

# 148 Ask Questions small

MARGARET GREENHALL: We're going to be doing a session tonight called it's OK to ask questions. And what we've got is we've got people from around the university are going to tell you a little bit about their role and what sort of questions you could ask them. So it's a freshers event, so I'm hoping that a lot of you are new to the university. But if you're somebody who's already been here a few years, that's fine as well. We have the chat running, so please do participate in the chat. And I think we've got a couple of wonderful people in the chat tonight.

We've got Frank and Ralph, who are both helping you out in the chat. Frank is from academic services and Ralph is from student services. So both of those will be helping you in the chat. And you may also see Kat and Rafa popping up as well, who are my Student Hub Live colleagues. Live with me in the room today we've got Heidi. She is going to be helping me out and telling me the things that you're doing in the chat. Heidi, they've been running a widget finding out where people are from. So where are people from tonight?

HEIDI: Yeah. So we've got the widget. So hello to everyone. So as Margaret said, my name is Heidi. If you came to the session this morning, it's lovely to see you again. I was supporting Isabella this morning, and now I'm supporting Margaret this evening. So I studied with the OU for five years between 2009 and 2014. Then I went off and did a masters, and now I'm back again and I start a PhD next week. So I'm going to be feeding through, as Margaret said, what comes through in the chat.

And I just want to reassure you that if you're brand new to OU study, I know exactly what it feels like. You can feel a bit apprehensive and a little bit overwhelmed. So before I go to the widget, just to say, Margaret. So a couple of people in the chat are asking about the format of this Student Hub Live. So this is a live broadcast. And if people are used to having Adobe Connect, it does look slightly different. Some of our sessions we hold in Adobe Connect and some of them we hold with this live broadcast.

So it does take a little bit of getting used to, but just to reassure you, you will get used to it. So the widgets, these are really fun, interactive little bits that make up part of the show where you can engage. So we have lots of different ones running throughout the show. And as Margaret said, we've got one here about where people are joining us from. So I've just put my details on the map there. So hopefully you can see the map of the UK and you can pinpoint exactly where it is you're joining us from. But if you're one of our international students-- we've got loads of international students.

I know we've got somebody joining us from-- it's Joel from Luxembourg this evening, so hello to you. If you're joining us from outside of the UK, then you can also add that on to the widget as well. So I can see we've got three people in North America joining us tonight, Margaret, and we've got 11 people in Europe and we've got 47-- or 48 in the UK and Ireland. So yeah, do familiarise yourself with the widgets as we go throughout the show, and lovely to have you with us and we hope that you enjoy it.

MARGARET GREENHALL: Thank you very much, Heidi. So I will introduce myself a little bit. So my name is Margaret. I work for the Student Hub Live as a main presenter. So I'm doing quite a lot of sessions this year for Student Hub Live. Next week, we're doing one on tutors and tutorials. And I'm actually an Open University associate lecturer, so I'm a tutor on three different courses, all science courses. So first year maths course, first year science course, and an environmental science course.

And I'm also an Open University student myself in geology. So I'm studying geology with the Open University, and I did my master's in education with the Open University. The format of tonight is going to be we're going to have different guests from different parts of the university, and they're going to talk for a little bit, and then you're going to get your chat questions brought to me by Heidi for the guests to answer. So we're going to just have a quick wave from each of my guests tonight. So they're going to come up on screen and we shall see them. So we've got from various different parts of the university.

That's Mark there from information services. That's Mark from student services, and Lucy, who's another associate lecturer, amongst other roles she does within the university. So they're all going to be talking to you later on and also fielding your chat questions. We've also got a video from a lady called Ute from the library, who can't be with us live tonight, but she's got some really useful information she wanted to share about the library. So all three of those are going to talk for a little bit and then bring the chat questions up to answer those.

So if you've got something you think you want to ask them, Heidi will capture your question and hopefully bring it to that person as we get through the session. She won't be able to bring every single question, so unfortunately, if yours doesn't get answered, I do apologise. But as many as she can, we'll try and get answered tonight, because obviously it's OK to ask questions.

