

KAREN FOLEY: Welcome back to Student Hub Live. Well, I hope you're all having a wonderful morning. We've got new people joining us as the day progresses. So a very, very warm welcome to you all. We've covered a lot so far.

But now we're going to take a look at one thing that is really, really important, which is the tutorials, the online rooms that The Open University use. And I'm joined by Zoe Gibson, who is a Senior Product Development Manager in our Learning Experience and Technology team at The Open University. And she is responsible for the online rooms, which deliver a huge amount of, what we call, learning events at The Open University.

Welcome, Zoe. You're looking very snug at home today, I must say. (LAUGHS)

ZOE GIBSON: Hi, morning.

KAREN FOLEY: Hi. So Zoe, people are talking about tutorials. How many can we go to? Why should students go to tutorials?

ZOE GIBSON: Okay, so the first thing I want to say is you may have noticed that I'm wearing a dressing gown at the moment. And the reason for that is I wanted to show you for comedy value more than anything, why not? It's like, you can go to your tutorials if you've just got out of bed. It might be that it's late at night and you're getting ready for bed. Or it could be that maybe you've rushed back from work and you've grabbed your cup of whatever drink you have.

The point is, that going to tutorials is really, really important. It's a great way for you to meet your tutors and the students that are on your courses. And for me, that's really important. It's about you making those contacts with people because you are studying online. So it's great for you to be face-to-face in an online environment.

Maybe you put your webcams on, depending on the situation. Or if you are in your dressing gown, don't put your webcam on because you don't have to. And just join your tutorial and feel like you're a part of your learning journey. And share your experiences with other students on your module.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. So many students have come to tutorials and say, can anybody see me? Or I've got the kids in the background and all hell's breaking loose. The animals are chasing each other around the kitchen. But as you say, you don't need to put your webcam on. You don't need to put your microphone on. So when you go into that room, nobody can see or hear you. They look a little bit different to what they look like here. But they are really lovely spaces and you can control what people see.

So we've been asking people whether or not they've been into tutorials. Most of them, eighty-three percent, have said, no, they haven't so far. That's because we've got a brand new cohort of students here. Those of you who have, might like to share with others what it is like. But let's take a look, Zoe, at what people might expect, then, when they go to a tutorial. So we've got a slide that shows a little bit about what things may look like on the computer.

ZOE GIBSON: Sure. Okay, so you can access your online tutorials either on a computer or a mobile device. The key point here is that we really want you to participate. We want you to

feel like you can join in. So if that's on your smartphone or a tablet, iPad, or a computer, that's fine.

So as Karen has said, this first slide shows you what it looks like on a computer. And then the next slide shows you that there isn't actually much difference in terms of the mobile experience and the computer. So both of those slides, they show you some content that's being shared. There's usually going to be a PowerPoint or a PDF presentation that the tutors may show. They may have their webcam on to talk to you.

There'll be a text chat pod so you can always interact through that. And there's an attendee pod so you can see who else is in the room with you. There may be other things like poll pods, or they may share their screen to show you something on a module website, for example. And we do ask that you put your mic on and mute it throughout.

Obviously, we understand that that's not for everybody. And it might not be convenient. You might have a very busy household and there's no way you can switch your mic on. But if you can and you can interact just to say hi to your tutor, make them feel like they're not just talking to an empty space, that's great.

And I'm sure other people will be feeling less confident about speaking. So if anyone can break the ice and do that first, that's really great. But you can go with a computer or a mobile device.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, we've asked people at home whether they've got headsets or microphones. Eighty-nine percent say yes, they do have one, which is absolutely wonderful. But as you say, Zoe, it's about breaking the ice and talking. And I think one of the things that people worry about when they're going to tutorials is, they think, I'm going to be quizzed. I haven't read everything. I don't understand everything. And that's exactly why you should go to a tutorial, isn't it?

ZOE GIBSON: Absolutely, absolutely. So I can guarantee that most people are feeling the same when they go to their tutorials. As I said, you don't have to put your webcam on. So nobody needs to see you. If you really can't put your mic on, don't worry. If you do want to use your mic, we do still recommend a headset, so like the one I'm wearing now with an integrated microphone. But you could also use your mobile device and the earphones that come with your mobile device.

So there are plenty of ways. It's also possible that on a mobile device you may be able to use your integrated speaker and mic. Now, the reason we ask for a headset is because we like to cut down on the background noise. So there may be a variety of people coming to the tutorial that may be hard of hearing or they struggle to take in auditory instructions. So they need to listen more clearly. Or it could be that English isn't their first language.

