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ROB MOORE: Hello, everyone, and welcome to Student Hub Live. You're here with me, Rob Moore, today and I'm one of the presenters on Student Hub Live. And it's really good to see you all. Today, we're going to be talking about one of those subjects which might cause you a bit of anxiety and make you a bit cautious, academic conduct. But we've got some experts with us today with lots of advice to make sure that you understand what it is and give you some really good tips.

So today we've got some help with us in the chat. We've got Ralph and Felicity with us. And they're going to be answering your questions, pointing you out to some resources that you can go to and just giving you some tips as we go through the session. You'll notice messages from Ralph and Felicity, because they will have SHL in front of their names. So any messages from Ralph and Felicity are there to help guide you.

And, of course, I'm joined by my co-presenter, Heidi today. Hi, Heidi, how are you today?

HEIDI: Hi. I'm doing really well. Thanks, Rob. How are you doing?

ROB MOORE: I'm all right. I'm looking forward to this session. I've been looking forward to this one for a while. So who have we got with us today, Heidi? And what are they talking about already?

HEIDI: Well, I'm going to start off with our international students first. So good morning to everyone that's in the chat and joining us today. I'd like to say a big Hello to Ernest in South Africa studying B100, which is an Introduction to Business and Management, which I understand is one of your modules, Rob, which is great.

We've got Linda joining us from Canada, who has got up really early this morning to join us, which is lovely. And we've got Michael joining. I hope I pronounced that right, Michael or "Mik-ay-uhl" from China. So great to have you with us.

We've got Leisha. Leisha, lovely to have you back, I know you've joined a number of our Freshers Events you're joining us from sunny blue skies in Colchester, Essex.

Beatrice from Bangor in Northern Ireland, grey skies, but quite warm for a change. We've got Anita in sunny Aberystwyth and Heather, says "Good morning, everyone a bright sunny day. The leaves have not yet turned good for walking after the session today. Studying Introduction to Criminology." Fantastic. I did my master's in criminology. Heather, you're going to really enjoy that.

Mazi says, "I'm definitely going for a walk after this session, Heather, then taking my daughter pumpkin picking, so that's going to be really nice." And Jackie says, "Morning from a sunny-ish Walsall, studying the access module Y035" And I'd like to say a big welcome to Emma because it's Emma's first time joining a Student Hub Live session. So great to have you with us.

We've got Claire watching from the Scottish borders. And we've got Tabby Faith who says, Baradar, everyone, coming to you from a great Wales. Now, it's a busy show today. We've got lots of people in the chat. So if you are finding that it's moving quite quickly, in the top right hand side, there's a little pin. And if you click on that, it will slow the chat down for you. It's a godsend for me. I use it all the time so I can keep track of everything that's going on.

And you'll see that we've got some nice widgets as well that you can play around with. So if you're joining us from the UK, you can pinpoint exactly where it is you're joining us from. And also, please, do let us know which module it is that you're studying. So I'm just having a little look at the widget now to see. Now

we've got lots of people who are studying psychology, which is great. So welcome to everyone, lots of psychology, lots of counselling, and lots of people studying primary education as well.

So please do put your details in there of what module you're studying. Pop any questions that you've got at all in the chat. It's my job to put them to the panel, so any questions or concerns or anything you've got at all, you can pop them in. I'll save them. So just put them in at any point throughout the show. And really enjoy it. Great to have you with us.

ROB MOORE: OK. Thank you, Heidi. And it's good to see so many people joining us from around the world. And it's fantastic to see some of you who this is your first time on Student Hub Live, so hopefully it won't be the last. We've got lots of events coming up throughout the year. So this discussion is split into three parts.

We're going to start off by having a general discussion about what is meant by academic conduct. Then we're going to have another discussion about what are the rules and how do we make sure we adhere to them. And then we're going to finish the whole event off answering your questions. This is my favourite part where we put the panel on the spot, so keep your questions coming through. And Heidi will be putting them to the panel on your behalf.

So I'd like to introduce my guest, we've got some fantastic guests today. We've got Jackie with us. Now Jackie is the head of school-- head of school for learning and teaching. And she leads on academic conduct in the School of Education, Childhood, Youth and Sport. And she also co-chairs the Welsh Faculty Academic Integrity Implementation Group. Now I've got to put my teeth back in after saying all of that. But no, Jackie is a real expert on all things to do with academic conduct.

Then we have Dean who's a student experience manager and one of our academic conduct officers. And he's going to be explaining the role that he plays. And we're delighted to have Charlotte with us from OUSA, That's the OU Students Association. And Charlotte is a student advisor who helps students who have issues but in a whole range of things, but specifically she's going to be talking to us today about academic conduct. So hi, guys, really great to have you with us today.

There is a word cloud for you to fill in at the moment now. So we've changed from the original one. And what we want to write down are the three words, one word at a time, three words that you associate with the term academic conduct. So if you pop those into the word cloud, then Heidi will have a look at that when we've had this sorted out.

So we're going to start off, and I'm going to come to Jackie first. And Jackie, can you explain to us in simple terms, what do we mean by academic conduct? And what is the role of the Academic Conduct Office, or what do they do?

JACKIE MUSGRAVE: Morning, Rob. Academic conduct is very much to do with maintaining standards and it also links to academic integrity, which is about moral behaviour. Now the role of the academic conduct officer has really developed over the years across our school and across the faculty and indeed the University.

Because at one point, it was much more about almost catching students out because what happens is we put all of our students' work through software to look for high matches. But what we have done within the school is really brought it back to the very beginning and looking at what we can do to prevent students being referred for investigation into academic conduct by an officer.

So if I can just go back even further, if you think that when you're studying for your degree you will get credits from each of your modules that you complete and this credit will build up to your final degree. So

you need we all need to be ensuring that what we are submitting in our assessments is our own work. And that we are not either using other people's work. And there is a whole different array of ways that other people's work can be used and we'll come on to that later.

So the very first principle is bearing in mind that whatever you are writing for your assessment should be in your own words. Now there can be-- there are a lot of students who can end up inadvertently, or almost accidentally, and do come in colleagues if you want to clarify my use of words here, but they can end up being investigated for academic misconduct because perhaps they haven't yet developed the skills of writing in their own words, paraphrasing, including references and citations accurately within their work. So we can talk about academic conduct as being good or bad.

ROB MOORE: So what we're really looking for is students to be able to show what they know, what they're saying and to separate it off from perhaps the sources that they've used. And so I know when I was a student, going back-- and of course, we used to chisel into stone tablets when I was studying. But we almost treated the academic conduct as the police. They were out to get you. But that's definitely not the case, is it? What we're looking for is developing this skill.

Now I'm on the other side of the fence as a tutor. It's very much about a skill that we develop with students as they come on. Do we deal with academic conduct differently at level 1 at the entry level to the way we deliver it at level 3 or perhaps postgraduate?

JACKIE MUSGRAVE: Yeah. What we're aiming to do is ensure that students are directed towards the resources that they will find helpful. I did some scholarship with our Praxis Centre, funded by our Praxis Centre and with colleagues within the faculty. And the title of the project is, "How can we Support Children--" children, I'm from early childhood. "How Can We Support Students to Develop Good Academic Conduct."

And we didn't get as good a response in the terms of numbers of students coming forward. But what we did find out was some really valuable lessons. And what the students did tell us was that they would look at a whole range of sources, the library, the VLE for their module, a whole range of different resources, because not one size doesn't fit everybody.

