

KAREN FOLEY: The Arts Hub was an online interactive event. And you're about to watch a session from that. But I wanted to explain to you how it all worked. You're about to see the video stream of the studio. But our audience participated online through chat and through interactive widgets. And those ideas were fed through into the studio from the social media desk. Of course because you're watching it on catch up, you won't be able to do those activities, but I do hope that you enjoy the discussion that follows.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Hi and welcome back to the Arts Hub. Well this is the final of our live sessions, and our first day of programming on the 10th of June. So for those of you who are watching in real time and for those of you who have recently popped in, welcome. This is an online interactive event. People can pop in and out as they go. And you can either choose to watch the watch and engage button, where you can see the chat as well as the widgets and participate if you would like to, but not essential, or you can just watch the live stream as well.

So in this final session, we're going to be talking about careers and employability, a very, very topical issue, in particular I think for the arts. And we were talking earlier about how important this whole idea was, that art students actually often underestimate some of the critical skills that they develop. So I welcome Siobhan Flint. Hi, welcome, thank you. And Siobhan, for those of you who are watching earlier, was in our previous session about studying the arts.

But I'd like to talk specifically, Siobhan, about careers and what the careers and employability service can actually do for arts and social sciences students. And I'd also like to welcome Fiona and Julie who are in the chats. So if you've got any specific questions, do ask them in the chat box, and they will be able to help you with those. Lovely.

So what are the key messages to students then in terms of what you tell them to do? We've got a lot of level one students, a lot of level two. When should they be starting to think about planning things?

SIOBHAN FLINT: I think the key message really is as early as possible to start your career planning to allow yourself time to do your research, explore different career ideas and options that you have, identify what those possibilities are, perhaps then arrange work experience or shadowing and

so on to gain some experience. And that over time will help you move to your career planning cycle if you like to get to the end point in terms of what you want to do next, whether that be further study or going into a particular career area. So it's really key to start looking as soon as possible. And we have loads of resources to help students with that.

KAREN FOLEY: Great. Now we've been asking students during the day, we've been using these interactive tools, these widgets. And we've been asking them about whether or not they've chosen the next module and what factors are important. And I'd like to show those a little bit later in the session to see how we're doing on that.

But there's also this idea I think with the arts-- and particularly we've heard from some of our students that have said, well I've started, and I'm just sort of seeing, I'm not really sure what to do. This idea of employability and careers seems to sort of indicate that you've got an idea about what you might want to do. But a lot of students are telling us that they don't. So what they do?

SIOBHAN FLINT: That's fine. Again, nobody knows specifically what they want to do. Again, there's ways that we can go about researching and identifying what different options there are. There's lots of resources. Again, trying something out through work experience or talking to people in a particular industry or area will help you find out more about that.

But yeah, I think the key message is as well is, if you're not sure what you want to do, I mean, stick with your studies, obviously, and pursue those in terms of your interests and strengths. You'll do well in those. And that itself will open up some doors and opportunities for you in the future.

Arts graduates, national surveys, actually are highly employable because of the amount of transferable skills that they develop through their studies. So it's a really positive message I think.

KAREN FOLEY: I mean one of the key things is that, for art students, this whole idea of creativity, of being human, of actually being able to influence things, those creative industries are really growing and expanding. So how important is it for somebody to be doing a degree, or especially at the undergraduate level, that is something that they end up doing? Are arts more transferable than that as a subject matter?

SIOBHAN FLINT: They're very transferable. And actually a lot of career areas, the majority of careers and jobs

that are advertised don't actually specify a discipline. Obviously some careers that is the case. But the majority of jobs are open to anybody of any disciplines. So I think the key message to students there is, again, it's yes, continue with your studies and do well and develop and progress in that. But really, it's about the key skills that you gain from your studies. And as you said, they're highly creative with problem solving, analytical skills, communication skills, and self management.

But the key to success is being able to make that connection between what you've done in your studies and what employers are looking for, and provide the real examples to an employer, not just saying I've got analytical skills. Well what's your example and what's your evidence? That might be from your studies. But it could also be from your hobbies or interests or work experience and the things that you've done as well. So trying to look at the whole picture, really.

KAREN FOLEY: I know there's a lot of questions about open degrees coming up in the chat room. So do let us know if there are any specific questions that you'd like us to both talk about here. And of course we've got our career advisers in the chat, Fiona and Julie, so they can answer questions as well.

Siobhan, that's a really good point, because so much of the time you see these things on CVs. I have great communication skills. I am blah. I am blah. And it's almost become quite meaningless now when you're flicking through people's CVs and thinking about things. You say that people should demonstrate some of those aspects. Now how do you go about doing that?

