

## Ask Aberdeen Episode 9 Transcript

**Georgie** [00:00:07] I'm Georgie.

**Michaela** [00:00:08] And I'm Michaela.

**Georgie** [00:00:09] And we're here to tell you about the University of Aberdeen.

**Michaela** [00:00:11] In each episode, we will discuss frequently asked questions about topics such as applications...

**Georgie** [00:00:15] Go abroad...

**Michaela** [00:00:17] Student life...

**Georgie** [00:00:18] Sports and Societies...

**Michaela** [00:00:19] Budgeting for Uni...

**Georgie** [00:00:20] And life in Aberdeen.

**Michaela** [00:00:22] We will be speaking to current Aberdeen students, those who really know what it's like to study and live here.

**Georgie** [00:00:27] And we'll be getting exclusive tips from members of our amazing staff.

**Michaela** [00:00:31] Join us for this episode of Ask Aberdeen.

**Georgie** [00:00:35] Welcome to today's episode of Gabardine. Today, I will be speaking to a current Aberdeen's Bethanie and our access articulation officer Emily. We'll be discussing moving from college to university and the experiences Bethanie had and how access notification team can support you. So welcome, Bethany, to our podcast. Do you want to just tell the listeners a little bit about which college you went to and what you then studied at university?

**Bethany** [00:00:57] Yeah, of course. So my name is Bethany Hume and I at the University of Aberdeen studied a master's degree in psychology, which was fantastic. And I've only just graduated. And that was after three years. I jumped into to second year of university. I initially started doing HNC in Social Sciences at my college UHI. So that's kind of a bit up north. And that just helped me to access a later year of the university experience.

**Georgie** [00:01:28] And I should actually just explain for our listeners that obviously when Bethany talks about college, slightly different in Scotland to how it is in England. So if you're an English student, you might think of colleges as when you did your A-levels. For Scottish students, you guys would do your S5 and S6, and then you might go to college. And we're going to discuss why you might go to college before you then come to university. So, Emily, you speak to students at careers fairs and you support the students. What else did your team kind of do? What's your role?

**Emily** [00:01:57] Sure, yes. Obviously, before covid, we used to go along to colleges and do presentations about coming from college university and go along to the careers fairs. A lot of has changed recently and this has to be online. So we do regularly drop in sessions

for our partner colleges and also using our Unibuddy system. We do them weekly for our local college, NESCOL, and we do the monthly for all our other partner colleges in Scotland so people can come along and you can ask any questions that you have either direct or in a group chat. And we also do lots of other activities with the local colleges as well. So this past year we've worked with lots of our local colleges and partner colleges to speak at their events about coming to study at the University of Aberdeen and about the application process and what it's like to be a college university student at Aberdeen. We do like to do this in person, so hopefully we will get to do that again.

**Georgie** [00:02:55] Yeah, would be nice.

**Emily** [00:02:57] Yeah, I do miss that. I'm missing face to face. It's just not it's not the same. We also run some twilight sessions. So just after work for college offer holders. We did one in March and another one in April as well. And that really looks at transition support. So how you can also join the University of Aberdeen community if you're coming in particularly year two or year three and how we can support you in that transition, depending on whether it's online and in person, we have a day where you get to meet with a lot of different lecturers and hear from them and help make up a choice about what you want to study and obviously other people as well in a similar situation. And we also are working on some programmes right now as well. So if you are looking to join us this year, you'll be hearing from us soon about that. And that'll hopefully on every year. And it gives you an idea about the transition. And we'll work on some academic sessions and then other support sessions as well just to get you ready for starting a university.

**Georgie** [00:04:03] And there's lots of things your team do. I think that people maybe don't know the support that's out there. So if you are speaking to anyone from the university and you're considering your options, we can always direct you towards Emily's team and our colleagues who are specifically there to help students who go to college or who are thinking about whether college is right for them. I think it's something people don't always think about. They don't realise that it's an option, that they kind of think they have to do Highers and then apply straight to university. So, Bethany, why did you go to college? What appealed to you about that?