But what all of the students who participated said was that they would then want to come back to their tutor for that reassurance that what they were doing was correct. Now in relation to level one students, why would we expect any level 1 student to come in with these skills? That's what you here with us for. And all as you said, Rob, we've all been through this, what can feel like a bit of a painful process learning about doing references.

So my one real piece of advice would be to engage with the resources and work with your tutor in order to-- and you need to invest that time really in developing the skills. It's like building the foundations moving forward. So what we're really doing with our level 1 students, across the school, across the faculty, is just ensuring that we get that message out and that we're as supportive as we possibly can because what we don't want is--

When I say unnecessary, it's actually inappropriate, I think is the best word, referrals made for investigation for students who may not have had much experience of engagement with education in the past. And from my personal point of view, I only did my master's when I was 40 or something. And it was years since I had done any education. And I really struggled, but I had to put the time in.

And then it's like a lot of things. It's like learning to drive a car. It suddenly clicks and you feel much more confident. But it's about listening and getting feedback. And certainly, as a level 1 student, we want every-

- we want to support and prevent students falling into being investigated for academic misconduct or not good conduct.

ROB MOORE: Absolutely. And it's amazing to me. When I have my students come in at level 1, quite often, I get panicked emails straight away in the first week about, oh I don't know about referencing, how am I going to get it right? Am I going to lose marks for this?

The answer is always the same. Don't panic. This is new. This is something we're going to teach you, something we're going to help you develop. So take it easy. Listen to what we say. If you ignore us, we'll have a problem maybe down the line.

But listen to us, work with us, and we'll make sure you get it right. So I just like to go over to Heidi for a second. We've got the word cloud building up. So these are your thoughts on what we mean by academic conducts. Heidi, what we're hearing from people already? Are we getting concerned emails or are people quite relaxed at the moment?

HEIDI: Yeah, I think we've got a little bit of a mix. So I just am having a look at the word cloud here. So integrity, honesty, rules, plagiarism, respect. So yeah it's, great to see people sharing their thoughts there. Please do have a little play around with the widgets. I just need to say, I've already had my first telling off of the day, Rob, from one of our students. So I have to go back and apologise.

So it was from Daryl. I sincerely apologise. Apparently I pronounced Bangor, incorrectly. In Northern Ireland, I called it Bangor, and it should be Bangor. So Daryl, my sincere apologies. Hopefully you can forgive me. Thank you for this teachable moment, so I will know how to pronounce it correctly in future. We had a question from Theresa, Rob. She says, "I'm at work so may miss some bits of today's session. Can I watch it again later?"

Yes, Theresa, you absolutely can. This will be made available again afterwards. We do have a couple of questions that have come through, Rob, but I just want to quickly touch on some of the love that's coming through for your background. So Tina says, "I need that room that's in Rob's background for sure." Tony says, "I really want that room." Lisa says, "I love Rob's background, but not quite as cute as Heidi's dog." And Lisa, sorry Sophie said, "Lisa, we need a background of Heidi's dog printed over and over again." So if you're new here, this is Martha over my shoulder. And she is my dog, which I think some people think I sedate because she doesn't move and she just sleeps the whole way through. But she's just absolutely ancient like that. So yes, I like to have Martha with me. She's my she's my little study buddy. There she is on the screen, little one-eyed Martha.

Unfortunately, she lost one of her eyes. She had to have it removed, and she can't hear a thing. She's completely deaf. And she's completely riddled with arthritis. She's my little street dog from Cyprus that I had flown over about a year and a half ago. And she's an absolute angel and delight. So nice to share our study buddy there.

And then, I do have a question, Rob. Are you OK for me to pop a question to you and the panel?

ROB MOORE: Yeah, have a question now.

HEIDI: Lovely. OK, so Heather says, "Do the references that we include in our assignments have to only be based on the module? Can we add others that's from outside of the module?"

ROB MOORE: Right. Well, if it's OK, I'm going to ask Dean to cover that particular answer when we move into that question. So and then-- because I don't want to answer the question. That's why we've got wonderful guests. But I'm going to ask Dean to cover that as part of his answer in the next bit if that's OK

In which case, we're going to move on to the next question, then so this is going to go to Dean. And what we want you to do now is on the screen, you'll have a ticker question going across the bottom. What's your definition of the term plagiarism? So share your thoughts in the chat. And Heidi will give us some of your definitions there.

So I'm going to bring Dean in. And Dean, if I can ask you the question, what constitutes academic misconduct? What are the potential consequences? And if you can bring into that the answer to that question as well about module sources. Do we only use module sources?

DEAN FLETCHER: So thank you, first of all, Rob. And great to see so many people here this morning, which I would suggest is probably actually a good sign already, as we'll probably come on to a bit later. We tend to see, as Jackie's already alluded to, it's quite inadvertent plagiarism oftentimes that we're dealing with. So it's usually, I'd say, the more astute students, if I can call everybody that here so far that we tend not to see.

So yeah, to do with a few things, and just to touch on a further point as well. Jackie explained that it I think can often be perceived as a negative, dealing with academic conduct. You are you are naturally dealing with disciplinaries, potentially investigations, breaches, potentially the rules.

And in my view, even though I deal with this day to day, it can quite often be perceived as negative, whereby I think the message has to be that it's important to recognise what is indeed academic misconduct so that we know how to deal with it and know how to avoid it.

But the aim actually is to develop good conduct, to develop good practise. And in doing so, we want students to lean towards how can I be a good academic? How can I use my sources appropriately to gain good credit rather than simply avoiding plagiarism? And because I think you fall short somewhat and do yourself a disservice if it's simply about how can I just simply not do the wrong thing, how actually can I do the right thing, the better thing?

So let's touch on some of those questions. And Robin, and please do come in if I miss any points, but I'll particularly touch on the module materials aspect as well. So what is academic misconduct? Well, it can take various forms. In its simplest, it's utilising or using the work from other sources, using other people's work or words or ideas and presenting them or passing them off as your own.

And a couple of points just to raise there that is often I think a misconception among students, the idea of using the work of others and the idea then of presenting or passing off as your own. So briefly, just to touch on that, when we say using the work of others, it's-- students will often say something along the lines of, this was my work, I wrote the assignment, I handed it in, et cetera.

What we actually mean is within your assignment, when you're drawing on information from other sources, which is permissible. It's completely fine to go and use material from other sources and to just bring that question in, whether that be module materials, whether it be other sources. And it's acceptable to use material from other sources at different levels of study, whether you should be using only module materials or external sources, it kind of depends on the level of study and the nature of the assignment. Generally speaking, at level 1, you only need to use module materials. You won't necessarily gain further credit from going to external sources. So as you progress through your studies, there is a bit more of an expectancy to go beyond simply module materials, et cetera. So that's more of an academic question, rather than whether you are allowed or permitted to use other sources. You can use any source in theory, say that somewhat loosely, but you can use any source.

