, in that a team had been writing our new European Union law module, which was due to be launched in the October. So nearly all of the writing had been done before the referendum on June the 23rd.

And obviously they've known there was going to be the referendum. And so what they had been very cleverly doing was trying to design it so that, yes, they knew they'd have to do a rewrite when the outcome was known, but to try to sort of have certain bits which would be OK irrespective of the decision, and then to know all the other bits which they were going to have to very hurriedly, in June and July, be rewriting so that that course would be ready to launch in October.

And the fantastic thing is that that course had really good feedback. And most impressively, 86% of the students who started that course not only stayed with it to the end, but passed it. And some of the results were amazingly good.

And I think it goes back to that point that you were getting from the feedback from students. In a sense, this is the perfect time to be studying EU law, because it's there on the news every day. So that sort of ability to link your studies to what is going on in the rest of the world is fantastic for that subject at the moment.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Well, absolutely. But very complex. And I mean Elena, your research on assisted suicide is very topical also, right now.

**ELENA:** Definitely.

**KAREN FOLEY:** But that obviously has a whole different aspect to it. How do you deal with that sort of more challenging side of things, when there are a lot of values associated with what you're doing? And ultimately, with law you're looking at points. But here, I mean, in your case you're looking at something that is very value-laden for a lot of people that may be difficult to separate from the items that you're actually trying to develop.

**EMMA JONES:** It is a very complex area. And I think the most important thing is to be very sensitive towards the people that are involved in the various cases that I'm dealing with- thankfully, not necessarily face-to-face, which would make it a little bit even more delicate, I suppose. But reading the cases is sometimes easy, because you understand it from the beginning, and you



understand what it means for the individual, rather than looking at it just from a law perspective.

But obviously, equally important it is to just keep yourself away from all the ethics and the morals, and be able to give a clear and comprehensive valuation, I shall say, of the assisted suicide legislation, for example, which again, it is very current, I was able to assist one of the cases that recently went to court in July- Noel Conway- for my research.

And it is amazing that a practicing, I'll say, a background helps you even when you're doing academic research to understand that much better the arguments that are brought into court by both paraclete counsel. And it is very valuable.

But again, I'm going back to trying to be very careful with the complexities that are merged into this area, that some people looking at it from a, let's say, campaign perspective, it definitely isn't that way. It is complex. And you always need to take everything into account. Because even though law is black on white, there are various webs that you might discover during your research.

**KAREN FOLEY:** And some of the subject matter in the modules we teach can also be quite complex. I mean, Hillsborough, for example, is one thing that, again has a lot of emotions attached to it.

**PAUL CATLEY:** Absolutely. I think as you're doing your studies, there may well be particular parts of the course which really resonate. It might be that you've been a victim of crime, and that you're now looking at criminal law, and looking at the particular offences which are particularly relevant to you. So I think that is something which tutors will be alert to. If there are things which you're finding distressing, well talk to people about it.

But I think another aspect of it is that if you are going to go on and sort of work in the law, then yes, one of the great things is you get to choose the area that you want to work in, and you're going to be able to specialise. But if you are, say, you're going to get involved in family law, then that is going to be areas which are emotionally very charged.

**KAREN FOLEY:** So there are skills that you would learn as you are working through to be able to bracket off, I guess, some of those emotions, so that you can focus on what is there.

**PAUL CATLEY:** And that's one of the things which I think the Open Justice programme is going to give students that ability in a very supported environment, to actually be giving real legal advice to people who've come along with their own personal problems. And I think that is going to

resonate for some people. And it's going to be something where that ability to think about how this actually impacts on that individual is going to be important.

**EMMA JONES:** Yeah. And one thing we're emphasising on Open Justice to students is actually you have to look after yourself, because particularly doing practical legal activities, but just studying law generally, and just studying, it is draining, and it can be hard work. And you have to take care of yourself and your well-being, and you have to kind of balance out what you're doing, and not lose sight of the other things you enjoy doing in your life. And that's really important.

**KAREN FOLEY:** I know we've got lots of questions, and so I'd like to spend a few minutes just going over to Kate and HJ to see what they'd like to ask our panel.

**HJ:** Yes, we've got loads of great questions. And we've had a lot of questions about where are the sessions this morning? And you can watch them. They'll be available on Catch Up on our YouTube page, and on our website. And they'll be up in a couple of days. So just have a look there, and you can catch up on everything. But, yeah, Kate's got some great questions for us.

**KATE:** Yeah, and so we've got lots of students here, very excited about starting their law courses this year. And we've also got a few students who are maybe a little bit nervous, and just wanted to ask about how some things might work, say, if we could ask the panel how tutorials will work. And in particular, we've had a question from Daniel saying, do your tutors get annoyed if they think a question is silly? So let's see what our panel have to say?

**KAREN FOLEY:** Emma Jones, have you ever had a silly question?

**EMMA JONES:** There is no such thing as a silly question. And if you have a question, you can bet that somebody else will have the same question, and just not have been brave enough to ask it yet. So I always say to my students there isn't a silly question. You're never bothering your tutor, because that's what they're for. Tutors like to hear from students, because otherwise you kind of think, but what are they doing? I haven't heard from them for a while!