So we're going to start the evening with Mark from student services. So we're going to have a chat with him about what goes on in student services. So right. OK. I'm just waiting for him to be in the right bit of the thing. So we're going to talk to Mark Newman from student services. Right, OK, there he is. So evening, Mark. Welcome and thank you very much for joining us tonight. Could you just tell us a little bit about the role of student services within the university, please?

MARK NEWMAN: Yeah, of course. And hi, everyone. I'm really pleased to be here and welcome everyone to this session. So as Margaret says, my name is Mark. I work as a senior advisor in the student support team. I'm part of what's called FASS or the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. And the student support team's role, really, we offer a range of advice and guidance on various kind of aspects of your studies.

Just to say, regardless of which module or qualification you're on, you will always have a student support team which is assigned to you. So like I said, I work for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. We also have Faculty Business of Law. One being education and languages and also science as well. In terms of just to give you an examples of the kind of things I guess we do and what we can help with. So whereas maybe your tutor would help with things like the content of your assignments, giving you feedback on assignments, the content of the module generally, I guess we can help on other aspects to your studies. So for example, it could be around supporting you about maybe concerns about completing your studies or maybe any other sort of pressures that's going on. We can help with things like, time management. Whether it's best to study one module or maybe you can study two modules. We also do a lot of signposting. So we do quite often refer to other internal or external agencies.

And another popular one is we do help with things like changes of qualification or changes of modules. And maybe how to navigate the system, because we appreciate starting at the Open University. There's a lot of online information. So we do also help you in terms of helping you through navigating the various systems and who to go to for the right support, really.

MARGARET GREENHALL: Brilliant. Thanks a lot, Mark. So you've told us some things about what you could do, but if I was a new student, how would I know how to get in touch with you? Because obviously it's a really good system to have the support there for me, but how do I get in touch?

MARK NEWMAN: So there's quite a few ways that you can get in touch with us. I mean, our details are always sort of on the Help Centre. I think there might be a contact link that will be posted in the chat. But you can call us. So we're available 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM Monday to Friday, and I think that's the same regardless of which kind of student support team you're aligned to. If you prefer, you can also contact us via webchat. You can do an online message.

You can even request a call back at a specific time of day. The only thing I would say with contacts. If it's something where you feel you want a more urgent response, I would always encourage, if possible, to contact via phone or webchat. At our peak period, if you're sending emails or online forms, it can take us a while to get back to you. So yeah, I would say for anything urgent if you feel happy to do so, give us a call or even do the webchat option as well.

MARGARET GREENHALL: Brilliant. OK. And you find that on your Student Home, won't you? Each student will have their own way of contacting student services on their Student Home. As a tutor, there's some things that I can't answer when my students ask me, can you help me with this? And so I often refer my students to student support services, and there's so many questions that I end up passing towards yourselves. I was interested, though, what are your most frequently asked questions?

MARK NEWMAN: So I think this-- it can vary and, yeah, I think also it depends on the time of year. So obviously around your exam, end of module assessments, we get a lot of questions about that. But I think generally we do get a lot of questions about things like, if you're not able to submit your assignment, what are your options? So it may be we could encourage you to approach your tutor for an extension or direct you to what's called the assessment strategy, which goes over, I guess what you need to do to pass the module.

Another common question is we sometimes get students who are maybe they've started the qualification and maybe they're unsure if it's exactly the right one. Maybe they want to tweak it or change it slightly. And also, we appreciate that students are here for three to six years or even longer. So sometimes, your studying tensions or your reasons for study may change at various points. So we also appreciate sometimes you might want to talk about maybe the option of changing qualification.

Another popular one is, how do the modules count towards your degree classification? So your stage one modules, for example, which I think a lot of you guys will be starting on with, they don't necessarily count towards the classification. And we appreciate it's quite sometimes difficult to work out what modules count kind of thing. But you know, what I always say, no question's a silly question. So always, any questions you have, we would always try and help, definitely.

MARGARET GREENHALL: Yeah. I think that's what people have got to realise, that all of us are here to help students. Ask us stuff if you've got a question. And I'm going to ask you one final question before we go to the floor and see what has been going on in the chat. What's your best advice for a new student?

