

Audio Transcript for Student Life at UWE Bristol

Slide 1 - Student life at UWE

Hello everyone. My name is Stephanie and today I'll be talking about student life at UWE.

Slide 2 - Why I chose UWE

So why did I choose UWE? I was advised by my previous college that UWE had a foundation course that could lead onto a Biomedical science degree and potentially medicine in the future. This sounded like a great pathway to me. I didn't apply via UCAS but however I did attend an open day at my college as some UWE representatives had come to talk about UWE and what to expect and give a better overview of the university. I definitely recommend doing your research and finding out as much as you can about any unis you are interested in before you apply.

Slide 3 - Arrive at UWE and Freshers' week

I have some comments from our current and previous students about what freshers' week was like for them. One says the campus is huge, the staff are really friendly and welcoming, this is really scary there's so many people, the other people in my flat really nice, I'm really going to enjoy being here. Freshers week is great for making friends and getting free stuff.

I would say that I completely agree with all the statements. Freshers' week is all this and more. If I was going to make a statement about it myself, I would say it was a thrill. Coming to the UK, being in a space where I was the only one that had no family around. Like everyone I was a bit nervous but soon made new friends. It was quite a thrill for me, it was really exciting time. I was definitely excited to find out about the university and the city.

Slide 4 - Accommodation

UWE Bristol offers quite a lot of options when it comes to accommodation. There's the option to stay on campus, for example in the Frenchay student village or the Wallscourt accommodation. Frenchay village has different blocks, I there's about 5 or 6 different blocks of accommodation.

When I was doing my foundation course, I chose to stay in one of the courts in Frenchay village. That was nice because I could be in a gathering of the people that were in my class, and we were always together. So it was easier for me to make friends. I would see them at class, and when I came back home they would still be in the same environment as I was. It helped me make friends really quickly.

Once students get to their second or third year they often decide to live outside of campus with friends they've made in the first year. Sometimes they decide to stay in the city centre. UWE has partnerships with some other accommodation providers in the city centre. Or students sometimes like to go private, they find a private property, find a private landlord. There's quite a number of different options, you can always explore all these to find out which one is most suitable for you.

Slide 5 - My course

In terms of the courses, I would say there is a lot of variety, they all differ depending on the subject, how it is taught and assessed, the module leader, as well as the modules you are doing.

For me personally, I studied Biomedical Science for my undergraduate degree. It was really nice because it was a fine balance between the lecture hours and lab work hours. So every week we would have three days of lectures, three hours overall for each day, and the next week it would be practical week, so we would have lab work as opposed to lectures. I found it was a really, really nice balance between teaching and practical. So that was very useful for me.

How different university is from school or college is an individual experience I think. For me I had to realise that I had to be a bit more independent. No one's going to tell you, "you need to go to this lecture", or "we need to make sure you've done your assignment". No - that's something that you take full responsibility for, and you're fully accountable for all the actions that you take at university. So that's quite a different experience from school.

There are different teaching components for different modules. There are lectures, tutorials, practical sessions. Also again depending on the modules some of them are assessed differently as well. That's something that you do during induction, when you come during the first week, that you will go through.

In terms of workload per se, again it varies for different modules. Personally for me I had to work while I was studying, so I had to find a great balance between work and study to manage my time. I tried to make sure that while I was doing both things I was able to balance them effectively.

UWE also offers academic support. There's PAL, which is the peer assisted learning service. Students either a year or two years above your current year can offer guidance and assistance with modules you're struggling with, if they had studied them in their first year. You get real time feedback, and guidance from students who have previously done the module that you're currently on.

The library also gives you access to a number of resources - books, journals, articles. There's also IT support available in the library. For instance, if you get a new laptop and you're having trouble setting it up, or you need to get Word or certain software on it the library offers full IT support so they can always help with that.

UWE also offers some wellbeing services. If you are struggling with your mental health or something else outside of your studies, the wellbeing service can also offer some support. The finance and budgeting service is available to give advice to students on how to better budget, or manage their finances more effectively. So yeah there's a lot of different support actually available at UWE.

Slide 6 - Additional opportunities

In terms of additional opportunities, there's loads to choose from. In particular, UWE offers placements to a lot of students. Depending on your course, it can be added onto your programme so you can have a sandwich year where you take a year off from your studies, go and do a work placement and come back. I will say this is one thing I really recommend for students as I have seen really average students go on to do a placement, and then come back and they've become exceptional students. The placement gives you real time work experience to build graduate skills. It also shows you what work life would be after university in a fast paced or dynamic work environment.

UWE also offers volunteering opportunities, studying abroad. You could also get work experience and summer internships. You could also find part time work within the University, or they can give you guidance to find part time work in a local company.

There is a service in UWE called the careers and enterprise service. They can help you with looking over your CV, refining it and basically give you the best help to land the job. They can also help with

guidance for prepping for interviews, guidance for job applications. I really urge students to take advantage of their services, especially in second and third year when your starting to think about life outside of university.