SIOBHAN FLINT: Well again, people don't often make the connection between what they've done. Like say they've done a project as part of their studies or, again, their working life or whatever, or they've developed-- look at your learning outcomes of your qualifications for your module and your qualification. It does have in their key skills and professional skills. And that will be where it's communication, teamwork, IT skills, and so on. So it's kind of realising that you're doing it already if you like and making that your example or what is your best example perhaps. But again, we can provide one to one support students as well if they want to help and advice talking through how they might kind of frame that in the best way to an employer.

KAREN FOLEY: So it really is reframing, I guess, what you're doing and identifying some of those skills and how they could be useful.

SIOBHAN FLINT: Yeah, definitely.

KAREN FOLEY: What about when students-- I mean, a lot of these employability aspects are being incorporated in assessment now. So it will be quite common to do a bit of self-reflection, maybe to look at an employability skill that's in a module. And those are being built in because it is such an important priority. So how would students then tackle that side of things when they're doing these questions, like pick one skill and say how you've done it? And what's the point of that? And how can that help people then build up a CV?

SIOBHAN FLINT: Well I think it's key anyway because you said it's self-reflection. Because that's, again, realising where your strengths are and where they lie. And by actually being aware of that and being able to articulate it, you can best present it to an employer or for further study. But it also helps to identify perhaps any gaps and further areas for your development and think, well, OK, there are the gaps, or what can I do to work on those then. Is it talking to someone in the industry or is it doing another project or work experience or whatever it might be? So it's a constant kind of review process, isn't it? We're helping you through these stages of your career planning really.

KAREN FOLEY: Lovely. Rachel and HJ?

RACHEL: Oh, we've got questions coming through. I'm trying to reply there. If you're in the chat and I'm supposed to be replying to you, I'm sorry if I forget.

So we've got some really interesting questions haven't we? But we've got one that's pressing that I think we need to get across from Sylvia as well. She says it's quite difficult to find jobs with degrees in classics in Canada because she's from Canada, lives in Canada. Do you by chance have any idea what jobs that I can do with a degree in classical studies? Are there any jobs associated with classical studies that I can do online? She says some people do do jobs online. So she just wants a little clarification if that's possible.

SIOBHAN FLINT: I wouldn't know off the top of my head about jobs in Canada, to be perfectly frank. But again, we can always help her to look into that. If she looks on the careers employability services website, there is contact a careers adviser for one to one support.

But what I will say is almost kind of turned that on its head. It's not necessarily what can I-- and people ask this question a lot, which I understand, and it's a perfectly valid question, what can I do with my degree in classics or whatever it might be. That's not so much the issue. It's more

about what skills you have to offer an employer. Because while your degree is one aspect, the important thing as well is a lot of employers will want, perhaps in light of competition, at least a 2:1 in your final degree classification if you like.

But really it's about, again, the skills you've gained and how you can present them, because that's where people often fall down. But obviously there are some careers that are directly related to classics. But actually, if you look, say, for example on the OU LinkedIn page and look at OU graduates from arts, you'll see that students go into a whole range of careers like media, HR, IT, education, and so on. So really you could almost say the world's your oyster so to speak. But there is a whole range of careers. It's very hard to kind of say there's one or two specific things. So really it's kind of almost, what do you want to do? What suits your interests and your strengths again?

KAREN FOLEY: So we were talking in the earlier session-- and it's such an interesting idea, this-- is that the arts can be so, so broad, so many transferable skills, so, so, so valuable, but yes, so specific. And I think especially when you're looking at postgraduate level, there are-- I mean, Kim was talking about these Norwegian carvings, something really, really specific. And now she's doing something quite different.

But there is sometimes this passion for something very specific, like perhaps Sylvia has this with classics. And you want to do something within that discipline, and you want to be quite niche And sometimes it can feel that there are limited options for that.

So aside from this whole idea about being broad, about having a degree level job that could be anything and sort of finding something that makes you happy, this idea then about having something very specific. But are there ways that you can still broaden that and be a little bit more natural, even if you are wanting to go into subject areas? Is there any general advice you could give to people about things like that? So for example, things like academic areas or perhaps working in various museums or ways in which some of those specific subject specific aspects can be broadened as well?

SIOBHAN FLINT: Yeah, as you say, there's careers in museums and galleries and so on. But again, with those areas, the key message is always, a lot of employers are looking for related work experience. So you need to consider perhaps start to contact places that are local to you that you can perhaps easily get to and so on. So I think that's one of the key messages around that.

KAREN FOLEY: And do you find then that once people start doing this work experience, which you mentioned

quite a few times, once they start doing that, do they then think, actually I don't really want to do this. I don't want to sit, categorising something in an office. I want to be out there doing archaeological digs, or do you know what I mean? Is there a sense that actually doing those things can give you an idea about what you want to do as opposed to which specific subject you want to focus on?