MARK NEWMAN: So I think the first thing I'll say is familiarise yourself with your Student Home page and your module website and also the Help Centre as well. I'd always say it's worth looking at-- I think I mentioned it before, the assessment strategy, which shows what you need to do to pass the module. That's something that you can find on your Student Home page. That helps in terms of identifying when

the peak periods are. So which kind of assignments are going to count more, when you're going to be busiest during your module as well.

And the second one I would say is, always be realistic in what you're studying in terms of the amount of time you've got. Because I think sometimes, the temptation can be to complete the degree as quickly as possible, and I think that's a kind of normal thing, really. But equally, there's loads of options available. You can study one module, you can study part-time, full-time. You can even take breaks in studies. So there's no right way of studying. It's all about choosing the option that's right for you, really.

MARGARET GREENHALL: Brilliant. Thanks a lot, Mark. So I'm hoping Heidi is going to be ready to come along with some questions that have come up from the chat. So, Heidi, has anything been coming up in the chat that you want to tell us generally? And then have you got some spe-- I can't say specific. Some questions for Mark. I don't know why I even try that one.

HEIDI: Yeah. I absolutely do. And actually, Mark, this question leads on really well. So I've got quite a few questions coming through, so we'll get through as many as we can in the time that we've got. So Mark, I'd like to ask you this one first because it follows on what you were just discussing there. So Jordan has asked, are you able to stagger level one and level two at the same time? Jordan is thinking of staggering module two, stage one and module one, stage two if Jordan has the time after the first year of study. Now, some people in the chat said they think that is possible, Some think that it's not. So you'll be our fount of knowledge, I think there, Mark, if you could confirm for us, please.

MARK NEWMAN: Yeah, sure. To be honest, it can depend sometimes on the qualification. So you'll find that some stage two modules, you have to pass specific modules in stage one before you can start study to stage two. But there are scenarios sometimes when you can start study one stage one module and one stage two module at the same time. But it does really vary depending on I guess which qualification you're studying.

HEIDI: Great. Hopefully that's really helpful for you, Jordan. Thanks for that response. So moving on to the next question. So Charlie has a specific question around tutors and would like to know when first year students actually get assigned their tutor. And again, we've had a few people responding in the chat, but if we could get a sort of a response for everyone, that would be really helpful.

MARK NEWMAN: Yeah, sure. Sorry, your dog just distracted me a bit there.

HEIDI: Sorry.

MARK NEWMAN: Once your module website is open, you should shortly get sort of allocated a tutor. So certainly by the time the module starts. I think for most of you, your modules are starting around the 5th of October. So by that point, you should be allocated a tutor. It can vary. So it could be a week before. It could be a couple days before. But certainly by the time your module starts, you should be allocated a tutor. And if that's not the case, certainly do get in touch with us so we can follow that up.

HEIDI: That's great. Really helpful. Thank you so much. Now, Adam has modules that straddle two faculties. So Adam is asking which student support team should he use.

MARK NEWMAN: So I think officially you would contact the student support team aligned to the actual qualification that you're studying. But to be honest, whichever student support team you come through to, we would always try and help. If it ends up being something that's very specific to the-- so say if I got one that was specific to science, I would always try and help as much as I can, but then I would maybe refer it to my colleagues within science. But I think when you click the link online, it'll automatically take you to the correct student support team and their contact details.

HEIDI: Lovely. That's great. One from Crystal. How do you know which assignments are the ones that count towards your final grade?

MARK NEWMAN: So on your Student Home page, you will get the assessment strategy which tells you-- first of all, it tells you what you need to do to pass. So normally that would be to get an overall score. You might need to get a certain score on your exam. And then it also shows you the weightings of each assignment. So there'll be some assignments that might only be worth, say, 5%. Other ones would be worth 20%. So it does, again, vary depending on the module.

And like I was saying earlier, if you're studying a degree, it's normally just the stage two and stage three modules. They're the ones that count towards the overall classification. You do still need to pass at stage one, but stage two and stage three, they're the ones that count towards the actual degree score. Although it might vary depending on which qualification you're doing. So yeah, again, any questions about that specifically, please do get in touch with us.

HEIDI: Lovely. Now I know that we're a bit short on time, so I've a couple more questions that I'm going to put to you, Mark, if that's OK. So Tanya says, will there be a time when we're taught how to properly reference when working on assignments? And is it possible for us to send draughts to our tutors beforehand before we actually submit our work?

