

**KAREN FOLEY:** Hello, everybody, and welcome to the Student Hub Live faculty of Business and Law Freshers event. Well, it's wonderful to welcome so many of you here today. My name's Karen Foley, and I am a lecturer at the Open University. And the part of my job I love the most is being here at Student Hub Live, talking to all of our wonderful students.

So Student Hub Live, for those of you who don't know, is the Open University's online, live interactive platform to facilitate academic community. And we do lots of things for students. They're all optional and extracurricular and free, for you as OU students, and one of them is this Freshers event, but we've also been doing various induction events.

And on Saturday, Module Start Day, we'll be having some Adobe Connect workshops, including things like time management, and we also focus on some key skills throughout the academic year, like essay writing, critical thinking, and lots that you can get involved with. So do check out the website and make sure that if you enjoy this kind of thing, you come and connect with us as often as you would like to.

So we have a wonderful programme here today. And let me just explain briefly how this will all work. So lots of you are new, some are saying, oh, gosh I haven't studied in a long time. I have no idea what to expect, but then again I wasn't expecting to be studying right now.

So let me tell you what we've got in store. We're going to give you a welcome from some of the team from the Faculty of Business and Law. We're going to introduce W101. Then we're going to meet some students who are going to share their experiences about when they first started studying, so you can ask them questions and also share your experiences with everybody else in the chat also.

We're going to introduce B100, the first level business module. And then we're also going to introduce apprenticeships. So there's lots to get down to today, in terms of what we've got in line for you. But it's your chance to ask questions to my panel of guests and to each other.

Now, Grace is in the chat and Mychelle's going to come in the chat later, and we

have our lovely student ambassador Tyler who's also in the chat, so there are lots of people that answer your questions. And anything goes in that chat. You can talk about what you're studying and where you're studying, questions that you might like to ask.

And if you have questions, then we can raise those to our panel. We'll do our best to answer those in this session. But if we don't, because the chat can move fast, you can always email [studenthub@open.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@open.ac.uk) and we'll get back to you.

So speaking of the chat moving fast, there's a little pin button on the top right-hand side of the chat. If you'd like to pin the chat, you can scroll through at your leisure. Some people, though, say, hey, it's all a bit much, all this chats and widgets and video, et cetera. Just chill out and watch the video.

So there are different interfaces that you can use and this is your time. You choose how you want to make the most of it. So, like I say, it's going to be there on catch up afterwards, but if you'd like to make the most of talking to lots of other students now, then go for it.

So I think that's all I've got to tell you in terms of what we've got. Let me introduce you to some of the key members of our team. I'm joined by Mychelle Pride, who is our head of student experience in the Faculty of Business and Law. And she works with our student representatives, associate lecture representatives, and also academics. Her job is about making the student experience as good as it possibly can be. And, in addition to all of that, let me tell you that Mychelle is also an OU student, so she's got heaps of empathy for what we're all going through.

We've also got Simon Lavis here, who is a lecturer in law in the Faculty of Business and Law. And his role, alongside conducting research, is to work on several of our law modules, including W283, W340, and W350. And in addition to lecturing, Simon has also tutored on various undergraduate and postgraduate law modules, so he also really appreciates the tutor perspective. So do pop in any questions for him.

And we're also joined by the lovely Gareth Jones, who is the Faculty Association representative for Business and Law on behalf of the OU Students Association. And, in addition to doing that, Gareth is a law student and is starting his first Stage 3

module next week. So welcome everybody.

So, my first question to you, Simon, is what is so exciting about studying business and law at the OU right now?

**SIMON LAVIS:** Yeah, I think, well, if I think about studying-- come to study law at the OU, I think there are a couple of things I want to flag up as particularly exciting. One is the people that are involved in the programme. And in particular, I want to mention the tutors that you'll have because there are a wide variety of tutors on the law modules. And they have a lot of experience tutoring-- a lot of them at the OU and elsewhere, but also a lot of them are legal practitioners or use their legal qualifications in a whole range of different ways to practise the law and in related areas.

We'll study the law and also support the students. And so, you can really get a huge benefit from your tutor. They'll be sort of working, and they like to work in the legal field. You can perhaps ask some questions about what they do and think about maybe what you might like to do with your legal qualification when you come to the end of your study journey.