SIOBHAN FLINT: Yeah, definitely. It's a great way of trying something out. Again, to really see, well, we can read things and research and talk to careers advisors and so on, it's the real life situation of finding actually, is this for me. And that may be the case, and that's fine. But there's nothing wrong if it turns out not to be the right thing for you, because again, the whole thing with any work experience, whether it's related to what you want to do in the future or not, is really what you've learnt from it.

So for example if you want to go into teaching, a lot of the interviews-- and this applies to other careers as well-- will be like, what did you in your work experience, for example. But it's really what you learnt from that, not just I did this, I taught a group of 30 students and so on. But it's what you learned about yourself as well as maybe about teaching as a profession for example.

KAREN FOLEY: You mentioned LinkedIn as well, networking and being with the right people in the right place. That's quite an important skill, because often these jobs are about being in the right place at the right time, knowing the right people if you are wanting to do something quite specific.

SIOBHAN FLINT: Yeah, definitely. Again, you said perhaps earlier on about what would you encourage students to be doing, thinking about. I would definitely say if you haven't got one already, set up a LinkedIn account. Again, there's lots of resources to help you to do that if you're not quite sure how to go about that. But it's a key way of finding out, perhaps then identifying employers in the area that you're interested in, what are the main issues, what's going on in your industry again, but also about networking. It might help find work experience and actually pay jobs as well. So definitely encourage that. And it's a great way of actually getting employment beyond the CV. It's kind of things have moved on from that a little bit. Really I'd say LinkedIn is one of the prime ways of getting employment and making those connections really.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, excellent, thank you. Let's go to the social media desk because I think Rachel has something that you'd like to talk about.

RACHEL: Let me just pin. So remember we were speaking earlier about you can pin the feed and go back through stuff of where this-- if there's any more comments, it's going to go. Perfect, we've

managed it.

KAREN FOLEY: It can go fast. I like that little pin. Not everyone knows it's there--

RACHEL: There's this little pin on the--

KAREN FOLEY: --but it's really useful.

RACHEL: --left and right. On the right hand side, if you click it, it will go red. So we're talking about now if you don't know where that pin is, check it out. It's quite handy. Excuse me.

Peter is quite interested. He studied an open degree. And there is a little bit of conversation here about open degrees. Peter wants to know, he thinks that-- well he wonders whether studying the arts is, in employability terms, much more about transferable skills rather than about transferable skills. Could he get any clarification on that?

SIOBHAN FLINT: Well I think transferable skills applies to whatever you've studied, whether that be an open degree, arts, or science, or whatever it is, because you will have gained skills and knowledge from whatever you've studied really. So transferable skills is really about what have I got there that can then fit over to there obviously. So it doesn't matter really what you've studied. Again, I know I keep saying it, the key message is that you need to be aware that you've got them and how you can demonstrate them is the really important thing.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. And I guess students can always talk about their classification if they are confused about that. You can find an advisor and talk to them about whether you'd be better off staying with an open degree and selecting a few modules, even if they're predominately around one sector, or whether you want to focus more specifically.

So Siobhan, can you tell us then what sorts of areas do arts graduates tend to go into in terms of careers?

SIOBHAN FLINT: I think a fair amount, again, go into education of different levels, whether it be primary, secondary, or FE and so on. But as I said earlier, looking for example in the LinkedIn of OU graduates as well as national surveys that are done every year about destinations of students, arts graduates, virtually there's not many careers that are closed off, if you like, because they are so employable in terms of the range of skills that they develop from their studies. So as I said, yeah, it could be media, IT, HR, banking. It is quite wide ranging to be honest.

KAREN FOLEY: And what sort of things do employers then specifically want in terms of those graduates?

SIOBHAN FLINT: Yeah, I mean that's another really key thing as well. I think a survey was done last year by the CBI, Confederation of British Industry. And one of the key messages there really was, I think it was about 95% or something of employers-- sorry-- yeah, around that kind of figure. One of the key things they're looking for is people with the right skills and attitudes, which obviously will vary slightly from different career areas anyway.

But that was, say for example, compared to like 15%, 17% were saying the university tendered was one of the main things that they looked at. So really it's kind of turning on its head.

They're saying really what we're looking for is people with the right skills. And I think that kind of positive can do attitude is what they're looking for as well.

KAREN FOLEY: And as we've seen from so many of our colleagues today coming here, you know, people who are studying the arts, and arts students in particular, often are so passionate and enthusiastic-

SIOBHAN FLINT: Yeah, definitely.

KAREN FOLEY: --about their subjects. And that must be really attractive to employers, people who can actually get really excited and engage with things. And as we've seen, because so much of it is interdisciplinary, you often have to engage with things that may not be your primary interest. And that in itself must be quite an important and valuable skill, to say you know, I'm really interested in this, but I have to do a lot of this to put it into context.

