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**KAREN FOLEY:** Hello, and welcome back to Student Connections. Well, we have a Q&A session. We have lots and lots and lots of questions. And here in the studio, I have three people who I'm very much hoping can answer them.

So I would like to welcome Katy, Carol, and Caroline. Thank you for joining us today. We've got lots of new students out there and lots of existing ones. So we're going to refresh our widgets. These are our interactive things that you can click on and let us know what you're thinking.

I'd like to know how you're feeling right now. Very conscious there's been a lot to talk of jelly beans, so I think you might be feeling a bit hungry. You might need a bit of a sugar boost. I've certainly given these two their Mueslix bars to keep going.

So let us know how you're feeling right now. Before we did this, and people were quite nervous, and especially the new students. So welcome. This is a really nice, happy space. And please do chat.

Meet each other in the Chat Box. There's no such thing as a silly question, remember. And whilst we're talking on topic, there's no harm in going off topic, meeting other people, and talking about other things, such as jelly beans.

So that's all cool. So please fill those in, and we're going to show those in a minute, when we've captured some data from them. OK. So HJ and Rachel, lots and lots of questions then, and we're going to do a quick fire around here. So can you let us know what questions you've had, either on the email or chat, and we will try and answer them.

**HJ:** Yeah, well, apart from the discussion about jelly beans and favourite flavours, which I don't know mine. There's too many to choose from. But one of the questions is introducing the Social Sciences. The best module to start with for forensic psychology. It's a very good module, and it covers a lot. So we want to know, in terms of specialising, where that takes people.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Absolutely. So where might people go if they're interested in pathways. Who might they then

talk to about which module might suit them best, be it this module, or just any sorts of module. Where do they go if they want advice?

**CAROL:** That would probably be us in the student support team, which is based in Cambridge. We offer qualification planning and course choice advice. So it would probably be us that they would come to. And they'll find our details if they have a look on the student homepage. It will say contact your student support team, and we would be able to help them with that.

Currently, it's a bit difficult, though. Because with forensic psychology, the pathway is quite structured. So at level one, there isn't actually much of a choice, or any choice. And the starting point would DD102, which is the introduction to the social sciences.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Perfect. Thank you, Carol. I should probably also get my panel to introduce themselves in terms of what they do, so that we can see where is relevant. Because this is one of two Q&As. Katy, could you tell our audience a little bit about what you do?

**KATY:** Yes. I'm Katy Smith. I'm a senior faculty manager, and I work with the tutors to organise the delivery of the tuition that the students will receive, and I'm a tutor myself.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Wonderful. Thank you. And of course, Carol, you act as an advisor, don't you?

**CAROL:** Yes. I'm an advisor in the student support team, and basically, we help students with everything that the tutor doesn't. So we work alongside the tutor, but our aim is to support the student through their studies.

**KAREN FOLEY:** So anything other than academic issues, somebody might speak to somebody like you, and they can speak to you or email?

**CAROL:** Yes, yes. There is an email address, which will be on students' home pages, as well as the telephone number. But yes. We can help with anything. So if students are worried about the level that they're studying, if they've got any health issues, if they happen to suffer a bereavement, or anything along-- through their studies, then they would come through to us.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. And Caroline.

**CAROLINE:** I'm Caroline Kelly. I'm the academic lead in the student support team. So I'm based partly in Cambridge, working with colleagues like Carol on the advisory team, and partly here in Milton Keynes, connecting up with colleagues in the psychology department. So I'm the person who

works between those two different areas.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Wonderful. Thank you very much. That was very useful. OK. HJ and Rachel.

**HJ:** Yeah. We got questions via email. Let's also remember connections@open.ac.uk. And one great question is from Sue, who had to defer from psychology last year, and she's going back to DD210, and she feels a bit daunted. Now, everyone has those times when they struggle with modules, and I had to drop out a module as well. So it's not something that's very rare indeed. So any advice for getting back into it and getting psyched up and starting on a good foot there?

**KATY:** I think as a teacher, I'd probably say to contact your tutor and just let them know that that's on your mind and you're a bit worried, and they'll help you to work through the difficult points. And if there's a problem, they'll help to work through it with you. Just bring that encouragement back up.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yeah, absolutely. So being mindful of where you're at with it, and expanding that.

**KATY:** Yeah, just let your tutor know that you're a bit concerned about previous things that might have affect your progress.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Is it something that you get then, Carol, with students phoning up and wanting to defer? Do they tend to just go away and hide and go, oh, it will get better, or do they phone you? What are some of those sorts of intervention points that are useful for people? Do they defer when it's really a crisis point? Is there something that maybe could be done earlier if people are noticing some warning signs?

