

**KAREN FOLEY:** Good afternoon, and welcome to the Student Hub Live. This event is a taught postgraduate induction in education, childhood, and youth. My name is Karen Foley, and I'll be presenting the programme that we've got lined up for you over the next four, five hours this afternoon.

So, what are we going to cover? Well, we are going to have an introduction to taught postgraduate, everything you want to know about postgraduate study but were afraid to ask. And then we're going to talk about what it means to be a postgraduate student and about your journey.

We're then going to show you some video breaks about all the essential things that you need to know, like about the library, the student support team, and we're then going to take a look at each programme in detail. And we'll end the day talking about whether or not serious academics can make a scholarly use of Facebook and Twitter and other forms of social media. So there's an awful lot to get through today.

Now, you will see on your screen that on the bottom left-hand side there are a number of interactive voting tools, and we'd really like to know where you are, how you're feeling about commencing your studies, which pathway you're on, if, indeed, you're a postgraduate student, and whether or not you're new to the Open University.

What are you most worried about? Now, these word clouds, if you haven't filled them out, are requiring three submissions. So there's a choice to put three things in. You need to put three things into to send it. But if you can only think of one or two, that's absolutely fine. Just put a full stop at the end, and then your results can submit.

And also, we're interested in knowing what's your work setting. So where are you working? That may be one or two or three things. Again, just put a full stop if you don't need to put an answer to all three. When you submit your data you'll see what everyone else at home thinks as well. So there's an added advantage in doing so.

Now I'm not alone today, because feeding in the chat from everybody at home is Lee and Zach and Claudia, who are going to be manning our hot desk today. Lee and Zach, how are you this afternoon?

**LEE:** We're great, thanks.

**ZACH:** Very well, thank you. Yeah. Good to be here.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Good. And we had a boot camp this morning which is all about assessment, and some of our students may still be here, interested in postgraduate study, which some people don't know you can do at the Open University. And that can be a very, very inspiring thing. What are people talking about right now, Lee and Zach?

**ZACH:** Well, we've got a few people introducing themselves. We've got Lila, who's doing her master's in education, first year. And we've also got Janice, who's doing the creative writing masters, who's also in their first year. So we're just kind of putting some questions out there, seeing if they've got any experiences of social media ed with their studies, and just asking if anyone is thinking of staying on and/or beginning postgraduate studies with the OU.

**LEE:** Absolutely. We're really keen to hear from any students currently studying with us on a postgraduate module. But equally, if people are thinking, well, actually, is postgraduate right for me? Can I fit it in? Then, by all means, get in contact with us, because this is really your afternoon.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Brilliant. We've got people joining us from Africa and the Middle East as well, so welcome from wherever you are. If you want to put something in the chat, we'd love to know what you're studying, how you're feeling about things. And I'll tell you now, Lee and Zach work at our student support team, as well as being OU students.

Now, for students who are approaching postgraduate study with no experience of the Open University, or, indeed, distance learning, it can be a sort of odd thing to get your head around. And so, Lee and Zach can answer any questions that you might have about really simple things, like finding support or how to contact your supervisor, et cetera. So they'll be able to answer any questions, as well as our panel in the studio.

OK. So we've covered the chat. We also can connect with you on Twitter. Our hashtag is #StudentHubLive17. And if you have a question that you haven't had answered today, or, indeed, you're watching this on catch up, you can always email us [studenthub@open.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@open.ac.uk).

And speaking of catch up, if you can't stay for the whole afternoon, all of these will be available shortly after the programme ends, and then they'll also be on our YouTube channel. So do subscribe to that if you're interested in finding out more.

Well, our last session, I'm delighted to welcome Eric and Jane to the studio today. We're going

to talk about everything you wanted to know about postgraduate study but were afraid to ask. So this is the time that anyone can ask questions.

Now, Jane, you're the programme leader for taught postgraduate studies in education, childhood, and youth, and Eric, you're the head of school and a senior lecturer in educational leadership. And you'll be joining us for a couple of other sessions later today with the rest of the team as we rotate through this programme.

But firstly, I wondered if you could tell us about the MA in education and about the MA in childhood new studies. Board introduction.

**ERIC ADDAE-KYEREMEH:**

Yeah. I mean, they're two of the key master's qualifications we have in our faculty. The MA in education has three pathways. So we've got the MA in education that could lead to leadership management, we've got one in inclusive practice, and we've got another route in applied linguistics. And then, we've got the MA childhood and youth. So these are the two main qualifications we've got within this portfolio of programmes at master's level.

And for the MA in education, there are three distinct stages. So we've got stage one, which has a suite of modules available for each of the routes. We've got stage two, which is the second stage. On completion of the stage one you move on to the stage two, which has a suite of modules to choose from. And then there's a third stage, which is the dissertation module.