The issue with academic conduct and referencing is whether you are illustrating that usage to the reader. So to just go back again slightly on the using material from other sources, using other people's work. We don't necessarily mean that you are literally using somebody else's assignment and handed it in, which we'll come to shortly. It's whenever, within your assignment, you're using material from other sources. You use this section from the module materials. You use this quote from this article, et cetera, et cetera. The presenting or passing off as your own is where it's permissible to do that. But when you do that, as I've said before, you have to then illustrate that usage to the reader. So if I use this quote, I have to show the reader where I got this quote from. In the absence of doing so, the reader has to assume that is my work, that's my material because I've not said otherwise. And it's that where the plagiarism occurs. So it's acceptable for me to use to or from other sources. But when I do so, I have to illustrate that usage to the reader so that they can tell apart, they can discern what is mine and what is the work of other sources. So let's touch on just a couple of things that we come across on various forms of academic misconduct. And I'm mindful of what the comments, the ticket question might be, so I don't want to give the answer away at this stage, people haven't addressed it.

But let's say, standard plagiarism. So using the work or ideas of others and presenting them or passing them off as your own. There's also a self plagiarism. So you can actually plagiarise yourself, which a lot of students don't realise, which takes essentially the same form, that I'm in theory copying my work that I've previously done in the past and another module for example and not illustrating to the reader that I'm doing that.

There's also enabling plagiarism, that's where I might make my work available to others and enabling them to commit plagiarism. A common form of that is where students might-- one students really struggling, they've fallen behind with their studies for whatever reason. And as a friend, as a study buddy, you give them some assistance, you give them your work. For whatever reason, they then over rely on that, copy that, plagiarise that, and you've actually enabled that plagiarism.

So it's not simply the offence of just copying other people's work. It's also then the fact that you've permitted that, you've enabled or you've shared your work for that to happen. A more serious forms, so stepping maybe away from inadvertent plagiarism is then where we might deal with cases like contract cheating for example.

So you go to an essay mill, one of these essay companies. They write your essay and you hand it in, essentially. And I know there's various forms of that. Sometimes students use resources to develop their own work, but sometimes students will get an assignment written for them and hand that in essentially. And those companies will say something along the lines of, it's plagiarism free.

Which essentially means that yes, their assignment may be plagiarism free in that they are acknowledging resources, et cetera and other sources that they've used. But when you hand that in, it's actually the plagiarism at that point. So various forms of academic misconduct, but yeah, the message just to reiterate again, is we want to steer towards good conduct, not the bad conduct.

ROB MOORE: Absolutely, Dean. And thank you for that. I think that was really clear, running through the different forms. And you're absolutely, totally agree with you about using module materials. See what you're expected to use, because definitely my level 1 students are expected to stick mainly within the module materials. My postgraduate students are expected to go mainly outside the module materials. So it depends what we're expecting you to do.

And I know that Heidi has got quite a few pointers to bring in. So Heidi, what views are being shared with us in the chat at the moment? What are people saying?

HEIDI: Loads of definitions of plagiarism coming in from our students, which is great to see. So Chantal says, "Copying someone else's work" Iona, "Passing other people's work off as your own," which is what Ian said as well, interestingly, they both said the same thing but they didn't copy each other, I promise. Kirsty says, "Cheating, copying." Amber says, "Using someone else's ideas." Lauren says, "Copyright." Richard says, "Claiming other's work as your own." And then Sandra says, "Using somebody else's work without giving them credit." Yeah, that's the key thing.

Skye says, "Using somebody else's ideas or work as if it were your own." Pauline says, "Not referencing" and Natasha Dawn says, "Not correctly referencing." And then Carol says, "Using other people's work without acknowledgment." So yeah, lots of ideas being shared there. Did you want me to come back to the question, which I was a little bit too eager, wasn't I, Rob? And I asked the question for Dean before he'd even come on the screen. So do you want me to ask that question again. Is now a good time or are you going to move on and get some more first?

ROB MOORE: Is this the one about using module materials?

HEIDI: It's about reference, yeah, that's right.

ROB MOORE: So the simple thing is and we like to try and keep things as simple as possible. So when it comes to referencing module materials, you have paid to study an Open University course. We are assessing your use of Open University materials. So unless you are actually asked to go and find external sources, external arguments, et cetera, we are expecting most of your answers to come from the material you've been given.

The absolute baseline for me of any past assignment is evidence that the student has read the module.

And what are the ways to demonstrate you've read it is to use module materials and reference it accurately. And there's a lot more focus on the earlier levels of the-- I'm in business and management, a lot more on those early levels, whereas, later on when we get to the end of the degree, we're asking students to look for other-- not contradictory, but contrasting arguments and ideas.

And we might ask them to go and do some research. But they still need to come back and use it within the module content. So hopefully that's a big enough answer for that question. If not, we'll come back to it at the end. So hopefully, Heidi, that will cover that.

I'm going to move on to the question for Charlotte now. So Charlotte, in your role in OUSA, you obviously have a lot of students who come to you who are concerned who might have been referred for an investigation. Can you tell us about your experiences of that and the sorts of things that you advise students?

CHARLOTTE STONE: Thank you, Rob. Yeah, so we do get a lot of students come to us with plagiarism concerns. I think July was our busiest month. So just a very quick brief overview of the individual representation service that we offer at the Students Association. It's been going since about November '21. We realised that students needed support with academic misconduct cases or complaints and appeals against the University.

So my role as a student advisor is to support students through the policies and procedures that the University put in place. So yeah, July, like I said was probably our busiest month because a lot of students were contacting us because they had sort of pending results. They went to look at their results expecting to see what they'd been given as a grade and see that their results were pending.

Quite often, they'll then receive an email from the University to say your results are being pended due to a possible plagiarism investigation. As you can imagine, being a student, and I'm a student myself, at the same time I'm working, it's a terrifying prospect to be accused of plagiarism.

But obviously, as Jackie and Dean have been saying, it's not the University aren't there to catch you out. They're there just to make sure that the academic conduct process is followed and that the students are doing the best work that they can do. So when students come to us, what we do is immediately say, it's OK, don't worry. I know it sounds scary, but it isn't. We'll get through this.

So a lot of it is an emotional support as well. Being a student advisor as well as the practical side of things. So we always suggest that students engage with the University's process. So the University will most likely request that the student come back to them with an explanation of potentially how the plagiarism has occurred.

We always suggest that you engage with this, because the University want to know what might have been going on in your life at the time that you wrote that particular assignment. Maybe they're-- you're very poorly. Maybe there's some outside sort of stresses going on, which perhaps maybe you weren't referencing at your best ability. So that's certainly something that we always suggest that you do. What was the other part of the question, Rob?

ROB MOORE: No. No wonder if you've got any some examples. I know when we spoke before, you talked about somebody who was being investigated for plagiarising themselves.

CHARLOTTE STONE: Yes, that's right. As Dean mentioned before, you can self plagiarise. Again, that was a new one on me. The student contacted our service and explained what had happened. We got to see the letter from the academic conduct officer.

And it was because what they had done was referred back to an assignment they had done previously in that module, and they'd not referenced themselves. And they hadn't realised that was a thing. And to be honest, neither had I. So we both went through the policies and the procedures of the plagiarism, and we were like oh yeah, there is self-plagiarism. So luckily for that student, it was a sort of gentle telling off of let's not do that again. Let's just try and get better.

ROB MOORE: Well hopefully, it wasn't a telling off. It was a flagging to say this is how you avoid it in the future. And of course, the reason you can self plagiarise is because you can only be awarded a mark for a piece of work once. You can't put the same piece of work in again and get another mark for it. So thank you for that. That's fantastic. So I don't know if Jackie or Dean want to come in with any other comments here.