**CAROL:** I think you will find-- or students will find that throughout their studies, they are sent what we've called interventions. So we pick up on when people aren't engaging a module, and saying, if there is a problem, please do get in touch. And I would encourage students to do that sooner rather than later, because there's an awful lot of things we can put in place to help students.

We can ask tutors to give additional support sessions. We can ask tutors to do generic study skills and things like that. So it's just important that students do contact us as soon as possible if they think there's a problem. And we are all human. We do-- don't worry about it. Yes, we know that life happens.

**KAREN FOLEY:** It is one of those things, isn't it? And I guess, Caroline, you sort of mentioned that you're both

an academic lead, and you do a lot of psychology. And there's a lot of psychological aspects behind a lot of this, isn't there, in terms of acknowledging things and maybe doing something about them.

What have been your observations of things that students maybe experience? I mean, my own experience is that students sometimes think that I'm the only person that this is happening to. And I guess you're overseeing a lot of it. How common is this sort of thing, and what happens?

**CAROLINE:** I think it's very common. I am a teacher as well, so I can see it with my own students as well. And that sometimes I think everything just comes on top of you, and it's partly about just keeping calm, giving it time management, planning your studies, planning your time.

But as Katy said, I think, really, if you start to feel that you're struggling, talk to your tutor. And you may also get support from other students in a group. But actually, if you talk to your tutor early, do that. As soon as you feel that you're struggling. Don't wait.

Have the conversation, so that you can talk about strategies to deal with it. And sometimes there are things that you can do, in terms of your assignment that's coming up. If you're doing more than one module, you may be having to choose which to prioritise at any particular point. But again, your tutor can help you to do that.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. Perfect. Well, I'd like to go back to that word cloud I asked you to fill in earlier and see how that's all looking because we've got a lot of things there. You're all excited, happy-- oh, that's good. Blissful. What a wonderful word.

Jelly beans. Jelly beans, jelly beans. [LAUGHS] Excellent. Oh, well, that's good. A lot of positive energies. That's great. And I know you've got a stack of questions. So what's the next one?

**RACHEL:** Sorry, just having to reply. It's all going off. OK. So Natasha wanted to know whether introducing the social sciences, whether that would be the best modules to start with for a forensic psychology pathway.

**CAROL:** Yes. That is-- that is the starting point for that.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

[LAUGHTER]

- CAROLINE:** It's a very broad-based introductory module. In that sense, it provides a very good starting point.
- KAREN FOLEY:** In fact, that's probably worth just mentioning, like you're saying, a lot of these introductory level ones are quite broad, and they will include a lot of different aspects from the social sciences, don't they? So they're a nice starting point. And the one other thing that is a good benefit of those is that sometimes you don't always think you might want to do something. So there's that little flexibility to think, oh, maybe I didn't like that bit more or less or whatever. And you can go on different pathways.
- CAROLINE:** Yeah, definitely. I mean, they do draw on different disciplines on social sciences, and there are bound to be some bits you like more than other bits. And sometimes you can be surprised. You think, well, I didn't think I liked that, but actually, I'm finding it quite interesting. So it's good to be open minded with those level one courses.
- KAREN FOLEY:** That's a good foundation. Because as Eddie and Alan were saying before, you can get to level three or postgraduate and look at something very specifically. But often are so and so related. There are so many factors going on. So it's important that it's structured that way, isn't it? Excellent. What's next?
- RACHEL:** We have a question here about industrial and organisational psychology. A student wants to know, what would be the best way forward for that with OU modules.
- CAROLINE:** I would say if you're interested in those areas, that probably your best bet to begin with is to do a psychology degree, our QR7 psychology degree, and then to move on to those areas in postgraduate work. So you can do postgraduate courses in industrial organisational psychology, but you will probably have to have a BBS accredited degree first.
- KAREN FOLEY:** OK. Perfect. Excellent. There are loads of questions. And welcome to all the new people who are logging in. We are having a Q&A session here at Student Connections, and we're answering all your questions. HJ, what else have we got?
- HJ:** Well, as you said, there's loads of new students. A lot of people starting DD102. It's a fantastic module. A lot of people want to just know if you could give us a general idea, for those who are just about start, what you get with DD102, what type of things that you can cover. People are really gearing to go and wanting to know.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Who'd like to answer that? Everyone?

[LAUGHTER]

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

**CAROLINE:** OK, I'll start by saying that actually, the DD102, this module, sits outside of our psychology SSD, although that's a starting point for many of our students. But it will give students a grounding in a number of social science disciplines that we have here at the OU. So Economics, sociology, social policy, criminology, some psychology. And we'll introduce students to all of those different areas and show some connections between those different areas. So I think it will give them a very good starting point.

