# Transcript - Zoe Walkington

I'm Professor Zoe Walkington. I've worked at the Open University in many guises, probably for around about 20 years now. Started out as an associate lecturer predominantly because I really believed in the social mission, because I believe that education should be available to absolutely anyone. Since then, I've worked in a variety of roles. I've been a staff tutor. I've been a central academic and now I'm one of the media fellows in the university. When I was an AL (Associate Lecturer), I really enjoyed working with the mature students that we taught at that time. Nowadays we have a lot more younger students. But what was really interesting about that was trying to work out from each student how they best learned, how best to kind of interpret the course materials to enable their learning experience. I marked all of the students’ work and through that I really got to know all of the students’ strengths and weaknesses and it was really satisfying, seeing how they improved over the period of study. There's something quite different about the quality of students that we get here, and I don't mean quality in terms of good or bad. I mean the quality of them as people. They're often very busy people juggling multiple responsibilities, including family, childcare, et cetera. They often didn't have the same opportunities that other people did early on, and so they're really happy to be studying and it's incredibly rewarding working with students like that. As a staff tutor, you manage the associate lecturers, so you're managing a lot of staff, not all of whom work full time and really, you're responsible for coordinating the student experience in the discipline that you're working in, and that can be quite challenging because we're such a big organisation. But it can also be very rewarding because you're helping staff with their own development. A central academic at the Open University is a very different role than you'll get in any other university, because you've gotta think of lots of different ways to bring things to life for students when you're only kind of meeting them, if you like, digitally because we're developing distance learning materials. We get a lot of experience of, for example, being filmed, making videos, it’s quite a creative role because we have to think of lots of different ways to engage students. So by working with colleagues in LDS, for example, we can use videos, we can develop animations, we can use all sorts of different ways to kind of tap into students’ different ways of learning, which is really interesting, exciting and enjoyable. And it's brilliant for our students who get a really good distance learning experience.

It's a great place to work and if you come and work here, you will really get a feel for the people. It's a very palpable sense that the people that work at the Open University are a little bit different, in a good way.