**KAREN FOLEY:** It's very exciting times right now, Simon, as well. And I'm just mindful that some people view law as rather sort of static. But law is so dynamic. What about what's happening in the world right now, things like coronavirus, Brexit, et cetera, that make law such an interesting subject?

**SIMON LAVIS:** Yeah, that's right. They have huge legal relevance. I mean my area-- one of my areas of teaching, constitutional law, is often considered to be a bit of a dry, slow-moving field. But if you look at the moment, we've got Brexit happening. That's a huge change to the Constitution. That's very interesting from a legal point of view.

And the coronavirus, with all of the legislation and guidance, the use of sweeping emergency laws to try and control the pandemic and keep people safe is a very interesting thing to study at the moment and a way to think about how law is used and how law can help or sometimes undermine, sort of, the benefit to society.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Absolutely. And the other thing I think that's so useful, in addition to the content, is the qualifications. Many students will study with a view to doing something very

focused at the end of that. But law is an excellent choice in terms of many other transferable skills.

**SIMON LAVIS:** Yeah, that's right. And some of those skills you mentioned just at the top of the programme about-- look on Student Hub Live-- are very, very prevalent within law. So you'll learn skills like critical thinking and problem solving, academic writing, research skills, and even toward the end of later modules, things like presenting orally to other people and collaborating with other people on projects. And all of those skills are really useful, whether you are thinking about becoming a lawyer or whether you're thinking about doing something else with your qualification afterwards.

**KAREN FOLEY:** And our students, later down the line, are going to find out some of the ingenious ways that you simulate some of those experiences for the Biz law students. There are some really exciting things lined up that you and colleagues have been working on.

Gareth, I wonder if we could consider this from a student perspective, as well? You're sort of studying. You're doing really well, starting Level 3 now. Why is law exciting, in your opinion?

**GARETH JONES:** I think for me, you just don't know where it's going to take you. As you've mentioned, the law is constantly changing at the moment, and I know from what Simon was just saying that I actually studied constitutional law as the whole prorogation was happening last year, going through the general election. And as you mentioned, I think some people would normally find that subject quite dry, but we're actually living what we were studying in the news every day, which is really interesting.

And also, the [INAUDIBLE] so you don't know where it's going to take you. And I think studying with the OU, we've got students based all around the country. And I know from when I first started W101 nearly three years ago, I've met friends from the very first group that we were in that I'm still friends with nowadays. And I don't think anyone would have expected when they start studying law that you're going to be attending a wedding 500 miles across the country between two OU students that luckily met that you moved in that same group. So I think expect the unexpected,

really, as you go along.

[LAUGHTER]

**KAREN FOLEY:** That's pretty-- well, Gareth, let's take a look because you and I are both in Wales, and I know there are lots of people in Wales right now. So let's see where everyone is in the country. People have been filling in our map, and we can see we've got lots of people in the UK and Ireland. I think we're up to over 200 people I'm in the chat right now, so not everyone's completed this.

But it's great to see colleagues in Europe, North America. Um, new ones over in Australasia, Asia, Africa, the Middle East. Don't worry, Mychelle, we can make up for that contingent and represent the southern hemisphere for everybody.

And we've also been asking people what they're most excited about, as well. Let's take a quick peek and see what our audience are saying in terms of their studies. So here we can see learning is the key thing, but also getting started, meeting people, making friends, finishing, meeting students, something new, community, gaining knowledge, environment, the future, business law, challenges, improving socialising, biscuits-- biscuits is very important, especially at Student Hub Life-- personal development, getting knowledge, and OU modules, the end, education, the future. So lots and lots of wonderful things there in terms of getting started.

But I wonder, Gareth, if you could sort of tell students about the way that things are designed, you know, because often we're really excited and stuff, but then we actually do this. What's been your experience of the way that the OU modules are structured?

**GARETH JONES:** I think, for me, I found them brilliant. So I was 10 years out of education before I started studying with the OU. I think I gave up halfway through my A-levels, so I only had GCSEs to my name. But, for me, W101 was amazing. I think it's built in such a way that it gradually builds intensity as you start off.

Every week is challenging, but it's challenging for where you are at that level. Before you know it, you'll be covering different areas like case law, constitutions, and you'll slowly realise how a snail in a bottle of ginger beer back in the 1920s has got so much relevance on the law that we do nowadays.