And on the MA in childhood and youth, we've got two modules, two core modules, K802 and E827, which are the key modules that every student who wants to exit with that qualification has to have. And then there are a suite of other modules that students can choose from. At the moment, most of the students are choosing from ED841, which is one of the key modules that you can easily add to the suite of modules you've got within that qualification. So those are the two key qualifications we're talking about this afternoon.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

Eric, I know, now having worked at the University for many years, I'm very [INAUDIBLE] with all these module codes and numbers and choosing qualifications and things. But I'm wondering if you could explain, especially to people who haven't maybe studied with the OU before, about these modules and the choice and about when they can make decisions. How much choice really is there?

**ERIC ADDAE-**

Yeah. On the MA in education, as I said, there are three main routes. So there's a route for

- KYEREMEH:** those who are aspiring to be educational leaders or practicing educational leaders looking more or less improve their practise. So there are modules that fall within that sort of route. So at stage one, students will be studying E811.
- And then there's another route, which is for those interested in special education, and it's an inclusive practise in this broad sense. And then, there's a module, E814, which will be their starter module. And then there's those who are interested in applied linguistics, the teaching of languages as well. So that would then fall within that route of MA in education applied linguistics route.
- So there are three distinct routes on the MA in education. And then we've got the MA in childhood and youth, which is the two modules K802, E827, and a third module. So each of them requires 180 credits, but there are 60 credits to choose from at each stage.
- KAREN FOLEY:** Right. OK. So everyone is beginning sort of at one level. And then, they're going to learn a lot of things that maybe will lead them onto the different pathways, and we'll be working through that later.
- ERIC ADDAE-** Yes. We will go through each of the pathways later on this afternoon.
- KYEREMEH:**
- KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent.
- JANE CULLEN:** I think, just to add to what Eric has said, then when students begin, very often they've made their choice about which particular pathway they want to follow right at the beginning. So we'll have students, for example, with a background in leadership or who are aspiring to be leaders in some educational setting. So they come in with a pretty set idea of the fact that they want to follow the leadership and management pathway.
- And so they will follow it, as Eric has said, for those three modules of 60 credits each through to the dissertation module, which is where they carry out a piece of inquiry in their own workplace setting so that, from a point where they are beginning to understand what it is to study at postgraduate level, which involves critical reflection, critical analysis, engagement with academic literature at postgraduate level, they start to develop their own research agenda so that they then, by the time they get to the third module, the dissertation module, they're ready to actually carry out their own small scale piece of research on leadership and management.

And that's exactly the same for the pathway in inclusive practise and applied linguistics. Most of the students who come in are pretty set and have made their decision about which, if they're choosing the master's in education, which pathway they want to follow. However, very occasionally, we do get a student who changes their mind as they come to the end of the first module. And it is then possible to actually switch pathway.

So it's possible, for example, to do the first module in leadership and management and then, for example, to move, at stage two, the second module, onto the inclusive practise pathway, which they would then follow through and finish on stage three. And that's partly because the stage one module has within it a lot of generic skills of learning about postgraduate level masters in education work. And so it is transferable, then, onto another pathway.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. Did you want to make any point here in terms of links to doctoral studies? What's making this different from maybe other ways of learning at undergraduate level?

**ERIC ADDAE-KYEREMEH:** Yeah. As Jane said, one of the key reasons why this stage approach is taken is mainly to prepare students for practise and for further study as well, which is mainly on to our doctoral programme. So within each of these stages-- so at stage one, as Jane said, we're introducing you broadly to what research is about. And then at stage two, we're hoping that you're beginning to form your own identity.

So even students who are coming in with credit transfer-- we should have mentioned that. We have students who don't stage one with us. They study stage one from another university. But they can come in with credit transfer onto our stage two modules. But once you get onto the stage two module, you're beginning to, more or less, identify the specific area within which you want to research.

So if you go on to stage two, we hope that, by then, we begin to form that sort of research identity. And then, onto stage three, that's where you conduct an empirical study. So with that sort of approach, it prepares students for our doctoral work. And we're hoping that with that approach, most students will then begin to see the clear link between the master's level study and the doctoral training.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Now, I just want to take a quick trip to the Hot Desk, because Lee and Zach work in our student support team, and they will be very used to people having questions about approaching us with credit transfer and being new to the Open University and maybe about advice on the pathways that suit them. And also, things like studying intensity.

Very briefly, Lee and Zach, because we're going to show the video later about the sorts of things you deal with, what sorts of questions do you think the students might have if they are coming new to the Open University?