I'm interested, we haven't really covered the sort of actions Dean that we might take. So if somebody is referred for an investigation, do we immediately kick them out of the University with a big black mark? Or have we got a sliding scale that doesn't necessarily end up in that place? What sort of actions are you likely to think about?

DEAN FLETCHER: Yeah, it's quite wide ranging actually. And just to touch briefly on what a point Charlotte raised. Ultimately, it's about when somebody is potentially investigated for plagiarism, it's about standards across the board. And as I'm sure every student here today, how would they feel if another student was gaining unfair credit and getting a better qualification, they would, for example, et cetera. So as much as it's catching those people out, which as we've said, it isn't. It's maintaining standards. You know, you're in an academic community now. There's reasons why these standards have to be

maintained, et cetera. And our process seeks to maintain those standards which includes potentially taking action as a result.

So some of those actions-- our software reports are reviewed by a human. So there is actual physical interaction with them. It's not just a case of the computer says refer type thing and it goes off. So it'll be referred-- reviewed by the initial referrer who then determines what appropriate action might be taken here. And it can range from no action, that can be no action on the basis of there is plagiarism here, but actually we're not going to do anything about it or there is no plagiarism, therefore, there is no action that can be taken.

Or in those cases where there is a finding of plagiarism, so it's kind of a dual approach really. Has the plagiarism occurred? Yes or no. And therefore, what do we do about it if it has? So if the plagiarism has occurred, the sanctions there can range from a study skills intervention, an academic intervention that would be where we're essentially saying, OK, here's how better to reference, here's the concept of referencing and illustrating your source, et cetera, and having a session with a tutor, essentially an hour's session for example.

So it could be something like that, an informal caution. We can then go to more the disciplinary level penalties, which might include reducing the marks to some degree. Usually that would be reducing or removing any credit that has been given for the plagiarised material.

And one thing to say on that is that quite often, that's purely to remove credit that should not otherwise have been given in the first place. So to put the student in the position they ought to have been. But yeah, I certainly wouldn't be worrying about being kicked out of University. I mean, it's not that simple. It's not just going to happen straight away.

ROB MOORE: Absolutely. And I know I've been involved in a lot of sessions with students where we have that one hour. And it's the only time they ever get referred, only action that's ever taken. It's that study session to help us catch up. I've just been notified that we've got a question, Heidi, that is right on topic for this. So what's the question that's been raised?

HEIDI: Yeah, I think this is a brilliant question that Rachel has asked. And it's a really important one just to help clarify things for our students if they're brand new. So Rachel says, "If everyone on a module is using the module materials to reference, won't that flag up that everyone's work is plagiarised?" So I think it would be great to get that distinction between how that potential plagiarising behaviour is being picked up. It's not necessarily around, oh, we're all referencing the same person.

But it's about using existing work and actually not crediting. So if they're already crediting, it's fine. But you're the expert, so if you want to explain that to Rachel and others, that would be really great.

ROB MOORE: So Jackie, are you OK to take that one, because I think that's around the technicalities of how we identify what might be potential plagiarism?

JACKIE MUSGRAVE: Excellent question. And I think that's where Dean's point about having the human touch is so important in looking at the reports. And you will find that many of the assessments that we have are personalised to the student. So you're very much encouraged to put in your own experience or reflections.

So you may use-- you will be using the module materials, but it'll be very much your thoughts, your reflections, and your take on what you're reading, and of course, meeting the aim of what the assessment is. So again, this is where by developing your writing skills and paraphrasing, it is a skill. And it does need some time investing in it to develop.

So what I would really say, and I know we're going to talk about top tips later. But I wouldn't get too concerned because it is a skill that you can develop. And it's about sometimes taking a bit of a risk, but always using your tutor to run ideas past and ensure that what you are writing is different enough and not likely to trip you up.

ROB MOORE: And of course, we're not trying to hide this process. I know on all of my modules now, students have the opportunity to put their assignments through Turnitin and get the report themselves. So it's not something we're trying to do in the background so we can catch people out. You can actually check yourself to see what score you get.

And if that's available on your module, talk to your tutor about it. They will explain how to use this and how to avoid it. So thank you for that answer, Jackie. And now we're going to look at some of the rules around academic conduct, about how we work with other students, and how it all fits into assessment. And I'm going to go to my guests, and I'm going to ask for their top tips.

But we also want your tips as well. So on the ticker that's going across the screen, we're asking you to share your tips on how you make sure that the work that you present is clearly your own. So give us your hints and tips in the chat, and we can go to those. So I'm going to start with Charlotte first. So Charlotte, what are your tips for students? So what advice would you give to a student to improve their academic conduct?

CHARLOTTE STONE: I think I'll start with perhaps a more random one. So I recently had a student who contacted us to say that they'd been accused of plagiarism. And what they'd essentially done was used an online platform to put their ideas down, put their thoughts down, and essentially put an essay plan together. It wasn't marketed, as it was going to be widely available to other students.

They just put it down as almost like a brain dump, that's where all their stuff was going to go. But it turns out this website, because this student hadn't paid for a sort of a private space on this website, this website was then shared with other students. And other students have since like taken her essay plan and made it their own basically. So that is something that I would really be mindful of when you have your own essay plans and your own thoughts and ideas, save them somewhere on Word, just on your own PC. Don't make them available online.

ROB MOORE: Yeah, absolutely. And some of the tools that we use are exactly like that where the free account is free because it presents the outputs universally. So again, an example of potential inadvertent plagiarism and enabling plagiarism even though that's not your intention. So that's a really good tip there. So Jackie, what are your thoughts? What advice would you give to students to help them improve their conduct?

JACKIE MUSGRAVE: Understand what is in the academic conduct policy, and what does it actually mean? Get to know your tutor. And we know that a huge proportion of our students have disabilities. Not all of our students actually declare a disability.

But if you know that you have something in your life that's going to impact on your studies, for instance, dyslexia, mental health difficulties, please build that relationship with your tutor so that he or she knows what the possible barriers may be and what could help you develop good academic conduct as well as engaging with the materials and the content and meeting the learning outcomes of your module.

And I think that having the confidence in your-- picking up on Charlotte's really important point, having the confidence to say to other students, we have to be careful about ensuring that the work that we hand in is our own. Therefore, if you are asked, don't pass on your own hard work for others.

And it can be difficult to say no, particularly if your other students are becoming your friends. And I think there's some of the main ideas that are really-- students do find helpful. And not just about disabilities or difficulties of any sort, we all have busy lives. We know that many of our students have got really, really busy lives.

And sometimes you can run out of time to get your work done. And if that is the case, again, speak with your tutor. Don't be drawn into using a website or even artificial intelligence. We know how much that has come to the fore over less than a year. So we at the OU understand how pressured all of our students can be with all of the work that they have to fit in, not just their academic work.

So again, it's back to your tutor, that relationship. Make sure that they know what your situation is. And they can help you, because there is lots of help that isn't using inappropriate sources and support that will end up with you having what is actually an appropriate investigation for academic conduct.

ROB MOORE: Absolutely. And the feedback we give. We are always very specific in our feedback in the area of citing your work and in referencing. We did have a comment come through about if you're saving your own work, make sure you back it up. At and I'll throw in one of my top tips, just as we go through. Every student with OU has a Microsoft 365 account. You're given one when you start. You've got an immense amount of storage there in the cloud. You've got 1 terabyte of storage. Use it, that's probably the safest place to store your work. Computers can fail they can blow up they can get stolen but the cloud is a nice, safe place that you can always get to when you need to. So that would be my tip there.