**KATY:** Yeah. And the benefit of doing a module like DD102 is it gives you experience of how the OU process works. So it brings in a lot of different activities and things that all of the other modules will have. So you'll pick up a lot of expertise in different areas as you move along in how to study.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yeah. That's a brilliant point, actually. Because the one other thing, apart from having all of that content, is the skills. And these modules are so well constructed that they take you through that process, how we actually look at knowledge, what constitutes it, referencing, essay writing. All of these skills are interwoven into that content. So it's a really nice way of both studying things as a social scientist, as well as thinking about some of the issues that are surrounding the area.

**CAROL:** It's also a really good preparatory module for any area in the social sciences that you want to specialise in. And as Katy said, the purpose of the introduction module is as such. It's not only to introduce you to the disciplines, but also to the university. And as such, that particular module, whilst it counts towards a degree, it doesn't count towards a classification. So you've got the opportunity to build up your skills when working with the university, so that you're on the right level when you come to the different modules.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Wonderful. Thank you. Rachel.

**RACHEL:** Saïd has just asked about modules leading to educational psychology at the OU. Don't know if you guys could answer that question.

**CAROLINE:** OK. Well, it's a bit like the answer to the organisational psychology, actually, because we don't offer modules here in educational psychology, as such. But if you want to go in that direction and be an educational psychologist, then you will need to have a BPS accredited degree first, before you specialise in that area. So again, I would say that our psychology degree is an excellent starting point before you specialise at postgraduate level.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Specialize. Absolutely.

and if you are particularly interested in educational psychology, then the Q07 psychology degree does have two developmental modules that you could choose. So you could actually start with E102, which is an introduction to childhood and child psychology. And then there's E219, which could follow on from that.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Brilliant. Excellent. Thank you. HJ?

**HJ:** Well, we've got a lot of praise for the support at the OU, which is fantastic. And a lot of praise for how accessible and all the different ways that we can get into contact if we want to ask about modules and different pathways and things like that. But some people are wondering what are all the different ways that you can get in touch with you guys if they need support or help with the OU?

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yeah. So we've got lots of students logging in. It seems to be a popular-- what time is it? It seems to be very popular. Is everyone getting up or something? But yeah. So we've mentioned some ways of getting in touch before. But Carol, can you just briefly explain how students can get in touch and who it's most appropriate to get in touch with?

**CAROL:** Yes, of course. If you've got a question with your actual module, or an issue with the module that you're studying academically, then it's your tutor. They're your first port of call. If you've got any other issues, or support tissues, accessibility, you want to talk about disability, you want to talk about health issues, things that have been happening to you that might be affecting your studies or additional skills, then you contact your student support team.

And that number that is on your student homepage. The email address is also on your student homepage. So you can actually contact us by those two means, if that's what you wanted to do.

**KAREN FOLEY:** And as a tutor, Katy, what would you do if someone did the wrong thing, or someone sent you

something, as a tutor, that should have been sent to somewhere else. What do you do?

**KATY:** Well, it would depend. I don't get mortally offended, no. It rarely happens, actually, but sometimes people send you something that's a rough draft or something that they should have sent you a final copy. But we tutors, we've seen it all before. And it won't put a black mark against the student's name, no. We'll just gloss over it and move on.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yeah, absolutely.

**CAROL:** I think the thing is as well that we work really closely as a team. We've really done a lot to build up a support team in Cambridge. And so we do actually interact with each other, yes.

**KAREN FOLEY:** But don't worry if you send it to the wrong place, it'll eventually end up in the right place. So if you end up asking your tutor something, and they say, oh, you should speak to someone, just ask. Just get in touch. Because being silent and on your own is never a good thing. Some people have been asking about joining the BPS, which is obviously-- you've mentioned BPS accredited. Can you tell us, Caroline, about that?

**CAROLINE:** Well, as a student on one of our faculty qualifications, you can actually join the BPS as a student member. And I'd certainly advise people to do that, because it gives you access to all the interesting events, and you can connect with other students and other people doing psychology.

**KAREN FOLEY:** And their magazine's quite good as well.

**CAROLINE:** Their magazine's very good. Yes.

**KAREN FOLEY:** And yeah. Lots of, like I say, events and students and things. That's good. So they just go onto the BPS, British Psychological Society website. So I guess you could just Google that. We'll try and chuck a link up on the resources page for that later, as well.

And a lot of people are asking some very specific questions as well, and I don't know whether any of you have the time later to either stay here and talk online, maybe for 10 minutes after the session, to see if we can answer any of those. And also, don't forget that if you do have something specific, because I know there are so many questions that we don't have time to cover, you can either get in touch in one of these ways and ask somebody, or if you want to email us, we will do our best to get back to you personally about that. And you can do that at [connections@open.ac.uk](mailto:connections@open.ac.uk).