[LAUGHTER]

There's just so much to it and it builds intensity nicely as you go along.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Brilliant. Excellent. Well, I won't press you on that because it will spoil everyone's fun later on, but I bet those law students are, at some point, are going to have a little chuckle.

Mychelle, business-- I mean, we sort of talked about the coronavirus and various situations having a massive impact. I guess it's similar in Business. Things probably are changing more so in the last year of business than they have probably in a very long period of time. What's exciting about studying Business right now?

**MYCHELLE PRIDE:** You're absolutely right, Karen. The evolution that's happening right now-- we just think about return to work, not return to work. What's going to happen with all those commercial spaces? We look at where the money is moving. I mean, they always say follow the money, don't they?

So in the Business Studies, starting out with B100, you've got five different units. You look at business from different angles. And we've got that added layer of COVID-19 pandemic, which, of course, is horrendous for many people, but has absolutely changed the landscape for business. So it's a really exciting time to be considering the impact that it has on business.

And as the others have said, the people you will meet will be friends for life. You've got tutors who work in the real world, so they can bring stories to you in your sessions. So it's a really dynamic business school and it's a real opportunity now to study business and make a difference for yourself and for the world around you. Super-exciting, I think.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Brilliant. The other exciting thing, I think, is working in an organisation like the OU that's so dynamic is that our academics can get on stuff really quickly. How are people responding to some of the situations, including some of the stuff going on, in terms of the teaching materials?

**MYCHELLE PRIDE:** Well, absolutely, Karen. So we're very fortunate because we have a 50-year history of distance learning and then, of course, since the internet, we've been doing

distance learning teaching. So we're set up to go for students and people are coming to us to ask about how to do it. So we feel very lucky that we can provide students.

It takes two years to develop a module here for us, and so that means that it is set. It's solid. It's sound. And it's going to be a great experience for our students. I'm really excited about that.

And I can't remember the other question you asked me, Karen. I didn't have enough biscuits at lunch, obviously.

[LAUGHTER]

**KAREN FOLEY:** It was about how we're including things. I'm just mindful that we've had some colleagues who've had links in some places, going and building case studies for our students. And we have the most incredible connections.

**MYCHELLE PRIDE:** We do, and actually, during the pandemic, we had one of our lecturers go to some countries in Northern Africa, and she did some work there because it was, you know, just so interesting and so exciting but also so worthwhile. And she's been able to do that as an academic, as well. So, you're right-- there are lots of opportunities for how we can change our practises as human beings, really, and make it a better world.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Brilliant. That's wonderful. Now, some of our students have said that they're coming into study after a considerable period of time, and I think that's been the case for some of us, as well. And they might just be figuring out how to study at a distance, also. So if that's you, we've got heaps of advice in store for you, and we'll show you through all the ways. So please don't feel anxious about any of that.

So I'd like to talk about what students need to do to prepare for this study. But before we do that, stationery is something that often people view as excellent preparation. A good old online order or a trip to the stationer's to get things. And we'd like to know what your favourite stationery is at home, or whether, in fact, do you think that stationery is important in preparing for your studies? Mychelle, you think it's very important, don't you?

**MYCHELLE** Well, I've got my magic pen here, Karen. And this magic pen-- if I get stuck when I'm

**PRIDE:** writing, I pick that pen up and start making notes with it, which is really helpful. And then when I'm feeling particularly queen-like, I have a little jewelled pen here that I use.

So I think stationery is really important. It livens it up. It can be a bit dull sometimes, or it can get a bit samey, so you've got to have something fun to change it up when you're working, and stationery is the best way to do it.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Brilliant. Mychelle, we've just ordered some Student Hub Life stationery-- some notebooks and Post-It notes and things. I know, it's so exciting. So we're going to find out how we can get this out to people. So join our mailing list on the Student Hub Life website and we'll launch some sort of amazing competition and also let you know about future events that we've got that may be of interest to you, as well.

**MYCHELLE** That's so exciting, Karen.

**PRIDE:**

**KAREN FOLEY:** I know. It is so exciting. I've always wanted Student Hub Life sticky notes. So stationery-- we're going to get some feedback in terms of students at home. Mychelle, I don't if you can have a quick pop in on the chats or maybe Angela or Grace can let us know what students think in terms of stationery.

But while we do that, let's think about preparing to study. Gareth, the module website is one of those key things that students really, really need to sort of get to grips with. Tell us about the importance of the module website, and, in your opinion, what students really need to look out for.