So Dean, we're going to come to you for your tips about improving academic conduct. What would you say to students?

DEAN FLETCHER: Probably two key ones. Really, number one is, I know you can't make people be confident, but do try to have confidence in using material. Quite often, students response to avoiding plagiarism is not wanting to actually go to sources and not want to over rely on sources. That's not the issue.

Go ahead. We want you to engage with different sources in order to develop your understanding. The issue is when you then illustrate that usage. So do try to have the confidence to actually engage with material. And the key here is illustrate that usage.

And think the way I try to envision that is if I'm writing my assignment, I'm typing it or handwriting it, whatever it may be. Every time I'm looking away from my page, then I'm going to another source, essentially. So at that point, note your sources down. Note the links down. Put it within your draft for example. At any given time, where I'm having to move my head to look for material elsewhere, is when I'm potentially drawing on material from another source. So ensure that aspect of your work is then recognised.

ROB MOORE: That's a really good-- I like that one. If you're not looking at the screen typing, you're using somebody-- potentially using somebody else's work. I also like the one about write your sources down as you go through. I didn't do that when I was studying. I was one of those students that tended to try and bring all the references together at the end, up nightmare.

It got to the point where it was taking me almost as long to check back on the references as it did to write the assignment. I very quickly learned, keep a log of your references as you go through, and that way it makes it so much easier when you get to the end. So if we can have us all back on the screen.

I've got a question I'd like to throw to the panel. We encourage students to collaborate and we encourage having study buddies and study sessions with others. Any tips on making sure that when we have those

really useful, really helpful sessions, that we avoid falling into this trap of potential misconduct? So I'm looking for hands to go up, anybody who would like to take one? Nobody, yet. Go on there, Dean.

DEAN FLETCHER: Yeah. It's a bit of a fine line really between where does study buddy collaboration breach the rules kind of thing, essentially. And even the nature of collaboration, there are times where you will be instructed to collaborate. But it's still important in those situations, again, when you are using material from the other person, persons, then you are appropriately acknowledging that and referencing that.

So we actively encourage students to develop social relationships working relationships, et cetera, studying relationships and sharing good practise. There's good guidance on the website. So hopefully, some material and links will be available for that. But it's when it gets to the point where it's encroached into the work being a form of the collective rather than your own work or indeed when it is drawing on other people's views and ideas and work that you are appropriately acknowledging that. So certainly encourage people to get together, but maintaining the actual output as your own or recognising when it isn't.

ROB MOORE: Yeah. And I think it's that level of discussion, isn't it? It's what are the arguments that we might look at here? What do you think of this idea? What do you think of the-- rather than what are you writing? So having that debate, having that discussion is really useful. It's definitely a key part of learning. But it's stopping short of well, I've written this, what do you think?

And I think that's where, for me, as a tutor, that's marking. I want to see that active debate in the tutor group forum or in the study group. But then I want there to be a clear gap between the discussion and what the student actually writes. So come back, Dean, yeah?

DEAN FLETCHER: Yeah, just kind of touching on a question that was raised earlier. And I apologise I can't remember the name of the person that raised it, but about if we're all writing from the module materials, wouldn't you expect to see everybody plagiarise in essence was the question. And yes, there is indeed a difference. If you are writing about the same topic, the same, I'm from a legal background, so the same case, we would expect to see certain material in there.

It's when it breaches that and goes to what we wouldn't expect to see. And this works with the kind of a study buddy relationship. We'd expect to see the same content addressing the question. We wouldn't expect to see the same structure flow, order of points, the same exact sentence used for example. So it's the sharing of ideas, how you might tackle something rather than how you physically get down to addressing the response to that question.

ROB MOORE: OK. I'm going to bring Jackie back in for a second, because I know Jackie needs to leave us in a moment. So and we've really appreciate your input, Jackie. And just wondered if you've got a comment you wanted to make before we let you get off to your next meeting.

JACKIE MUSGRAVE: Thank you, Rob. I would just, again, say please build your skills up and invest that time. Bear in mind that we really don't want to be referring students for an investigation into their academic conduct, because it is really distressing for students, but also for staff. We just don't like doing it.

We want students to be able to feel that they can submit their own work and get that credit, and that's what we have to do to ensure that standards are being met and that we are all getting the credit towards our degree that we've earned by our own work. Because as humans, we want fairness, don't we?

And it has been touched on that students are actually quite can be quite harsh on each other if they know that another student has basically cheated. And by cheating, I mean, deliberately copying somebody else's work and student's work. Going to an essay mill or perhaps using artificial intelligence, which incidentally is actually relatively easy to identify if that has been used.

So I just want to reassure you that we want to be as supportive as possible and work together to prevent anyone being referred for investigation, particularly when it's still the process of developing your writing skills and referencing skills, because it can really damage your confidence. And I've been there where I've had feedback about my referencing not being as good as it could be when I was a student.

And it's better to have that feedback within your assignment rather than ending up being investigated inappropriately. So I hope I haven't scared people too much. I'm just trying to give the two sides of the story.

ROB MOORE: Yeah, and now, hopefully Jackie, well I think the message today is coming through very clearly. It's basically, we're there to help. We're there to develop your skills and help you to improve. The only way somebody is going to get further down the line to have a real problem is if they don't take on board the help and advice that they've been given. So I'd just like to say thank you again for joining us. And really appreciate you fitting us into your busy day. And we look forward to you in a session in future.

JACKIE MUSGRAVE: Thank you. Thank you, Rob. And thank you students and everybody, it's been a pleasure.

ROB MOORE: Thank you. So we're going to get some feedback from Heidi now, and see if anybody's popped any tips or if they've got any more questions for us. So Heidi, what's being said in the chat?

HEIDI: I love this comment from Aurora just now. I think we've lost Jackie now. But she says, "Can I give Jackie a fiver to stay off the radar in case I ever forget a reference." So that one did make me smile. So advice and tips then. So Ian says, "I've done the referencing course with the library, and it was very good and it put my mind to rest."

And Alicia said, "After this, I'll try the referencing course with the library." So perhaps if one of the team could put the link to that in the chat, that would be really helpful because there's some people talking about that. Iona, "In terms of tips and advice, I take note of exactly where I'm getting the information from. Then when I write the TMA, I add after any citation or thought where I'm referring to anything with a highlighted page number or source name. Then referencing is simple."

I agree with that. I used to be terrible with my referencing. I used to think, I'm going to leave it to the very end. I'd procrastinate. And then I'd finish my TMA and my assignment, and I'd be like, oh, I've got to spend like another day going through now and finding all these reference things. So I started forcing myself to put it into a spreadsheet and then it was easier then to tack on the end.

And I'm sure people are aware of this, but it's something I only discovered very recently. Obviously, in Excel, you can get things in alphabetical order really easily. But you can do the same on Word. So when I submitted my giant dissertation at the end of my masters, which I think was 10,000 words, I just kind of put all of the references in there all in whatever order I wanted.

And then you can just sort it all and it just automatically does it for you. And that just really put my mind at ease, because I'm terrible at putting things in order. So that might be a good tip there. And June says, "I tend to, when writing assignments, reference as I go." Yeah, put the reference list on a sticky note. We've got lots of love for sticky notes in the chat, so I can double check them before adding to my reference list at the end of my assignment.