**LEE:** We got lots of questions, particularly from postgraduate students who are new to OU study. They want to know how it works, they want to know what subjects they can study, they want to know if their previous undergraduate study is relevant to postgraduate study and if that's applicable. So there's lots of questions out there.

There's also lots of answers as well that we can provide in the student support team and also through our credit transfer team as well, who are really helpful in sort of signposting students to the right sort of information.

**ZACH:** We do get a lot of questions about how much time you would need to do full time and part time intensity. And we actually did have a question on there that you might be able to help us with from Liala, who's doing a masters in education and wanted to know a bit more information about the fast track route, which can be quite intense for people new to OU study.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Brilliant. Could you explain that? And then we're going to talk a little bit about OU study.

**JANE CULLEN:** Sure. We have a fast track, which is actually taking those three modules that we talked about, but instead of taking them over a period of three years, then a student can take them over a period of two years. And really, that is a period of very intensive study. So I think one of the things, picking up on what's just been said about intensity of study, that is a real intensity of study.

And the idea is, then, that a student-- say a student was starting the whole master's in education this October, then they would start with their stage one module in October. They would still be studying their stage one module, but they would then start their stage two module in February 2018.

They would finish their stage one module in the June. They would still be studying their stage two module. And they would then begin their stage three module in October so that they would overlap all of the modules once they got to February 2018.

We reckon usually on the master's in education that students need to set aside 15 hours a week for study. So if we're talking about students taking two modules at the same time, we're

really talking about 30 hours. Basically a full time job of studying if students want to take the fast track. But we do have students wanting to take the fast track, and that's what they do.

**KAREN FOLEY:** We asked students what they were most worried about, and time management came up as one of the key things that people were anxious about.

**ERIC ADDAE-KYEREMEH:** Yeah. I mean, again, as Jane said, planning your time well ahead of your study is very, very important, because in all the modules, we give this required study level. And it ranges between 15 to 18 hours. And we expect students to plan ahead, because it's real. I mean, you need to set aside that time to be able to go through the study materials, plan for the assessment, plan to work on the feedback that your tutor gives you, do a lot of the reading that we provide through the study guide. So it can be--

**KAREN FOLEY:** And to think--

**ERIC ADDAE-KYEREMEH:** And to think.

**KAREN FOLEY:** --that's the hardest thing, is to get that time where you're not stressed to actually be able to reflect.

**ERIC ADDAE-KYEREMEH:** Exactly. So planning is very, very important. And students have to understand that the learning hours that have been put on there is tried and tested. We know it will take approximately 15 to 18 hours to actually navigate your way through the study. That's why we put that there. So students have to set that time.

But again, like learners, I mean, there will be times where it's quite intensive, and there will be times where there will be a little bit of slack. And I think it all comes down to planning, really.

**KAREN FOLEY:** No, absolutely. Now, I asked you to bring some things along so that we could explain what online learning was like for students at the Open University, and you've brought these things with you, which I think is quite reassuring. So how does it work, then, in particular for new students? What do they need to know about the OU way of learning?

**JANE CULLEN:** Well, I think, if we're talking about the Open University at postgraduate level in our master's in education and our master's in childhood and youth, then one of the things that may be different, even to their Open University undergraduate learning, because we have a lot of students who continue on, is that postgraduate learning for the master's in education, master's

in childhood and youth, is all online. So that there is no face to face teaching at all, in the sense of tutor and students being in the same room.

So the idea of bringing along the laptop and the headphones is that that's the way that tutor and student communicate with each other. And I suppose one of the things that I hope is reassuring is that the tutor is still front and centre of all the learning that students do at postgraduate level, that all students are assigned to tutor and tutorials continue and are an integral part of all postgraduate study.

And that's tuition via live video conferencing, either in the small tutor group, which tutors find, particularly new students, new postgraduate students, find immensely reassuring. In bigger, sort of what we call cluster-wide level tutorials-- in other words, where students get the opportunity to interact across a wider set of their peers and students. On the tutor group forum. And I think students will be fairly used to forums, but that's kind of a longer time to actually interact with each other and with your tutor.

So a wide variety of ways. But with all materials available online and available through laptops, through tablets, through phones.

**KAREN FOLEY:** OK. So Eric, I wonder if you could tell us a little bit about how people might find their way around the module website. We've got some screen captures here that we're going to talk people through. But finding the module website is one of the most important things to do right now, if you haven't found it already.

So let's take a look at this example, which is EE811. Eric, what are the key things that we need to alert people's attention to here?