**GARETH JONES:** The module website is really important. I think when you first start studying, it's very easy to get drawn into the material, go rushing off ahead of that, and actually not realise what's surrounding the material and all the helpful resources that you've got available.

I think, for me, there's two really important parts of the website. So, if I was any student at the moment, I would take a couple of hours out where you would normally think about studying before you start actually have a play around and see what you can find.



But, for me, probably the most important thing really into studying is actually the week to week planner. This is really important. It tells you exactly what you should be doing every week. It'll tell you when your assignments are coming up. And that can be updated as you go along, as well. It'll tell you what tutorials you booked on to for that week.

And then, on a personal level, and on the subject of stationery, as well, I also think finding the OU student shop is important. It's where you can get all your branded notebooks, get comfortable hoodies for when the nights get cold, as well. So I think it took me a while to find that, and as soon as I did, I think I spent quite a bit of money in there, but really comfortable in the end.

**KAREN FOLEY:** And you can also get a TOTUM card, which is the NUS card, where you can get 10% often of loads at different places, although the discounts do vary, including all your groceries at the Co-op in many different locations. But also, you can get it at some stationers as well, which is really super handy.

Nicholas says I love stationery. So does Meghan. Lauren says my whiteboard is my best friend. Jodi likes pastel highlighters. Yes, they are a cool thing indeed.

Amanda also loves stationery, and Meghan gets overexcited over pens. Well, you should definitely, then, send us your details to the Student Hub Live. Subscribe to our mailing list and we can hopefully get some of those out to you guys who like stationary.

So one of the things that's important in addition to the module website, and, of course, finding out those other links like the Open University Students Association, is booking onto tutorials. We talked a bit about this yesterday in our event, but you may like to catch up on where we showed the VLE, talked to online tutorials, and the OU Study app.

But, Simon, I wonder if you could sort of talk to us about how and when students need to think about studying and study spaces. It's often a very important thing. How much does it matter?

**SIMON LAVIS:** Yeah, I think it doesn't matter too much, you know, where your study space is. I think the important thing, and a good thing to think about before you start is, sort of,

what will work for you, in terms of studying. So is there somewhere that's a bit quiet that you can dedicate to studying that's tidy or that's set up how you like it? You've got everything you need there, including your stationery. To combine the stationery and the OU-branded things theme, I've got my OU pen, which is always sort of on my desk here so I can make the notes I need to.

Yeah, and so somewhere that suits you to study that's sort of free from distractions, where people around you know that you'll be studying at certain times. And you can say to them-- they can encourage you to go and study and then they also know not to sort of bother you when you're trying to concentrate on your studies.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Can we have a look at some study spaces? I think the three of you have sent us some pictures of your study spaces. Whose is this?

**GARETH JONES:** So this is my one.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Very organised, Gareth.

**GARETH JONES:** I'm comfortable.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yes, very comfortable.

**GARETH JONES:** I could spend enough at this desk.

**KAREN FOLEY:** And whose is this?

**SIMON LAVIS:** This is my high-tech-- this is my study space. Yeah, I think it is actually a drop-down desk, so it's quite a flexible space. It's actually in our spare room, so it sometimes needs to be used for other things. It doesn't have to be, sort of, a huge desk or a huge space. And I do all my work-- almost all my work-- here.

But, yeah, it's part of quite a sort of flexible space I work on within our house. So I have to keep it tidy for that reason, not because I'm incredibly tidy.

[LAUGHTER]

**KAREN FOLEY:** And one of the benefits of studying online is that you don't need a huge space. Normally, this is full of papers here in my office because I love piles of paper, which is a dreadful habit to get into. But Simon, it's good to see you all working neat and

nice.

Marianne has a sloth pen, which sounds very interesting. I'd love to see a picture of that. Howard says stationery is so amazing. Could we have an academic planner for the OU, please? Well, that's something that certainly we can look into.

The other space, as well. We've got our final study space. Mychelle, I think this is yours.

**MYCHELLE  
PRIDE:**

Indeed, that is Gary, my co-author, just warming up the keyboard.

[LAUGHTER]

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yes, cats on keyboards are not always the best thing. I tend to find that they hinder rather than they help, very often. So that's not so good.