MARK NEWMAN: So I think in answer to the first point, I mean, there are sessions, I think even through Student Hub Live and also OpenLearn, which do sessions around referencing and other, I guess, academic skills. And I think in terms of the second part, I would encourage you to reach out to your tutor as soon as you know who your tutor is, just to advise them what works for you. And if it's possible to send draughts, I would probably say, yes, it should be OK, but I think it might vary depending on the individual tutor. So I would always encourage you to check with them first.

HEIDI: Great. And final question, I can actually answer this one. So Cheryl has asked the question, can you do a PhD at the Open University? And the answer is yes, Cheryl, you certainly can. I'm starting my PhD next week. So when you come back and see me in three months' time, I'm not sure I'm possibly going to be quite as coherent as I will be after three months of PhD study. But yeah, I don't know if Margaret or Mark wants to pick up on that and explain a bit more about some of the PhD opportunities at the OU.

MARGARET GREENHALL: I have to say that I don't know much about it, so I would--

MARK NEWMAN: There is a dedicated-- I'll be honest, we don't really deal directly with PhDs. There is a specific PhD team, though. So if you've got your website and search research degrees, PhDs, there is actually a contact team that you can contact directly about any sort of information around PhDs.

MARGARET GREENHALL: So thank you so much for joining us tonight, Mark. It's been really invaluable, the amount of information you've been able to fit in such a short time. And I do hope that our students feel free to ring you up and ask you lots of difficult questions.

MARK NEWMAN: Absolutely. It's been great. Thanks, everyone. Bye now.

MARGARET GREENHALL: OK, bye. Mark, Thank you so much. So thank you very much to Mark for that. So we now have a video Ute from the library, and somebody was asking about the referencing. She's going to talk a little bit about that, and the people in the chat will be putting in some links to the library referencing provision. So the library is your go-to place for sessions that they run for you to go on referencing.

And also they have lots of links on particularly the Harvard Cite Them Right. So there's a page on the library site that I go to about 15 times when I'm doing my assignments. I keep going to it, and I never managed to get around to bookmarking it. So I would highly advise that you bookmark that one. So hopefully the technology is going to work and we should be seeing, for the next 10 minutes, Ute and myself that was pre-recorded a few weeks ago.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- Hi, Ute Welcome to Student Hub Live today. Thank you very much for recording this video. I'm just going to ask you a few questions about what goes on with the library. So can you tell us a little bit about what you personally do in the library?

- Yes, of course. Hello. Welcome to Student Hub Live. So I'm a learning and teaching librarian, and what I do is I teach digital information literacy. So I provide training sessions for students, for example, on skills like finding information, evaluating information, referencing, and I'm also advising on these skills at the helpdesk. And another thing I'm doing is that I read draughts, which will later on become module material, and make sure that library sources are embedded and students develop these digital information literacy skills.

- Oh, fantastic. Lots of different things you do, then. So when I think of a library, I think of where you should take my kids to read Gruffalo and things like that. But I'm guessing a modern University Library is a very different entity to that. Could you tell us a little bit about what a modern university library does?

- Yes, of course. No problem. Yes, we do have a kind of physical library, but most of all, we are an online library. So what we do is we provide electronic material, make sure it's accessible to students. And yeah, so students can access our resources 24/7 and we make sure they are available.

- Fantastic. So there's lots of things that students can use, but I mean, so that's all the online stuff.

- Yes.

- But a lot of our students are studying at home, which can be a bit lonely. Is there any way they can get to physical libraries?

- Yes, they can. I know occasionally we have some students living close to Milton Keynes where we have the physical library for the Open University, so they are very welcome to come and use that space. We are open at core hours, 9:00 to 5:00, Monday to Friday. But for the majority of students who live further away, they can join the SCONUL scheme, which is a UK and Ireland scheme. So if they live in the UK and Ireland, they can then, once they've registered with it, visit another university library which is closer to them, and there they can use the spaces, but they can also borrow some physical books and they can go online to do their actual studies.