**ERIC ADDAE-KYEREMEH:** Once the student has logged into the module website, a typical example is what we've got on there, which is EE811. And on the top, you'll see that we've got assessments, tutorials, forums, resources, et cetera, on there. And these are very, very important starting points for each student. You have to make sure that you've clicked on the assessment and tutorials to make sure that you have a clear idea of what your tutorials are on.

And for me, one of the bits of advice I'd give students is to make sure that you know what the assessment requirements are. So if you click on Assessment, it gives you a good idea of what the assessment requirements are for your module.

And then, in the middle of it, which has got current weeks and all weeks, if you click on the All



Weeks, it gives you a full list of all the elements that you're going to cover for each week. So it gives you an idea of a week by week sense of what you're going to go through. And that will help in your planning as well. So that's where you get on there.

And then, on the right side, you see where it's got tutor? You've got your tutor details on there as well. So very, very important that you click on that to make sure that you know how to contact your tutor.

**KAREN FOLEY:** And, of course, the Search function on the top right-hand corner is really good. And then, the assessment page. So it's very important to find the assessment, as you said before, which you access from that page of the module website. Let's take a look and see where these tutor marked assignments are. And here they are, with their nice deadlines.

**ERIC ADDAE-KYEREMEH:** Exactly. And that's-- so when you click on the Assessment page for this particular module, this is what comes up. It's clear that there are three tutor marked assignments and an EMA. And it's very, very important that you click on there, have a look at what the requirements are, because, in some cases, you are required to seek permission. If you get to learning stage three, for instance, you have to require-- you are required to seek permission for the setting which you'll be conducting a small scale study. So you need to plan all of that in advance--

**KAREN FOLEY:** Get your ethics in and everything, otherwise--

**ERIC ADDAE-KYEREMEH:** Get your ethics-- exactly. So very, very important to have a look at that at a very early stage.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. Now, there are also additional resources, which can be the opportunity to go and procrastinate, or they can be very, very useful. Tell us what's interesting about these resources, Eric.

**ERIC ADDAE-KYEREMEH:** Yeah. These resources are usually put together by central academics around key things that are emerging within the particular module. So on this particular module, you'll find podcasts that have been done by colleagues here, or sometimes podcasts that we've actually recorded with colleagues outside the OU, talking about topical issues that are relevant to that particular module. So these may not necessarily be part of this study guide, but they are resources that will help you in terms of understanding the debate and the discourse around a particular module.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Now, you mentioned that you could study online, so I assume that means anywhere.

**ERIC ADDAE-** Yes.

**KYEREMEH:**

**KAREN FOLEY:** And you've got mobiles and tablets. So I'm assuming, then, that students could get the module materials and assignments and do those on the go?

**ERIC ADDAE-** Yes. And that's one of the things that OU is better at than any other university. All our  
**KYEREMEH:** resources that are fully online are also optimised for tablet devices and mobile phones.

**KAREN FOLEY:** So here's an example of what it looks like on a tablet.

**ERIC ADDAE-** Exactly. So the same module, moving from a laptop or computer desktop, is optimised for a  
**KYEREMEH:** tablet device. And this is what it would look like on your tablet, with all the elements lined up there.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. And also on a phone as well.

**ERIC ADDAE-** Exactly. It's optimised for mobile phones as well-- Android or iOS platform or Windows  
**KYEREMEH:** platform, and it will look something like this on there. So you can study anywhere that you've got access to an internet connection.

But increasingly, what we're finding is that some students don't have very good bandwidth in terms of internet connectivity. So we've got-- they can download these resources onto their own device for reading offline.

**KAREN FOLEY:** No. That's important, especially if you're going abroad. OK. Just a very brief mention, because we're in our last minute, Eric. Looking at assessments. So you've shown us where the TMAs are. What do we need to tell students about the fundamental differences and the importance of assessment at this level?

**JANE CULLEN:** Well, I think-- I mean, I think, one of the things is that assessment is, as Eric was saying, then, the standard assessment in the master's in education is three tutor marked assignments during the module and then an EMA, an end of module assessment. End of module assessment is not, for the master's in education, any kind of examination. It's a piece of writing.

So in other words, I think, with all of the assessment that they do at master's level, it is really

coming to terms with and increasingly investing in those critical skills and those research skills that they're developing.

**KAREN FOLEY:** No. Thank you very much, Jane. You're coming back to join us later because we're out of time. But I'd just also like to mention briefly that you might like to follow us on Twitter, which is @OUPGED, and there's also a Facebook group. And Zach and Lee can put the links to this in the chat as well. So do join that on Facebook.

We're going to have a quick video now which is about library for postgrad. But Jane and Eric, thank you very much. You'll be back later to explain a little bit more to us. And then we're going to come back and talk to Alison and Azumah about being a postgraduate student. So I'll see you in a couple of minutes.