OK, now we've been talking to people about what they might feel nervous and worried about, and we're going to show you your responses to our word cloud about what you're most worried about right now. So many of the students do sort of express various different concerns. Let's take a look to see what they had to say about that.

So key things here are failing and times and exams and falling behind, writing too much, struggling, missing deadlines. Oh, I'm not feeling good enough, motivating myself, juggling work and kids, not writing well, education, poor grades, being isolated, technology, work-life balance, work-life study, a new way of learning, time management, biscuits and weight-- yes those are important considerations, also. Slightly less so, but there's lots of stuff coming up here, as well.

We at Student Hub Life do help with a lot of things like essay writing, time management, critical thinking, et cetera. But some of these concerns are so real. I wonder, Mychelle, what you have to say about things that you think maybe students don't need to worry about?

**MYCHELLE  
PRIDE:**

Well, I think students quite often we hear, am I good enough? Am I going to be able to pass? Am I too old? Am I too young?

But I've got a little trick here. This is a worry monster. And what you can do is you can get online or in a shop, and they have a little zipper, and you can put your worries in the mouth and then put it under your bed. And then when you wake up in the morning, the worries are gone.

So I think what my key is here is that no worry is too big, and you can overcome your worries. Ask your tutor, ask student support team, just contact anyone. Ask your friends and family.

There's so many people who are willing and want to be successful. And I just think that worries are good because they motivate you and inspire you, but don't let them consume you. Get help as soon as you can.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Brilliant. Gareth, what would you say about not worrying?

**GARETH JONES:** I think the most important thing is not to worry about anyone other than yourselves.

I think a lot of people will be part of social media or even notions from somewhere else. And you'll very often see students say, I'm on Week 6 already, when you're supposed to be on Week 1, or you completed TMAs two months ahead.

What they're doing really doesn't matter to you at all, I think. As long as you're looking after yourself, keeping up to date on your own studies, it really doesn't matter what they're doing. It's your own journey at the end of the day. As long as you get to the end, that's all that matters.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Brilliant. That's absolutely wonderful. Now, we're really, really over on time. Simon, I wonder if you could just in a super-fast way explain some of the ways that people can connect, and we'll put all of these links in the chat and Grace is going to put them all in there, as well. But tell us about some of the ways that students can connect with the faculty.

**SIMON LAVIS:** Yes, so there are lots of different ways. I think I'd look out for events from within the faculty. There are digital coffee mornings in the faculty. There's a welcome cafe on the Business qualification website. There's a law-wide forum on the LOB qualification website. You can meet and discuss with other students.

And there are some Facebook Live events and things like that, as well. As well as these Student Hub Live events, of course. And then the modules themselves have

the welcome forums for all students on the module. A lot of them at the start of the module where you can meet other students who may be in a similar position to you.

And also, as you get going then, your tutor group forum is a really good way to talk with your tutors and other students who are studying the module you're studying and may be in a similar position to you and can sort of support you and talk to you about how are you getting on and things like that. So there are lots of different ways to keep in contact with the University and with other students.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Brilliant. That's absolutely wonderful. So keep a note of those. You'll often get newsfeeds on your module website, your qualifications website, et cetera. But the key point is there's lots of vibrant, thriving things that are happening throughout the academic year, so make the most of those if you can.

Rebecca says that she was feeling all of those concerns that people said, and Sharon says Artie wants an OU study monster. Yes, so they are-- in fact, I've got mine somewhere down-- the dog had it before. Mychelle sent me a worry monster, as well, so I have one too. They're super helpful and cuddly.

And Hera says that's such a good idea. Her family used to want a worry jar, so that's a wonderful thing to do, as well. So everyone can get their worry monster or just a worry jar or something to put their worries in, which, actually, is really, really therapeutic in itself.

So I hope that that's filled you with some sense that we're not alone. Many people have the same concerns. But as Gareth has shown us, yeah, you know people do get to the end feeling super-happy and confident, meeting other people along the way. And there is loads that you can get involved with if you would like to at the Open University.

So we're going to show you a quick video now. We're going to talk about [INAUDIBLE] which is a video called "I Wish I Had Known." And Gareth Jones, which is about comparing yourself to others. And we'll be back for the next session, where we're going to introduce 101.

If it's not a subject you're choosing, do stay tuned with us and enjoy chatting to other people. And who knows, you may be a convert to law after watching our next

session. Stay tuned and see you in a minute.

[MUSIC PLAYING]