

[TRANSCRIPT: New Student Special Episode 1: Let's Talk About...Discovering your student self]

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[INTRO]

Hello. Welcome to UWE Bristol's Let's Talk Now *New Student Special*. As I'm sure you already know, life is full of challenges. And in a new environment, with a new city to explore, new people to meet and new and more difficult subjects to study, these challenges may feel like more than you can overcome. But we promise you, you can.

We've put together this series of podcasts to give you just that little bit of insider information into what we think you need in order to be successful, not only while you're here at UWE Bristol, but later on in your life and your career.

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[SIMON PHILLIPS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR STUDENT AND ACADEMIC SERVICES]: It starts off with that question of *'who are you'*, but it's really important *'who do you want to be?'*. You are stepping out, along with everyone else around you, into this big unknown. It's meant to be a point of difference, so you've got to own the fact that something different is gonna happen here and *'I'm only here because I want something different to happen'*. So it's a question of, yeah, *'who am I'*, but the really important question is owning what you want your future to be...*'what type of student do you want be?'*...

[MUBARAK MOHAMUD (MO), LECTURER, BRISTOL BUSINESS SCHOOL]: ...I think the most important part of that video was that question at the end...*'what type of student do you want to be?'*...that's a huge thing. Clearly that video talks about what, I think, society would tell an impressionable student before they go to university - all about alcohol and wasting time, and being goofy and stuff - but the video is actually saying, it's what *you* make it. So that's why this video is really important and I think I feel quite inspired by it. It is what you make it...

[SIMON]: ...yeah, you've got to take ownership of that, don't you. And I suppose to make it what you want it to be, you need to take, before you even come to university, you need to just sit on your own and think about what you want it to be...or sound out somebody you trust. Because a good point you make, Mo, about the image of being a student - because it's not always true, is it? We don't always believe everything we see on an advert, or read in the papers and I think even if people in the year above you, or you know somebody that's a bit older than you that's gone to university first, they're only giving you...when you ask them...their perception of university. And when they give you their perception of university, unless they're a person that you really know and really trust...like we all do, they might just be bigging it up a little bit. Oh, yeah, it was really easy...

[MO]:...yeah, it was easy. But not actually what it is to be a student. And I think we wanted to get across in this podcast, what it is to be a studious student. And I think, as a lecturer, we can tell, from the moment they walk in through the door, who are the studious persons and who are the non-studious persons. Obvious signs are, like...

[SIMON]: ...as soon as they walk in?...

[MO]: ...in the first five or ten minutes, I'd say. They're sat right in the back, they're very timid and it could be because they're just anxious about it and I think we need to be aware of that. But I'd say within three or four weeks... The habits the student picks up in the three or four weeks of their first coming into university, lasts with them for the three or four years that they're here. So if they're always eager to ask questions...don't really care about if people are (because of their insecurities) feeling that they need to do less well or lower expectations straightaway by going *'I'm not bothered'*...all these little tell-tale signs students are really just bringing in very low expectations, to the point that just by being you'll do better...lowly-perceived expectations, really.

[MILES THOMPSON, LECTURER, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY]: ...and I think that's the trap. I think accidentally a lot of students fall into a low-expectation-trap. They don't mean to..they don't do it consciously...it's not something they would deliberately do...but without meaning to, they kind of go *'I've got to fit in here, I need to try and be cool-ish'*, whatever that means, and so by doing that they feel like they can't ask questions, won't do the reading. *I'll take the path of least*

*resistance*. And, that may feel comfortable but it's not the best way to get everything you can from your student journey.

[MO]: Absolutely, and even more so, not even the student journey itself, it's about having the best experience while you're here. Actually, university is a very safe environment for you to do anything and everything...

[MILES]: ...absolutely...

[MO]: ...and to actually evolve as an individual. And to play it safe like that from day one, really does hinder the steps that you could have taken...

[MILES]: ...completely. Because university is ultimately is about exploring. It's about exploring subjects, it's about exploring yourself, it's about exploring everything else that university has to offer. And if you just sit back and kind of go *'I'll just take the path of least resistance. I'll just do the minimum, I'll just get by'*, what a shame... And so the great thing about that video is that it asks

[MO]: ...what do you want...

[MILES]: ...what do you want? What could it be?...

[MO]: ...and that's a really scary, but really exciting question...

[MILES]: ...it's both. It is both. And weirdly, if you just thinking that your university career, your university journey is just about getting a 2:1, or a First, then you're again constraining yourself...you're missing out on all these other things that university can be about...with friends, with voluntary work, with societies, with all of that. And if it's just about *'I'm just gonna make sure that I relax, but just try to get a 2:1'*...it's like no, no, no - there's these other things too...

[MO]:...yes, absolutely. And I think the video, the question actually is - you have the power to make it what you want. It actually gives the autonomy to yourself. The centre of locus is you. So you really do make it what it is. So whatever programme you're on, actually the experience you're gonna get is what you decide.

[MILES]:...it's down to you.

[MO]: ...that's probably the most important part of the video, really. Students are in the driving seat

[MILES]: Certainly, they're in the driving seat and to a certain extent, they will get out what they put in. And so, if they can approach their first term, their first week, their first day with that that, kind of like, 'ok. To get the most out of this, I've got to put stuff in'. Then they'll get the best experience'.

[MO]: That's really cool. Right. Let's listen to the next one...

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