- Wow, that sounds amazing. I haven't actually made use of that myself, but I did know about it. We've got people in the chat putting the links in, so if you're interested in what she's just telling us about, the links are there for you. So as well as being a tutor, I'm also a student. One of the things I had to do, the final thing, was write a report, and I had to find references to write my report. But I just couldn't narrow down the search and get anything useful. I kind of started at the top of the library search or I started on Google. Do you have any suggestions to ways that I could have found those references more easily?

- Yes, we have quite a lot of help and support and guidance available in the library. So on the library website we have got a page called Help and Support, and there we have got a section which provides you with links like finding resources for your assignments and how do I do a literature search. And that also goes into how to, for example, filter results, how to choose keywords which are the most appropriate

ones. And we've also got some training sessions which can help students with these kind of search techniques for a subject.

So there is a training and events page as well on the library website, and there sessions such as-- well, there is the introductory session to the library, but there is also one about using library search, which is our discovery tool, and there is one which is about using library databases. So I would recommend using both the guidance on the Help and Support page and also the Training and Events page. There are recordings available, but if students want to attend a live session, they are very welcome to do so. Dates are listed there. And finally, there is also a Being Digital collection which is under a slightly different section on the library website, which is using the library and then services for students. And Being Digital is a collection of short activities students can do. And that goes into filtering information, finding keywords. So anything they actually need for search.

- Wow, this seems to be a lot of resources there. One of the things you mentioned that I did find my way to eventually was the databases. Could you just explain to the students what a database is compared to the main library search?

- Yes, of course. So databases focus on a number of journals. Very often they are subject databases. So students would then already do a search in a resource which is already a bit subject focused. So the database will search fewer results than library search because library search searches across most of our databases.

But it means they will have to filter a little bit less and often it's already a little bit more subject focused, and it also gives them the chance to do a slightly more tailored search. They have got more options how to actually search in an advanced search. So it's quite useful to start off with the discovery tool library search and then go into a database to actually refine that search later on.

- Brilliant. Thank you very much. That sounds fantastic. And then the next thing that I have to do, obviously, once I've got the information, is I've got to do referencing properly within my report. And it's one of the top questions we get from our Student Hub Live students. They say, how do we reference? And we say, the library's got some fantastic resources. So what sort of resources do you have to help our students with referencing?

- Yeah, that's a good point. And we get quite a few questions about referencing as well. So again, this is on the Help and Support page on the library website. There is an entire section about referencing. One of the links which is also a subpage is called Referencing and Plagiarism. And on this page, it explains quite a few things about referencing. But there is also a link to the Cite Them Right database.

The Cite Them Right database covers the different referencing styles students will use, and it also covers the different types of resources, like a journal article or book or module material. So students can then look up how to reference that particular type of resource. They get an example, they get a template, and that should hopefully help them. They can browse it, but they can also search for particular resource. Oh, and there's a quick guide. So for the most frequently used types of resources, there's a quick guide to Cite Them Right Harvard referencing.

So if students use Cite Them Right Harvard, they can use the quick guide. Most students will be using that. But we always say check your assessment guidance first, which styles you are using. And yeah, hopefully that will help them. But there is also some referencing help in the Being Digital collection, which I've mentioned earlier on. There's an entire pathway about referencing and it does guide students on the referencing journey.

And there is also a training session, Why and How of Referencing, which they find on the Training and Events page. So there is help available. And we are always there at the helpdesk, as well if students have more questions. Students can find links to our webchat and also how we can connect to them via phone and email on every page of the library website.

- Fantastic. So that seems like-- I do send my students to that page all the time, the short guide to the Cite Them Right. When they ask me what to do, I say, go to this page. It tells you exactly what to do for each type of in-text citation and each type of reference. It's an amazing resource there. So thank you very much for joining us today. We'd just like to finish off with finding out what's your top tip for using the library.

- Yeah. I mean, my top tip is that if you've got a few minutes, just explore the library website and where everything is and find out where the different resources are and just play with it. You can't break it. And if you get a little bit stuck, yes, read up on the guidance and help and support sections and the other places I've listed. But please do feel you can get in touch with us at the helpdesk as well. So it's just practise.

- Brilliant. Thank you so much for your help today. Do, everybody, get on that library and use it. It's got so much resources. You can even get e-books, an entire e-book to borrow, can't you?