Slide 7 - Facilities

UWE has a number of facilities on and off campus. Some are specific for certain courses. For instance if you're studying criminology at UWE, then there is a dedicated crime scene house. They set up different crime scenes from real life crimes. I think that's pretty cool. If I was doing criminology that's something I would really look forward to as it would give you some real time experience, and give insight into what it means to really be working on a crime scene.

There are also standard law courts. There is a robotics lab at UWE Bristol which is nationally and internationally recognized as a centre of excellence for advanced robotics research. It is the largest research facility of its kind in the UK, it's really massive. There are different projects in the lab in partnership with global companies which are amazing. You can get the chance to work on something that can have a huge, huge impact in the world.

UWE also has the Centre for Sport at well. There's a gym, basketball courts, football field and a variety of different sports facilities that you can use. As I've mentioned before you've also got access to the library 24/7. There's a cinema on campus. The Centre for Music is for people who are musically inclined, or who want to learn a new instrument, join a band or sing. I know the UWE opera performs every year in the Bristol city centre so it might be a great opportunity for someone who is looking to explore singing.

Also at UWE there is a health centre dedicated to the UWE students. You can go and book an appointment with doctors. You can also have access to a variety of shops on campus. There are also bigger stores close by the university. I know there's a big Asda and a big Sainsbury's close to the university as well, just in case you can't find what you're looking for around the shops on campus. So there's quite a number of facilities that UWE provides for students to use either for academic and non-academic purposes.

Slide 8 - How I spend my free time

In terms of spending your free time at UWE there's quite a number of ways that you can do that. You could be in the library as I was all the time. Or you could go shopping, you could relax, there's quite a number of different bars as well, and restaurants on campus that you could go and have a chill out, day and night with your friends.

You could also go to the gym. If you've got a part time job you could just work. Personally, I was mostly in the library, or working. It really just depends on the student and what it is they are interested in, but there's a lot of ways that you can spend your free time at UWE.

Slide 9 - How I spend my free time - sports and societies

In terms of free time I really want to highlight the range of sports and societies of which UWE has loads. I think they currently have about 120 societies. Some of these are academic, and plenty of others aren't. I know there's a physics society and a maths and stats society as well. If you're in tune with those kind of subjects, or those kind of activities then that's something that you can do. There're also lots of sports societies so whatever sports you play - soccer, lacrosse, basketball or whatever there is there is a society for you at UWE.

There are also societies focused on different regions and religions. For instance, if you are Pakistani there is a Pakistan society. If you are Nigerian there's a Nigerian society. If you are Muslim there's a Muslim society. If you are Christian there is a Christian Society as well. Lots of societies are for students to explore and find things they like, as well as picking up a new hobby like DJ-ing or dodgeball.

This is something that I really encourage students engage in, getting involved with societies. It is something that could help build employability skills. If you are a president of a society or an executive member that's something that would be good on your CV. You get to learn some skills that might be applicable in the work environment.

Slide 10 - About Bristol

Just briefly to talk about Bristol. Bristol's a great city, I think it is one of the things that really got me excited about coming to UWE. It's a very cultural and artistic city. There's a popular artist called Banksy from Bristol and there is a lot of Banksy art just up on the walls of buildings and on the streets, which I think is really, really cool. There are some great festivals out here in Bristol. My favorite one is the balloon festival. It happens every summer. There are balloons going up in the sky, which is filled with balloons. When it gets dark the balloons light up a little bit, like really bright lights in the sky, it's amazing, something that I look forward to every year. I think it's something that students that will be joining us at UWE Bristol will enjoy as well.

Slide 11 - What do I want to do after graduating?

In terms of what to do after graduating there's quite a number of options. Some students go on to do a Masters or postgraduate course, or a professional course – it just depends. Some students go on to get into a specific career or profession. Others might say, 'I want to take a year out and travel', that's great as well.

Some people continue in their part time job, but on a full-time basis. Or some people get another job in another country. I personally got a job in another country, before coming back to do my PhD here at UWE. Again it really depends on the individual, what they want, what their future is looking like, and the best option that might align with what they want from their future.

Slide 12 - Your years at University should be the best time of your life

I have come to the end of this presentation. I just want to say that your years at university should be the best time of your life. That can only happen if you make it that.

No one else is going to be responsible for making your university experience great. You are solely responsible for that, you just have to stay focused, stay committed, stay motivated, just keep working hard.

Higher education isn't something supposed to happen at a certain time. It should happen at the time that the student thinks is right. So don't feel pressured to rush into higher education if you feel you're not ready. Think about it, take some time. If you feel like the time for you to go into higher education is now, then great, go on, go into higher education. But if you feel you need to wait a few months the same - great. Higher education is not something that you do at a specific time, no it should be done at the time that is right for the individual. Remember everything that you do now is an investment in your own future.

Thanks for listening and I hope you have found the presentation useful.