Now, I do have a question. There are a couple of people, which said they really would like this one to be asked. And I know that we've got plenty of time for questions at the end. So this is quite a quick one, Rob, if I can just quickly put this to the panel. Rebecca says, "Is it possible to have too many references cited in your work assignment?"

ROB MOORE: Oh, that's a good question I'll let Dean answer that. And I'll come back with an answer as well. So Dean, in your role as a tutor as well, do you have do you ever criticise too many references?

DEAN FLETCHER: I think this is one of those instances where there's a bit of a separation between good academically and good academic conduct. So for example, and again, I say this somewhat tentatively. In theory, somebody could copy and paste their entire assignment, quote it, reference it properly, and it's not academic misconduct, but it's not very good academically. Don't do that. That's the disclaimer.

And similarly, with this kind of question, the idea of too many references. If everything that you are quoting from other material sources is appropriate reference, that's fine. I would maybe question academically on, you gain the credit for your own words, your own understanding and interpretation. So drawing on a resource to then show for example, your critical analysis of that is where you're gaining the credit. You're not gaining the credit for necessarily copying that quote.

So to what extent, if you're drawing on so many references, are you removing your opportunity, with word counts and things like that, for example, to actually gain your own credit for showing your understanding? So in principle, reference everything you use, but use wisely.

ROB MOORE: Yeah. And I think my answer is very similar to yours. And it's the-- it's the point that the reason you're using sources is to build up an argument, to build up a point that you're making. If your point is just purely made up of sources, then you're not developing it. You're not proving it.

So for me, a better assignment is one that will have a good range of sources that clearly support the argument or the point that's being made, rather than just lots and lots of sources which come together in a mishmash and not a very structured way. There's definitely a case where you can have too few.

And there isn't-- I haven't got a magic number of how many is the right number. The answer is a really unhelpful enough. You need enough sources to support the point or the argument or the analysis that you're carrying out, and they need to be referenced correctly.

So it's-- my students in my tutor group always grown when I say enough, because it's not a very precise number. But I know when I look at a piece of work, whether there's enough. And it's difficult to say up front. I think what we're going to do. Yeah, we'll have one more question on this one, Heidi, and then we're going to go to a short break. And then we'll come back with a proper question and answer session.

HEIDI: OK, yeah, so just to say, Leisha, I promise you I'm going to put your question to the panel in the next session. And Dale your question was quite similar to Leisha's so I just want to make sure that we've got a bit more time to answer those meatier questions. So that's the only reason I haven't put it to the panel. I'm being reminded in the chat to ask. And I promise I will. It's very much on my radar.

ROB MOORE: They want the questions answered, Heidi.

HEIDI: They do. They're eager. I don't blame them.

ROB MOORE: Which is good. This is what we want.

HEIDI: Yeah. So a great question here from Sophie, and it was one that I really had to grapple with when I first started studying with the OU. The question Sophie asks is, "Does OU module content have an author?" Emma said, "I'd love an explanation on the module content author point raised above by

Sophie." And I think that question is all about referencing in terms of do we reference the OU? Do we reference the author? Like how does it work?

But we know that the module content does have an author, and if you can talk us through in the time that we've got on how we would reference, that would be great.

ROB MOORE: OK, so this isn't a big session on how to reference. We do have sessions in Student Hub Live that look at that. So I'm not going to go too much into the details on the practicalities, however, when it comes to who the author is, sometimes the author is clearly stated and sometimes it's not.

And if the author is stated, you should use the author's name. If the author is not stated, then use the Open University as the author. And that is the very simple rule of thumb. So if you have printed materials from the OU, it's quite often you will see who wrote that section or who wrote that book. And that's the name that you will use.

Sometimes, it's not so obvious if you're using the website version of the module. It's not always so obvious who the author is. So you can then default to using the Open University as the author. What other questions that are being asked and what are the most pressing ones?

HEIDI: Lovely. OK, so Leisha has been waiting very patiently to have her question answered. So thank you so much for your patience, Leisha. So I've got two questions that are quite similar, so I want to try and combine them. So just bear with me here because there's quite a lot of information here. So Leisha says, "If a group of students are communicating in a WhatsApp group, is it OK for them to share the notes they've written about a module they're studying with others on the course. Is that forbidden or is that OK?" And the reason that she asks is because Leisha has been advised that in the code of conduct, it says not to share module information, but does not specify personal notes. Now Dale has gone on and kind of expanded this a little bit more. So I want to combine the two.

Dale says, "Just to clarify, I'm just trying to get a clear response. You're saying it's OK to put non-TMA answers for feedback in the tutor forum for other students to see and comment on, but it's not OK to put non-TMA answers in student social media groups for other students to see and comment on. I understand why they don't want you to discuss TMA answers with students. That makes absolute sense." But I think Dale is-- says, "I have a problem with discussing answers to some of the activities, to not only check if fellow students have understood the questions or content, but also to help students if they're struggling." So that's why I say it's a bit of a meaty one there, so I'm not sure who wants to tackle.

ROB MOORE: Well, we'll come to Dean first to tackle that, and then Charlotte, if we can get you set up to think about what advice you give to students when working together, because we want to encourage that working together. But how to work together and stay within the rules. So Dean first, please.

DEAN FLETCHER: Yeah so again, a bit of a disclaimer. Is it's kind of one of those greyish areas where there isn't a fine line on at what point do you then go into breaching the rules, regulations, et cetera. The first thing to say is going back to an earlier point of any kind of collaboration, whether you're instructed to do that or not, you're always recognising the involvement and work of others.

Insofar, as to what extent that becomes where you should be recognising other people's involvement, I said before about the idea of having a study buddy relationship. We encourage you do consult, share your thoughts and ideas on the general assignment, the question, how you might approach it, et cetera. I personally would say that if you're getting to the realms of sharing notes, even in draft form, that's something for me to avoid, because you, number one run the risk then of it's the recipient, if they use that

material and that then relates to your assignment, how was that match come about, has it been as a result of sharing work, et cetera?

If in theory, the sharing of notes is to the extent of discussing and addressing the task, that's probably something that's quite plausible, quite feasible. And you know, we'd encourage you to do that. It's where anything that might form the content of your assignment is there they're not recognised or illustrated for the usage or that where you're sharing that and you're enabling somebody else to be able to plagiarise that. I don't know if that specifically addresses that part of the question.

ROB MOORE: I think that's a good point. I think if in your notes, you've potentially got sentences that you've created, which could then go into your assignment and somebody else uses it, that's definitely the sort of thing that could be flagged up.

So I think it's be careful is the answer. If you get too close to you sharing your thoughts that could then be used in the answer, that's when you might need to defend it. But we do like students to share ideas. So is that, so thought you were raising your hand again, Dean, to come back to that one, sorry.

So yeah, share your thoughts. Have those conversations. We don't want to stop students talking to each other. Absolutely not. And we encourage you to talk about approaches and argue different points of view and get different perspectives. It's just be careful if you're sharing anything that could then appear in somebody's work. I'm going to come to Charlotte for a second. And Charlotte, I just want to know from the OUSA point of view, what's your advice on working together in study groups? And do you give advice on how to avoid crossing the line? Are there any points that you bring out?