**Bethany** [00:04:32] So I did my full time high school, obviously within the Scottish system where I got to my sixth year and I began doing Advanced Highers and I had applied for university at the time and hoped to get the grades because they were all conditional offers. And unfortunately, I just didn't reach even the minimum threshold at the time, which was obviously very disheartening and just kind of makes you kind of rethink, OK, is this really for me? Is this something I have the ability to do? And there was kind of a bit of doubt after finishing high school because it was like, I don't know whether I want to go to college to maybe feel like this may not work again. But having taken the summer, obviously before college started, it did give me that chance to kind of regroup with myself and think, is this still something I want to go forward doing? Do I still want to go to university? Do I still want to continue this academic journey? And I still did. So I went to college. I knew that this would be a good way forward. I applied. And then I heard from someone who kind of said to me, maybe not applied for quite the right course here, we do have this option where you could actually go into your second year because I didn't know this existed. I thought I would still have to start from stage one. So that's actually how I found out that I could be a direct entry student. And then from there, it just kind of made sense. I got the grades at college and then managed to move in.

**Georgie** [00:05:56] Yeah, that's absolutely true. Emily, can you explain how that works when people go into second year and how that happens for them.

**Emily** [00:06:02] Yeah, of course. I think that's a really good point that Bethany makes, that if you are going to college and you think there's any chance that you might want to go on to university afterwards is to speak to the people at the college and speak to ourselves or to the institution that you're going to follow in college to see what your best rates are, because obviously we do have courses that leads more directly to essentially year two, year three. And so it might feel like there's a couple of years away. It's never too late to start thinking about them

**Georgie** [00:06:31] something else as well. And I think this is correct, that the funding for SAAS, you can kind of combine that with your college and university. So if you're coming into your second or even your third year, having done a couple of years of a college degree and then you come into university, it kind of merges. And like Bethany said, you're not you're not doing like two years or a year at college and then starting fresh, you sometimes can come in kind of miss first year of university and come in because you've already covered some of those things. So it's sort of a bridge. It's not an extra time. And then, making it up as such, it does work brilliantly for students like Bethany, who perhaps didn't get the grades to get into university first time. And it's a really great alternative to go to college, do a bit extra bump up those grades with an HNC or HND and then come into university. And I mean, Bethany just had to be accepted for a masters at the university. So that's incredible that you didn't give up and that you're like going on to even a further stage of education after university. So that's really good. Emily, Bethany went to college up in Morray area. Can students come to Aberdeen from any college or how does it work with that?

**Emily** [00:07:42] Yeah, absolutely. So we do have partnerships, certain colleges. That's where the curriculum so closely matches the college course with one of our courses. And those ones are quite clearly mapped out because we do work with our partner colleges to map out those curriculums and those routes. And that allows students to enter into year two or year three. If you did want to have a look at that, our college brochure is available on the website and that quite nicely sets all of it. However, if you don't go to one of those partner colleges, it by no means, you know, means that you can't come to the university and it doesn't mean that you can't go into advanced entry. So what you do is you supply usually through you courses we would do normally would be assessed by an academic selector. They would look at the course that you've done, looked at the course you're applying for, and then just see what they can offer you from first year to third year. And it just depends on your experience and what you've studied.

**Georgie** [00:08:42] I think that's a good point, that there's lots of information on our website. So if people are listening to this and they've got more questions, you can access us, question through the website or find out more information as well from your experience. Bethany, how did you find like moving from college to university? Because it's often quite a big jump from school to university. So how was it for you coming from college?