SIOBHAN FLINT: Yeah. As you say, I think that passion and drive because, again, employers don't expect graduates to walk out the finished article from their studies. That's partly why they may take them on to train them and support them in that particular career area. But it's really, yeah, that kind of can do, positive attitude. And if you've studied a wide range of things, understanding that sometimes, in any of our work, we all have to do bits that we perhaps don't like so much, but it's just part and package of what you have to do, isn't it? So I think again that passion and drive, which art students definitely have, is definitely what employers are looking for.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, brilliant. And so what can students then specifically get in terms of your area, the careers and employability service. How can students make the most of that and what can they do?

SIOBHAN FLINT: Yep, we've got loads of resources for students. We've got our website, which has got lots of useful information on there. Specifically for arts students then, we've run two forums over the

last few years where they can come in and obviously exchange ideas and ask questions and so on. One was on publishing creative writing. Another one was more of a general careers forum in terms of asking various questions.

From that, we've developed some FAQs that we've put on the qualifications site in the Career section. And recently, I think in April, we're running OU Live on arts skills and career opportunities. And that's available as a recording on the careers employability services site.

So forums, OU Live, the website. I mentioned the qualification site as well. It's got customised careers content on there suggesting the kind of careers that you perhaps could consider or go into, suggesting some employers and organisations that might help with your networking.

KAREN FOLEY: And can people like Sylvia get a one to one appointment--

SIOBHAN FLINT: Yep, definitely.

KAREN FOLEY: --something specific like that?

SIOBHAN FLINT: Yep. So I would encourage you to perhaps do your research and use those wide range of resources first, and then perhaps have some of your thoughts together if you like and some of your questions.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, so it's more useful.

SIOBHAN FLINT: And by all means, yeah, via our website. Then you can contact a careers advisor for one to one advice, which could be then delivered by email or Skype, in some instances face to face as well. So yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Wonderful. Well thank you very Siobhan for talking us through all that.

I'm going to finish by asking you to select our next caption competition. We're all about objects, as you can see. And we have our board here.

Now I've done this one. And we have some other images. And we're doing a caption competition. And the people here put captions in. We're going to choose the ones that we think are the best in a very subjective way. And we are going to send you a 10 pound Amazon voucher for your troubles. So which do you think we should be focusing on next?

SIOBHAN FLINT: So you say you've done that one?

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, done that one.

SIOBHAN FLINT: OK. I quite like giraffes actually.

KAREN FOLEY: The giraffe and the snow.

SIOBHAN FLINT: I like that one, yeah. He's just kind of popping out, having a look above. So yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. And will you have a go at the caption competition?

SIOBHAN FLINT: Oh god, yeah. I'll give it a try. I'll have to have a think.

KAREN FOLEY: You'll have to watch our session from creative writing because they have lots of wonderful ideas. Excellent. Well, we hope that you can send us those.

The best thing actually, we've been getting a lot on Twitter. So send us those to #ArtsHub60. Because that way if you win and you had to go and do something else in the afternoon, we can let you know.

So we will be back at 6 o'clock tonight. We're going to have a really fun interactive quiz. It is called Is It, or Is It Not, or That'll be an Ecumenical Matter. And so you're going to have to play at home against our team of panellists in the studio. It will be loads of fun and a good chance to have a chat. We've got a really lovely evening session lined up. We're then going to talk about resilience and disappointment and get some tips from OU students about how to make the most of everything and motivate yourself.

We're then going to be doing our lucky dip, so looking at yet more objects and what those bring to mind for a couple of academics here. And then we're going to be talking about why is the past important. And you've seen some people from history here today. And we're going to combine history and English tonight. And it will be a really interesting discussion about why the past is important.

But in the meantime, what we're going to do is we're going to play some reruns from some of the previous sessions today. The live stream is going to be open so you can check, but we're going to go and grab a bite to eat. And we'll be back live at 6 o'clock, although please do continue to chat to each other.

Before we come back at 6 o'clock, if you're watching now and you're planning on watching

then-- although I will announce it just before we get back on air-- we're going to break the live stream again, which means that you will need to refresh and log back in. So we do that temporarily, nothing to worry about.

But I'm really looking forward to this evening. I've had an amazing day so far, and I hope that you have too. We're going to leave some of the widgets up so that you can let us know how you're feeling, where you're at in terms of things, and then we can feed a little bit of that back in tonight.

Don't forget, you can email us. We'd love to see your selfies, studenthub@open.ac.uk. Send us those on Twitter as well, #ArtsHub16.

And I've been Karen Foley. It's been a really, really wonderful morning. Thank you for all the support and sharing of information that you've given each other on the chat box. We haven't had a huge amount of time to mention that so much, but it has been really wonderful. So thank you for taking part.

I'll be live back at 6 o'clock tonight. And we will all see you then.

[MUSIC PLAYING]