- You can. Yes. Yeah.

- Right. Brilliant. Thank you very much.

- Thank you very much for having me. It's been a pleasure.

- Thank you.

[END PLAYBACK]

MARGARET GREENHALL: Thank you so much, Ute for taking the time to record that with us. We've been having a little widget running whilst Ute was talking, having a look see which of those services you might be wanting to use. So let's have a little look. Heidi, do you to tell us a little bit about what people have been doing?

HEIDI: Yeah, yeah. Absolutely, Margaret. So the most popular choice at the moment for our students in the chat about what services they think they'll use from the library, the number one, as we can probably predict, is reference training. So you talked about it there in your conversation. So reference training is number one.

Database search is the second most popular, and then borrowing e-books. I think the numbers are moving around as I speak. I think your little plug of the e-books at the end there, Margaret, helped with people making their mind up about what service they're going to use. And then you've got the SCOUNL scheme, which is amazing, where you can go and use other libraries.

I don't know whether many in the chat have been to the library at the Milton Keynes campus of the Open University, the Betty Boothroyd library, but it is absolutely beautiful. It's fantastic. So if you live anywhere near Milton Keynes, then do pop along and make use of it, because it's really lovely. So the numbers have completely changed now, Margaret, as I've said that. Nothing I can do. So we'll go with what I said at the start. But yeah, it's changing as I talk.

MARGARET GREENHALL: And what else has been going on in the chat whilst people are watching the video? We haven't got Ute obviously, to answer questions, but are there any things you want to bring to the live show about what people have been saying in the chat.

HEIDI: Yeah, well, there were some questions that were coming through, which obviously we can't put to Ute. But one thing that I would say to students-- so as I've mentioned, I've been there. I know what it's like



to study with the Open University and to take this very first step. There's lots of people that are feeling concerned about many elements of their studies, which is completely normal and completely natural. What I would say is just take it a step at a time. Nobody is going to expect you to have your head around everything immediately, and don't feel concerned that you're going to slip behind if you haven't immediately understood something. It's absolutely fine. The OU is here to support you. And the wonderful thing is we have such a diverse group of students.

We've got students who are working full-time, we've got some students that are in caring responsibilities, that have got families. We know what it's like for individuals to be juggling so much. So just try to be kind to yourself and just take it a step at a time. I know it's easy to get a bit overwhelmed at the beginning, but honestly, this time next year, once you've done a year of it, you're going to be sitting here thinking, whew, what was I even worried about?

MARGARET GREENHALL: Thanks a lot, Heidi. You've got a lot of experience yourself, haven't you? OK.

HEIDI: Yes. Yeah. Lots and lots.

MARGARET GREENHALL: So thank you very much for that. And do make use of the library. I think I've underused it really last year in my course. So I'm now doing a third year course. I better start using it a bit more, I think. So we're now going to be hearing from a new person. We've got Mark joining us from information security. He's going to be telling us a lot about what he does. So thank you, Mark, for joining us. Very kind of. I don't know much about what you do in information security, so could you just tell us a little bit about your role within the university?

MARK HUGHES: Yes, of course. No, good evening, everybody. Good evening, Margaret, everyone on the call. First of all, welcome to the university. Welcome to the OU, our community. If you're joining us again after studying before, welcome back. And yes, in a nutshell, yes, I am Mark Hughes. As you've just seen on the screen, I'm the information security engagement manager here at the Open University. So in a nutshell, my role as a whole has been predominantly been working with staff. over the last few years. I've been in my role-- it's evolved slightly over the years, but for the last three or four years, and we're working to ensure that the OU is a secure place as possible that prevents cyber attacks getting through as often as possible, and that you can go about your studies in a secure way and that we're supporting you with that. And I think in terms of moving on from supporting you with that, that's where we want to move our focus now in the next 6 to 12 months.

So to achieve this, I'm working with my wider team, my senior information security engagement manager, to improve and deliver our information security engagement plan to incorporate students a lot more than what we do now. So previously we've worked a lot with Student Hub Live, so I've attended this event before. I've spoken to new students. We've fielded questions, for instance, and it's been a really worthwhile event for us to gather information on the sorts of things that we know students want to find out more about, those anxieties you might have when you first start studying.