CHARLOTTE STONE: Thanks, Rob. I think, similar to what Dean was saying and what yourself was saying, WhatsApp groups are an excellent source, or a source of social media forums and groups, are a really good source to get other people sort of maybe opinions, perhaps of the assignment question, because sometimes some assignment questions can be taken from can be seen from different angles. So it's always interesting to see what other people think what the assignment question is. But yeah, like you said, you've got to be really careful about crossing the line. In terms of advice that OUSA gives, we usually here to support the student through their perhaps an academic misconduct case.

It's something that-- it's all just about being very careful. It's all again, like you said, we want to encourage students to collaborate together to form friendships and such as well. But you've just got to be really careful that what you say, your ideas perhaps, can't be taken by another student to then be passed off as their own. That's probably, just be very just be very careful.

ROB MOORE: Yeah, absolutely. And steer clear of anything that could end up in an answer, potentially. I'd just like to just make a comment about WhatsApp as well. So you said there you can WhatsApp groups are really useful for picking apart questions and understanding what the questions are. As a tutor what, I'd like to see, though, is using the tutor group forum to ask those questions.

And the reason I say that is that I like to be able to check that what's being said is actually correct. If a student submits an answer to a question and they've completely misunderstood it, they can't use the defence, well, the WhatsApp group said this. If the WhatsApp group gets it wrong, you're going to end up losing marks.

If you ask that question in the tutor group forum and discuss it as students, it gives me the opportunity as your tutor to perhaps head off any misconceptions or any poor advice. So I always suggest that if it's a TMA or exam-related question for some clarity, involve your tutor in that discussion and make sure the tutor is involved because not everybody gets it right. It doesn't matter how good the student is, there's a

chance you might be getting poor advice and we're there to help. So we're not suggesting don't discuss it, just put it in a place where we can be involved. So Heidi, hopefully we've answered that question. What's the next one we've got to look at?

HEIDI: Yep, hopefully Dale and Leisha are happy with that very detailed response. So thank you so much, everyone. So Sophie asked a question. Now this one is a little bit in jest, but I think there's actually a really, really valid point here. So Sophie says, "Can you submit an assignment, then quickly email your tutor to tell them to ignore it and you submit again if you forgot to check your references?"

And then she's put a laughing emoji at the end. But actually, I know there are ways that you can resubmit as long as it's before the deadline. So I thought that might be quite good advice that we give to students as well.

ROB MOORE: So if you don't mind, guys, I'll take this one, because this is advice I give all the time. So first of all, when you submit an assignment through the electronic system, you are allowed to resubmit, I think it's five times. It might even be more than that, but you're allowed to resubmit several times before the cutoff date. So if you find you've made an error, just resubmit.

If you are planning to be away and you're worried that you won't get an assignment in, actually, send an early version of your assignment in as just in case. And then you can always resubmit afterwards. So if you think that you've got a good one, but actually want to do a bit of work on it but I might not get the time, submit the good one, and then submit the further one later on.

So your tutor will always mark the last one that was submitted. So you can't send a note to your tutor and say please do version three, ignore versions four and five, because they won't see versions four and five, they will just see the last one. So the last one you send is there.

And whilst you're submitting your assignments, remember that you are ticking the box that says this is all my own work and I've checked it's the correct format and I've checked it to the correct file. Don't just tick those boxes as a matter of course, because that's you saying to the University, I'm taking responsibility that this is my work and the correct file. You can't come back later and say, oh well, I'll just tick the box, it wasn't the right file at all.

There's a little option to download your submission when you've submitted your assignments. Always do this. Once you've submitted it, download the submission and check it's what you meant. That's the right time to then submit the right one.

I do a lot of work with students where they submit the wrong assignment for whatever reason. It might be an early draft. If you're not very good at marking, labelling your files, get into a good habit. So if you're doing a business degree, you will have six TMA1s by the time you get to the end of your degree. If you just label TMA1 as TMA1, how do you know you've sent the right one in?

So when you're saving your files, TMA1 for B100 final. If you label it as that and your final edition, you know what you're uploading. So a slightly lengthy answer to that question, but yes, you can resubmit if you've forgotten your referencing or if you want to add something, even if it's just in case of submission. So Heidi, next question.

HEIDI: Yeah, so I know that we said that this isn't-- we're not going to give specific details about how people reference, of course, within this session. But this question has come up a couple of times, Rob, and I know that you'll be able to answer it quite quickly. So this is Dale and Sophia who've asked this question. And it's all around referencing yourself which we talked about earlier, so that you're not plagiarising yourself.

So if you've done some work that links to another assignment, essentially, how do you quote and reference those previous assignments? Is that something that we can pick up on quite in a concise period of time?

ROB MOORE: Yeah, so Dean, is that something you can talk through? So referencing yourself in the previous assignment.

DEAN FLETCHER: Yeah, so again, without going too far into the technicalities of the reference, one of the points I always say to students is when it comes to academic conduct, the starting point is are you showing the reader that this came from somewhere else? So if you don't actually technically reference yourself or another source, correctly, if the reader can tell, they're trying to show me this came from x, you know, a separate issue is oh here's how to do that properly.

So the primary starting point for me would be acknowledge that work in some way. How to technically do that, I mean, as a formal answer, I'm not entirely sure, to be honest. I'd personally do that as you would any other reference, an acknowledge the respective TMA. So I say I'm not sure insofar as well. I don't know the year, et cetera, and things like that, the author.

However, you have done your referencing style within that assignment, and that could vary from modules and schools. Then I would apply that in the same format to your respective TMA module, or if it's another institution, it could be an article or a report you've done anywhere in theory. So you're acknowledging it in the same way, but the principle being are acknowledging it.

ROB MOORE: And I think, we don't want students to get panicked that they've got to get it in exactly the right format that we're out, if your italics aren't in the right place or your brackets aren't in the right place. Academic conduct is all about making sure it's clear to the reader where the source comes from.

The actual detail of how you've referenced and what the reference looks like, that style and formatting, we can work on that. So a common comment from me to my students is you're referencing the right things in the right places, just not quite in the right way. Let's work on it. And that for me is the ideal place at year one where we're developing those formatting skills.

The other thing I quite often put in is saying, it's not clear where this came from. This should have been a reference, or you should have told me where this came from, or is this your own thoughts, or did you pick it up from the module? So we give lots of advice on that as we go through.

Just had a comment from Tina flashed up on the screen About? Your tutor can pick up your assignment early. Yes, they can Tina, but the rules to tutors is, we mark the last one submitted before the cutoff date. If you are submitting multiple ones, it's quite nice as a tutor to know there's another one coming so we don't mark ahead of time.

And but oh, look at that. That's my light. Angela is laughing in the background. My light has just fallen off and bonked me on the head. Yeah, so if you do submit another one, it's a good idea to tell your tutor. But we should always be marking the last one. OK, so Heidi another question will I put my light back up.

HEIDI: Well, whoever put that question in your notes there, Rob, I'm annoyed with now because they've just stolen the question that I was going to ask you. And it's because it was part of a broader question, I just--

ROB MOORE: Ask the broader question, then.

HEIDI: Yes, I will do. OK, so I think that was Tina that asked that question. And actually, that's really interesting because I had no idea. I thought that all tutors waited until the deadline before any of them

started marking. So Tally says, "What if a tutor starts marking assignments submitted before the cutoff? If so, they may mark an earlier submission."