**Bethany** [00:09:03] It was it was an Eye-Opener in a lot of different ways. And kind of the starting point is obviously for those who do move, it's a big step because I went to a local college, so I still lived at home. So the first step was, you know, OK, now you're going to go and live as an independent person. Now, I moved in with my partner at the time and we were private renting. So straight off the bat I wasn't in student accommodation and kind of

didn't have the access point with the socialising, which is maybe where someone would choose to go differently. And that's absolutely fine. And there was a lot of information all at once. I think that's maybe the thing that I found slightly difficult for myself was that I went to this university and I you know, I got my student card. I got my basic information of, OK, these are your classes. This is where you need to go, OK, you're registered, which is great. But then it was like, oh, my goodness, where do I go from here? So I used an open day as a chance to actually walk around and find all my classes because I had my timetable. So it's just trying to find ways to make myself comfortable with this massive transition because the college is tiny by comparison to this massive university where you've got all these room numbers and building names. And it's a lot to adjust to, but there is chances to go and adapt to this and, you know, figure out on your own or with other people. And class sizes were a big surprise for me. When you've got like upwards of two hundred people sitting in a class, obviously that's not a situation right now. But, you know, something that will exist again, hopefully in the future. That was a shock, but also really nice because you realise that a lot of people sitting around you with the same passion while in college, sometimes people aren't there for exactly the reason of wanting to get all the way through. You know, maybe it's kind of got a different goal for them. Maybe it's something they're doing just with different intentions. So to sit with people that are universally trying to do the same thing as you was a great experience. And it was very different from college overall. It was it was a big transition, but it is possible.

**Georgie** [00:10:58] Yeah. So, I mean, I went through the English system and I came from doing my A-levels to going to university and that still felt like I went to quite a big sixth form. College is quite a lot of people and still going into university is like, well, I'm on my own now and I've got to kind of fend for myself. But there's lots of support and there's lots of like Aberdeen, people always say is really friendly campus and a really friendly environment. There's a lot of people around to kind of advise you and guide you, especially in that first week and lots of things happening. So it's quite a fun experience. And Emily had mentioned before her team run an articulation event, which again is normally in person, which hopefully will get back soon. But again, that's aimed at supporting students like Bethany, who it's a slightly different process coming from college than it is coming straight from school and just making sure that the support is there and that you feel comfortable and you're definitely not on your own, I think. What sort of things is that you provide for students during that altercation event, Emily?

**Emily** [00:11:52] I think those two events that probably could be quite helpful with the transition. So the first one is articulation. I would call it an articulation day. It's a day on campus. We run over a week. And it gives you an opportunity for the on campus to get to experience what it's like to be on campus and see the buildings and you do the campus tours. We show you all the different buildings. And that allows you to see if you were studying there where you might have a lecture or a tutorial or you might go for your lunch. And I think that just seeing the campus itself takes away some of the nerves about it, too. And you also get to meet some of our lecturers and you'll see how friendly welcoming they are and how keenly are to have college students at the university as well, and that they are aware that you are jumping into year two or three quite often, and they know the difficulties that come with that, too. So getting to hear from them, speak with them informally over a lunch and then getting to listen into several lectures as well, gives you an idea of what you might want to study. So, for example, maybe at college you're studying social sciences, but you don't know what you want to study at university. So you might get to listen to three or four different social science subject area talks and get an idea of what you would like to take, which I think would be really helpful. And then as well, with any other event that we're working on, our programme, I should say, with the transition summer programme, which

will be taking place this year. I think that will help the transition as well as you will learn lots of skills about moving from college, university and some of the things you mentioned there. And I think they would be helpful if that have been available when you did transition from college, university and hopefully will help students feel supported. Ready to start with us.

**Georgie** [00:13:40] And Bethany, you said you did psychology so that you have really big lectures in psychology, as on these really popular courses. And I know we have is animal behaviour is one of the courses that we've created as a kind of direct link with some of the colleges with as well that people can go across to there. Any other courses that we cover particularly or any courses that you can't do if you're coming from college.

**Emily** [00:14:01] I mean, some of them are definitely more difficult. But I would say that if you don't see it listed on our website under the college brochure, it doesn't mean that you can't do it. And I mean, you might have to go back to first year. But in the grand scheme of things, that's, you know, maybe one year of your whole life and your whole future ahead. So if it's something you really want to do, it could be worth it, but it might be something we just haven't mapped out. So absolutely don't be put off by the limitations of what's available and listed on our website. Just get in contact with access to and we can look into that for you.