Really, how does cybersecurity matter when it pertains to studying? So what we're really looking to do is, one, how we can support you with your studies and studying securely, but equally, how that can tie in to your personal lives and how that sort of ties in hand, really, as you go about your studying and your day-to-day lives. So to empower the OU community as a whole and ensure you can study securely, we are going to be devising more training and awareness for you.

So make sure that you're aware, for instance, as you go about your modules and you're transferring from module to module and you're going through your studies over the months and years, you know the steps

you need to take to keep yourself secure, your devices secure, and your personal data secure. So as a part of that and evolving from Student Hub Live, we're going to be producing more advice and guidance. So you'll see some of those guidance links in the chat.

We've sent around I think another sort of guidance document that will be disseminated to you. That more pertains to software. So as you go about your studies, you may have to use software from time to time. So you might then have to download it to your device or you might have to access it, and that, of course, has security concerns because it will process occasionally your personal data or it might process some of what you've written in your study.

So something that is personal to you, some information that you need to protect as you go through your study. So the message is really not to worry, because in the background we're going to be providing more updated resources, support for you just to reassure. And of course, if you do need us, we're always on hand to support you. So we do have contact addresses. So our team is most easily contactable via [information-security@open.ac.uk](mailto:information-security@open.ac.uk).

So we're always on hand to support you, you have anything that you need. Equally, we want to empower the wider community to be as secure as possible. So we are also going to be doing targeted training webinars, for instance, in the future to help prevent cyber attacks, helping you process sensitive information more securely, and equally, attend events like today to ensure that you can be as reassured as possible as you embark on your studies and feel as empowered as possible to make yourself more secure through day-to-day best practises.

And we'll go a little bit more into that, hopefully, throughout the discussion this evening. But beyond the general reassurance and giving you some top advice and guidance tips, we want you to know that you are going to be our best and first line of defence when it comes to preventing cyber attack. That doesn't mean to say that you should feel burdened by this responsibility, but just, we believe that you can be that, you are that, and it's our job to empower you to do that.

So if you've got any questions for me, as I said, please field them my way this evening. Hopefully we can reassure you and include that, one, we've got the ability to keep you secure as you study. You should be reassured that the OU is only becoming more secure as we want to protect your data and encouraging you to stay studying with us as long as possible, and equally provide that day-to-day support through Student Home, for instance, and providing support documents that can be saved on there.

And overall, to provide that experience where you're not having to worry about anything other than those deadlines and coping with those. We don't want you worrying about anything else. So really, the message today is we don't want you to worry about cybersecurity. Let us empower you and enable it.

MARGARET GREENHALL: Thanks a lot, Mark. So there's going to be a lot of help and support for people by the sounds of that. My students sometimes ask me questions about how to stay secure online, and I know little bits and pieces myself. But, obviously, you're the expert. What's your best advice for them?

MARK HUGHES: Yes. There's a variety of things you can do. So if I could summarise it into a few bullet points. First and foremost, keep your identity safe, I think when you're going about your daily business. So when you input passwords, for instance, so don't reuse passwords. Say, for instance, you've got an account with a social media provider. It could be an account with your email service provider. Don't reuse the same passwords across different accounts.

And it can be tempting sometimes, I know, when we can't remember sometimes multiple passwords, so you might change the odd digit here or you might change the odd little bit there. But fundamentally, it's

quite a similar password. So don't use similar or the same password across multiple accounts. So to help you remember passwords-- because we know that's easier said than done, so to help you with that, try and set a passphrase. So rather than a traditional password, which might have a word and then you might have a character and a number included in there, that can sometimes be more difficult to remember.

So think of a phrase. Maybe go three to four random words. It's going to be easy to remember, it's going to be longer, and it's going to be harder to crack as well. So from your perspective, it's a double win in that regard. So you can make your password secure in your personal life and while studying at the OU, and equally as well, it's going to be far easier for you to use day to day. You can remember it well. And that's definitely one of the top tips we can use from passwords.

In terms of beyond that, so you can use multi-factor authentication. So that's sometimes referred to as two-factor authentication as well. So that's like a second layer of protection. So beyond what you'd have with a password-- so multi-factor or two-factor authentication could be a system is asking you to log into something using something only you would have.