So if there are those specific questions, we will take a couple of those that are more generic coming through, then do do that, and we'll get in touch with you. HJ and Rachel, what other questions can we try and answer in the last four minutes?

**HJ:** Yeah, there's some questions then for careers for social sciences, because it's a very broad subject area. So if you want information about careers or social sciences, or if there's any good careers you think a lot of social science students go into, we on the chat want to know about it.

**CAROL:** Well, the Open University has a very good careers website, and I would suggest anybody have a look at that and explore that. If it's a career in psychology that you're interested in, then once again, I would suggest that you go to the BPS website. I think it's [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk). And then also, we in the support team recommend that students or inquirers actually have a look at prospects, which is [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk). There's an awful lot of careers information on all of those sites that would be helpful.

**KAREN FOLEY:** And we also had a session yesterday that you can watch on the catch up, from the careers advisory service. And they outline all the sorts of various support that they can offer you in addition to that. And I'd like you just go back to that other widget that we said before, where we were asking what level people are studying, and mentioning we had lots of new students. Could we show that, please, to see where we're all at.

So lots of level one students. 69% of level one, eight percent level two, and 23 at level three. So it's great to see both the level three students welcoming all the new students, and also new students coming along and enjoying a conference such as this. Right. I think we've got time for a couple more questions, HJ and Rachel.

**HJ:** Aside from careers, which has begun to get very popular at the moment, there do seem to be questions about what happens after the degree, in terms of some options that there may be. We talked earlier about postgraduate stuff, but some people are still interested in knowing what the OU has to offer, if there's anything new coming up, as well.

**CAROLINE:** Well, we do have a new post-graduate programme coming up. We will have an MSC in psychology and an MSC in forensic psychology. So it'd certainly be great if lots of people are interested in joining up for those modules. And that programme will start next year, actually. And the autumn of 2016 will be the first presentation of those modules. So that's quite exciting

for us.

**KAREN FOLEY:** And if you've just logged on, because we're aware a lot of people have, we had a session a little earlier today that'll be available from tomorrow on the catch up, where we were talking specifically about those and what it involves, et cetera. So please do check that out. Did you want to say anything about the--

**KATY:** No.

**KAREN FOLEY:** No, no. Fine, let's try and get some more questions in there while we can.

**HJ:** Sorry. I'm just looking through chat. It's going quite quickly today. [LAUGHS]

**KAREN FOLEY:** And there's one thing I should mention, actually. When it gets very busy, don't forget-- well, I haven't explained, to be fair-- but there are different ways that you can actually use the interface. So if you're finding the chat's getting quite small, if you look-- I think it's the bottom right hand corner, you'll see different screen layouts, so that you can either have the chat bigger, or the video smaller, et cetera.

So there are different ways of viewing in that interface. And you can also pin the chat. So if you want to scroll down and look at something, or if it's going a but fast, you can do that and move it manually, so that you can then engage with that conversation at a pace that suits you. Right. Other questions?

**HJ:** One question was, when deciding modules, it can sometimes be difficult to try and work out how much you can take on, and someone's looking at doing two level three modules at the same time. Very brave. So are there any tips for being able to juggle that? Any strategies or anything to think about before you register on two modules at the same time?

[INAUDIBLE]

**KATY:** We would discourage. [LAUGHS]

**CAROL:** It's not something that we would recommend, especially if you're wanting to go into a psychology career, because the results from your level three modules are crucial to the classification of your degree. And if you're going to a provider, they're not going to say, how long did it take you to get your degree, they're more interested in the classification that you've achieved. So it's worthwhile taking that extra year and making sure that you get good marks,

rather than jeopardising your level three modules.

**CAROLINE:** I suppose I would say, if you do have to do it, and you do the two at once, the first thing I would look at is the assignment deadlines, and make sure you're looking at your diary and getting those clearly plotted in your diary and thinking about how you're going to manage time.

**KATY:** Yeah. Certainly towards the back end of both modules, when you've got an exam for both of them coming up, or reports to write, it can get quite busy. So it's definitely worth-- if you have to do that-- to plan it.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. Well, we've had loads of questions. Thank you for staying on for a little bit. And don't forget that if you do have any questions that we haven't had time to cover, email us and we will make sure that we get back to you.

But thank you very much Caroline, Carol, and Katy, for coming and talking today. It's been great. And great to see so many new students. I hope we've answered some of your questions.

But we do have a session later with Georgina Blakeley and two associate lecturers, where hopefully we can answer even more questions. So do hang on for that. But we're going to have a short break now. And we'll be back in about five minutes.

[MUSIC PLAYING]