**Georgie** [00:14:34] And Bethany, how did you find fitting in coming into second year or coming in that part way through? Did you find that did you feel like you missed out on anything or how did you find it?

**Bethany** [00:14:45] Admittedly, it was difficult by my natural character. I'm quite an introvert, so I'm not I'm not a very social person. So like some of the clubs and, you know, that initial week where there was all these pressures coming along and, you know, joining all these clubs, unfortunately, that's where I was massively lacking in experience because I hadn't been around so many people before. Where I'm from is very, very quiet. So to have all these crowds and all these different people in this diversity was all quite a lot for me, unfortunately. And I kind of I didn't really socialise so much when I came into university, was a lot more focussed on the academics. So I think that maybe in that sense, I kind of was at a slight disadvantage with myself. You know, that's not to say other people wouldn't go in and be a lot more social. I'm sure a lot of people have been. I think that it kind of helps when I started classes. And it was just by complete coincidence, I sat down at this table from a practical group and I met this friend of mine. And I just it was kind of that casual talk like, oh, what do you study? Oh, I do this oh, you do this sort of thing. And we both kind of came across the fact that we were direct entry and immediately it was just like a weight off the shoulders, just knowing that there's someone else experiencing the exact same thing as you and it just opens that door completely.

**Georgie** [00:16:00] That's really nice. I think sometimes people feel like there's almost a stigma of going to college and then coming into university. And they shouldn't feel like that, too, because you're definitely not alone. I mean, the fact you didn't know that your friend was also direct entry kind of shows actually it's not a label and no one knows and no one can tell. But it does. If it does make you feel like it's all different, then there are lots of other people in your position. But what advice would you give, Bethany, to someone who was looking to apply to college or he's at college now and looking to come to university?

**Bethany** [00:16:31] I would say that, you know, if they do get in and then they do have that initial time of, you know, kind of adapting to the university, do your best, even if you don't like it, do your best to try something, join a club. It doesn't have to be so, you know, a

sports one. It doesn't have to be an acting one. Just join something. Just try it, you know, just walk along one day, put your email down and just give it that little go, because it's honestly, I think it's the one thing if I could go back, I would definitely try to be more involved and try to kind of integrate more into that, you know, student life in a different way. Focussing completely academic is great because I am you know, I'm here and I'm proud of where I am. But at the same time, there is that thing that I like throughout my whole degree, which was kind of enriching friendships with multiple groups of people.

**Georgie** [00:17:20] Yeah, that's brilliant advice. I think remembering the university is more than just your degree is really, really good advice. And I did lots of sports things at uni and I still wish I'd done more as well. For me it was laws. I wish I joined the Law Society and I kind of things that you always look back on. So anyone who's listening to this podcast and kind of wondering what to do, I think all of us would agree that get involved, get stuck in, give it a go.

**Emily** [00:17:44] I was at exactly the same. I didn't join enough societies. And it's a time in your life where you got to join a society or a sport that you maybe never tried before it. And that opportunity doesn't present itself again very often when you're an adult or not as easily. And it is a great way to make friends. And I think especially if you're coming in a year, two or three is a great way to meet new people as well.

**Georgie** [00:18:07] Really. Thank you so much. I think for sure. Your experiences and hopefully our listeners, anyone who's thinking about going to college or who's at college now and is thinking of applying to Aberdeen will have a look on our website. As Emily said, there's lots of support and resources there and you can email her team as well. So if you've got any questions, we also have about UniBuddy chat online. So if you want to speak to any students who are studying a course perhaps you're interested in, you can find more information out there. But thank you to Bethany and Emily. And please check in for our next episode of Ask Aberdeen that will be coming next week.

**Voiceover** [00:18:41] Thank you for joining us for this episode of the Ask Aberdeen podcast, if you would like to suggest a topic we should cover, please email us at [ukteam@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:ukteam@abdn.ac.uk). We would love to hear from you to be alerted about new episodes. Subscribe wherever you get your podcasts.