Christine said, "I read somewhere that if I submit an assignment early and then the tutor has the right to mark that early, then that's the version that they will use, is that correct?" And then Pauline says, "Surely some tutors collect them before the cutoff, though." So I know we touched on it there, but can we just clarify like once and for all the process for all of our slightly concerned students then in the audience.

ROB MOORE: Yeah, so because we are busy, we will pick things up early. And it depends what your tutor said as well. So what I normally say to my students in my welcome message is, I may pick the assignments up and start marking them early. If you intend to resubmit, let me know. So that's what I put it.

It's not an official thing. But the official thing from the University is you are allowed to resubmit up to the cutoff date. And as your tutor, we should mark the last one submitted before. A bit of advice though, don't annoy your tutor by sending something in really early, then sending something in on the cutoff date without letting them know. It's got nothing to do with policy, it's more to do with the fact you don't want an annoyed tutor marking your work, so it's just a sensible thing to do rather than anything else.

Yeah, the OU policy is the last one submitted before the cutoff date will be the one marked. But it's just about that communication and courtesy, because we do like-- we've got a lot of work to do to turn the assignments around. And I do know a lot of tutors like to get started early. You definitely won't get the results back before the cutoff date, but some tutors will mark before. So it's that relationship with your, tutor build on that.

And if you let us know, that's right. And in a lot of cases, the things that you change are really quite minor polishing things. It's not often that we'll get a resubmission where it's a major change. OK, any other questions? I'm quite conscious we've not had Charlotte on for a while, so any questions we can put to Charlotte?

HEIDI: Oh, you've just put me on the spot with that one. I don't know if this one's going to be completely relative to Charlotte, so I do apologise. But this is a question that's come through from Tony. So Tony says, "Is Mendeley, OU approved?"

Now, I had to Google Mendeley. We've had quite a few conversations around Grammarly in the chat. Some people saying they love it, some saying they're really not keen. I found Grammarly, amazing actually, really, really useful. So yeah, Mendeley is about avoiding plagiarism when writing. So is that something that is approved by the OU? Are we happy for students to be using Mendeley?

ROB MOORE: Now, this one's definitely going to have to go to Dean. And it was a question I had, Dean, the fact that not just Mendeley, but reference generators in general, do we like them or not? Reason I ask that is because we have a very specific style at the OU. We use Harvard referencing as approved by Cite Them Right. So do you find there's a problem when students are using these reference generators, reference management tools?

DEAN FLETCHER: Yeah, there's probably two points again, here. And I feel like I've maybe said this. The common denominator is, ultimately it's referencing the work from another source before we're going to the technicalities of how you do that, et cetera. Obviously, in different modules schools, you will have the way of referencing as I kind of alluded to before. So as long as it's consistent with that.

Insofar as what's approved, what isn't, then there isn't there isn't a clear line on, yes, you can, you can use this and that. That's like using any source. I think, in theory, you can use any source out there,

however credible that source is. Academically, you may get credit or not for using credible or not credible sources. But in theory, if you use material from another source and you've referenced it, academic conduct wise, you're fine, sort of thing, you know. Let's look at that separately whether you're drawing on appropriate sources.

In any study, certainly in legal study, are you using the actual laws, Halsbury's Laws of England, et cetera, the relevant acts legislation? Or are you going to Wikipedia? Well, there's a difference there. But the second point is, I think, don't do yourself a disservice. We've said before about the nature of referencing an academic being a skill and a skill to be developed.

Yes, get assistance in trying to do that and use the resources in how to construct a reference, but try to actually learn that skill as you go along. Don't have something, do it for you because you actually miss out and do a disservice to yourself I think in that respect. So to kind of catch all that, acknowledge the sources, primarily. And nothing is necessarily approved or not. It's whether you are acknowledging the source and doing that properly and appropriately. But do try to, yourself, gain the study and the skill of referencing and using credible sources.

ROB MOORE: And you've actually hit on one of my bugbears as a tutor, where students are using these reference generators. And because the OU is behind a password protected system, if you use some of these generators to generate your online references, it basically gives you the link to the sign in page for the OU. It's not a reference at all. It's just a link to the sign in page.

And where that happens, I quite often go back to the student, say, look I don't have a problem with you using something to generate your references. But at least, I expect you to be able to recognise when it's kicked out rubbish. So something that's just taken me to the Open University signing page is, as part of their online reference, is not an online reference. And for me, that's where the skill comes in. If you're using these tools, being able to recognise when it's telling you something that just doesn't make sense. So I'm going to finish up because, Charlotte, I'm very conscious that Dean has answered the most questions. I'm going to give you just a minute just to say something about how students can get in touch with OUSA if they do want some advice, if they do feel they need some advice. How do they get in touch with you and the best times to do that?

CHARLOTTE STONE: OK, lovely. So we have a website. I think it's oustudents.com. Hopefully, it can go in the chat somehow or on the web page afterwards. So if you look on our website, it's all-- we've got a whole section about student advice and the individual representation service. It will give you some help information around plagiarism and also the other things that we can help and support with such as complaints or appeals, academic appeals.

And there's also a way of appealing a plagiarism case, if that's what you wanted to do. So we're here. It's myself and my other colleague, Chibwe. We both work part time, but over the week, we are we're always in. One of us is always in. We're here to help and support as needed.

ROB MOORE: And am I right in assuming that all students of the OU are automatically members of the OU Students Association? They don't need to join, they're automatically members.

CHARLOTTE STONE: Yeah, automatically members, that's right, Rob.

ROB MOORE: Thank you for that. And thank you, Charlotte. Thank you, Dean for your time today. It's been really helpful. And hopefully we've allayed some of the fears and people are feeling more comfortable about developing their academic practise. So Heidi, as always, last comments to you. Last thoughts from the chat?

JACKIE MUSGRAVE: Sorry, yeah, just lots of engagement in the chat today. Lots of people are talking. So hopefully, she said, we have been able to allay some fears. I know some people said that they were feeling a little bit anxious, a bit concerned. So hopefully we've been able to put your mind at ease. And I'm sorry that I wasn't able to put all of the questions to the panellists. I know our students have been really, really enthusiastic. So I'm so sorry if we didn't get time to answer your question. But thank you so much. And we hopefully, we'll see you at the next event.

ROB MOORE: Thank you very much. And talk about the next events, we have a few coming up. So we've got a number of workshops coming now. It's a little way to our next live event in the studio. So we've got academic conduct. Oh no, that's today. Look at the-- I'm reading the calendar, I can't even figure out which day it is.

We've got some sessions looking at essay planning and academic writing coming up. So these are all booked, but you can still put your name on the waiting list. We've got sessions coming up on creative problem solving. And then in November, we've got a session on support and well-being for student carers.

Also in November, we've got a session on power reading and busting myths around academic conduct. So if you want to see the events that are coming up, please go to the Student Hub live website. They're all listed there. If you want to make sure you don't miss out when the tickets are arranged to go to these things, subscribe. That's how to make sure you get your tickets in advance.

And of course, we've got the feedback form. So there should be a link to the feedback form on the website and in the chat. We really do like, well, we need your feedback. We need to know what you want us to talk about. And we need to justify the time that's spent bringing these sessions to you.

So tell us what you want to talk about. Tell us the things that you like, the things you didn't like, and we'll. Make sure we bring those in the future. So thank you everyone for taking part. It's been a great morning and I look forward to seeing you all at future events. So have a good day. Bye-bye.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[AUDIO LOGO]