So being able to cut out some of the background noise in your own environment is really important, not only for you so you get a better experience and can hear what your tutor's saying and your fellow students, but also, others can hear properly. But I can't stress enough. Go into your tutorials. It's really beneficial for you and your fellow students. And you'll get a lot out of it.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Thank you, Zoe. HJ, speaking of microphones is your microphone working yet?

HJ: I hope it is working because there's so much going on in the chat.

KAREN FOLEY: You've got to stop muting it.

HJ: I know.

KAREN FOLEY: Stop muting it.

HJ: I'm terrible at that. That's the only problem with having a headset.

KAREN FOLEY: What's going on? And do we have any questions about tutorials that Zoe can help with?

HJ: Yes, we do. So we're all doing well in the chat. I must say earlier that we said you can't break the VLE. But it seems Max and Fiona took that as a challenge. So if anything goes wrong, it's down to them.

(LAUGHS)

KAREN FOLEY: They're still tabbing?

HJ: But there was a question about whether or not we should book all our tutorials at once or as we go along.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, that is a very good question. Zoe, well, firstly, can you show us where the tutorial timetable is and also, then, what should students do?

ZOE GIBSON: Yeah, that's a really good question, actually. So to book on your tutorials, you need to go to Student home. And on Student home, under your Modules, there's a Book your tutorials. If you click on that link, it will give you a little tab for each one of your modules that you're on. So select the module. And then there will be a list of events that you can go to.

When you go into each one of those types of events, so just to explain what I mean by that. So for example, your first tutorial might be an introduction to your module with your tutor. And when you click on that, you may get several options because what we try to do is, where possible, we do try to give people the choice of dates and times so that if you want to attend live, that you can do so. So select the one that you feel best suits your personal calendar. When you select that and you book onto it, what that does is that information is then pulled into your module website.

So Tammy talked to you about the tutorials tab on the module website. That will be empty. It's not populated when you first go to your module website. There is a prompt to go and manage your bookings and book on tutorials. When you have done that via Student home and the booking system, the ones that you have booked on will then get pulled onto the tutorials page on your module website.

Then they also get pulled into your study planner. And as Tammy talked about, where you can export the dates, you could then export the dates to your personal calendar so that there is a reminder and you know when those tutorials are coming up. On the module website, you always go to the module website to access your tutorials. Again, that's where the rooms for your tutorials are. And by booking on your tutorials, you get a link to the correct room.

So you don't actually need to think of anything else, apart from I've booked on my tutorials. I have a list of them on my tutorials page. And I need to go here. And I get given the link. And I go there when it's the date and time of my tutorial.

So to answer the specific question because there was one, wasn't there, about whether we should book on all of them, that's really personal preference, I think. The option is there for you to book on all of them in advance. So, if you want to be organised and you know the ones that you want to go to, then why not? There's nothing to stop you doing that.

If you decide later on in a few weeks or months time, as it may be, that actually your life has changed. You can't actually make it. You can do one of two things. You can go and you could just cancel it because maybe it's not for you right now. Or what you can do, is go and have another look at the other dates and times that are available and see if there's one that fits your calendar better. And you can cancel one and you can re-book on another one. We give you the option all the way through your module. That's never blocked, okay?

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. That's wonderful, Zoe. We just need to wrap up. I wonder if we could just very quickly show that last slide, which shows all of the bookings that are there, while I just ask one very final question, which is, if you haven't booked on a tutorial, can you still go?

ZOE GIBSON: Yes, you can. So on the tutorials page, what you're seeing now is if you have booked on your tutorials, then you'll get a list of everything that you've booked on. Underneath that table, there are the links to the other types of online rooms. Now, if you haven't booked and you know which room you need to go to, then you can access the room still. And you can join in. There may be sound reasons why you've not been able to book. And we would never want to stop anybody from accessing their tutorials.

So again, that's a really good question, Karen. But obviously, if you book, it means that you have your sign posting. It also means that the tutor knows who's coming to their tutorial. And it may help them plan a little bit better.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Zoe, thank you so much. That has been absolutely wonderful and really, really, super helpful. And I hope you've enjoyed that at home. At Student Hub Live, we also do workshops in Adobe Connect, which is the online tutorial rooms Zoe has been showing you. And we have some on module start day, where we'll also be introducing you to the VLE. So it's a great opportunity to come along.

Now, for those you need to book because spaces are limited. So check out the Student Hub Live website for more details and to book your space on those workshops on Saturday. So we're going to take another short video break. And then we're going to look at the OU Study app. So stay tuned. And I'll join you in just a minute.