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

So it's great to hear from students. It's great to have any questions you want to ask. That is what we're there for as tutors. And we want to be there, and we want to help.

In terms of tutorials, it's great because you can choose between online or face-to-face, or do a mixture- whichever suits you. And the online ones are also recorded. So even if you can't

make it on that evening or that day, you can listen to it and watch it back later. So there's lots of choice. They cover the same materials, whether they're online or face-to-face.

You can sign up for them on Student Home. So you can go there now, have a look at the dates, pick which one suits you, sign up for it. It won't necessarily be with your tutor, but it will be with a tutor who's teaching the same subjects, who is still a tutor on the same module. And you should get to meet some of your peers there. And it should be a fun experience as well.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Brilliant. So Sachia is interested in how the online tutorials work. And you can watch the Catch Up, because we did that today, and we actually had an online tutorial as well. But there's plenty available on the Catch Up page that you can access from the OU Connections web site, Sachia. So do check that out.

But in a nutshell, these tutorials are a space where the tutors will talk to the students, and basically clarify issues. They might develop activities. But it's also really enhanced learning, as opposed to grill them on what they have or haven't been doing.

**EMMA JONES:** Yep. There's definitely no grilling involved. And it's not really about teaching. It's about really taking what you've been learning in the units, in the materials that you've been reading for the module. And it's about talking about them, it's about thinking about them, maybe applying them in a different situation, often sort of working with a few people, and discussing, maybe having a little debate.

But there's not any pressure on people. People, if you don't feel comfortable speaking in public, you're never going to be forced to do something like that. You just need to go along, take it at your own pace, and your tutor will work with you wherever you are at.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Brilliant. Now we've covered most of the do's and the good things. And I just wanted to cover a few of the don't's that we wanted to warn students about. And one of these is Facebook and social media groups.

**PAUL CATLEY:** Yeah. I think there's a risk with Facebook and social media groups that you'll get the wrong information. And in one sense I think they can be great. They can be supportive. They can be really good at developing a community.

But what I would say is really crucial is listen to your tutor about advice as to what is required, and things like that. Because it might well be that the person who's telling you on Facebook thinks that what they're saying is correct. They may not be malevolently trying to trick you.

But it is really important that you take the advice from the right sources. And therefore look at the materials. Look at the guides that you're being given. Talk to your tutor.

**KAREN FOLEY:** What about extensions? And you've mentioned being organised, Emma Jones. But one of the things that we wanted to tell students was avoiding asking for extensions after the deadline, or reading the questions, in fact, that they need to answer for their TMAs- their tutor-marked assignments- too late. Why does that matter?

**EMMA JONES:** Yeah. First of all, if you read the questions kind of a couple of days before the deadline, it can be a bit of a panic. And you have to go back and try to find the relevant materials. And it's all quite stressful.

If you read the questions well in advance- because they'll be up on the website under Assessment, so have a read of them- then when you're going through the materials, if you see useful stuff, if you're making notes, you can put a little star by it. You can highlight. You can make a mental note. So I'm going to come back to this. This looks like it's useful for the assignment. So it's a very helpful way to be planning, and having it churning over in your mind.

When it comes to extensions, teachers know that things happen, and things can come up in your family, and might be ill. There's all sorts of things come up. And you sometimes do need an extension. And as long as you've got a good reason, tutors are quite happy about that. But we do need to be told.

And we do need to be told in advance, because if we're not told in advance it's a far more complicated process. We can't agree. Then we have to go through our students experience managers. It all gets very complicated and long-winded. So please ask for extensions in advance. Because your tutors are sympathetic. But it is really helpful to us if you do.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yeah. No, absolutely. And bearing in mind that we've got students at different levels here, could we just sort of touch on how, as you move up- in particular for level 3, you're doing more independent research. And we mentioned some of those specific databases that you can access from the online library. But also, what would you say in terms of, I guess, cautioning students about the extent to which they use their independent study time, and their critical thinking? What would you say to bear in mind in terms of the balance, here?

**PAUL CATLEY:** I think what they'll find as they move into level 3 is there is less material in the modules, and

much more emphasis on them thinking and going off and researching and finding extra information. And I think that's really important skills for you to be developing as you're going through the law degree.

But what is really important is not to think, well, there's a bit less this week than there usually is. So I'll do that, and I'll have a break. Yeah, because very much the idea is that yes, that's part of it. But then there are going to be things that you're being asked to do to go off and find a bit more information and things like that which are central to the course. And therefore you need to do that.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Well, unfortunately we need to wrap up now, because we're out of time, and we've got a lot to cover. But we will have a lot more sessions, and a lot more opportunities to answer questions. So do keep those coming through.

So Paul and Emma Jones and Elena, thank you very much for coming along and talking to us. I don't think that sounds so scary anymore. And I hope that we've reassured you that it's going to be a really supportive, wonderful journey into your studying with the Open University Law School.

We're going to have a short break now. And then you're going to join me back hopefully for our next session, which is going to be about "More than Courts and Judges." So I'm looking forward to that in about five minutes. So we'll see you very soon. And do keep those questions coming in the chat. We will have time to address those as we move on through the programme tonight. See you in a minute.

[MUSIC PLAYING]