For instance, when sometimes you're asked to provide a code that's sent to you after you've tried to log into-- so it could be like your online shopping account and they send you a code to your phone, for example, making sure that any account or transaction you complete any time you log in, it has MFA or 2FA installed. But again, if you need me to explain that further, of course, ask me later. If someone ever asks you for your login details, including your email address or passwords, never disclose it.

I think above all, never disclose any of your OU information, whether it be, as I say, a password, an email address, anything you've been doing on your studies, as this information can be used to combat sort of social engineering. So cyber attackers could, for instance, use that information to try and scam you. For instance, they can use the information that you're an OU student and they could use that to your disadvantage. Be vigilant to scams as well. So we're seeing increasing now-- and we'll probably touch on this as well further on in the discussion around AI.

You'll see a lot around AI and how that's emerging over the last few years and how that's being used to scam people in a more sophisticated way. And it makes it very hard to trust what's the legitimate contact and what isn't, what could be that phishing scam. So to spot AI, maybe look out for known legitimate emails and see if there's similar language being used. Look at the formatting, the processes. If it's from the OU, do they follow similar processes to what you see at the OU, like from your tutor, for instance? Equally, look at the sending addresses. Does the sender and the sendee address match what you should be seeing? What have you seen before? And equally, if in doubt, report that email. So if you see an email that you're a little bit suspicious of, most email service providers will have a report function. So you can usually click on-- it could be the three dots, that could be in the top of the email screen, you might have a Report button.

And you can click something around to send a report to that provider and that can help the provider filter those emails out in future so people don't receive them. So that stops you being scammed. It also stops other people being scammed as well. Equally beyond that, I'll explain deepfakes. That's something as well. That's something to look out for, but I'll explain that again a little bit later on. In terms of your tutor name. So that's something probably to look out for. That's probably the most common scam we see.

We sometimes see essay writing services or people trying to encourage you to commit plagiarism and other things like that. So they're the sort of scams as well to be looking out for. So be wary of those

people impersonating your tutors or another member of OU staff. So again, looking out for the official OU email address which would be for a staff member at open.ac.uk. See if it matches up. But if in doubt, as I say, report it. And then just wrap up on this point for everybody.

Keeping your devices up to date. So I think we are disseminating a piece of content for you around keeping your devices up to date and how important that can be. As you get to end of a module, you might be using, for instance, a piece of software, and then you need to delete it at the end of that module. You might not need it anymore. Because if you don't need it anymore and it's sitting on your device, that could encourage, then, vulnerabilities. People could exploit that.

And equally then, that leads to an increased risk of you being scammed, ultimately. So the key message is if you have software on your phone or it could be your device that you use for your studies, if you don't need it, remove it. But we've disseminated some guidance for you, which can explain what you need to do to be as secure as possible when it comes to keeping software updated. And I've got a few more bits, just very quickly. I won't go into too detail because I'm aware of time.

Don't disclose your own email address to any third party, first and foremost, because, again, that can be used to harvest your credentials. It can be used towards phishing. If you see browser pop ups, for instance, or any sort of pop up that's encouraging to click on it saying you've got a virus or something like that, never click on it. Restart your device, check to see what your permission settings are in your internet settings. That can be a really quick way to avoid your device being compromised and scammed.

And then equally-- quite an important one, actually, if you're studying remotely. So if you're studying things like-- it could be a cafe, a coffee shop, or a library, for instance, like a public library, don't use Wi-Fi that you can automatically connect to. So if you're connecting to Wi-Fi to try and do your studies, only connect to Wi-Fi that you have to input a password for. So where there's a layer of protection, because if there's not that layer of protection, your data is at risk.

MARGARET GREENHALL: Wow. So much useful information there, Mark. I would like to remind everybody, if you want to look back over what he's just said, that we are being recorded. So if you go to Student Hub Live, catch up after the event, you can have another watch through too, because there was a lot of information there. I think you've already really answered my next question, which is about phishing with a P-H, because you did explain about that. So we'll go to the one here. We've got one thing people's mind is the question of how AI can impact on a digital life, but I know very little about it. So how do you think AI itself affects cybersecurity?

MARK HUGHES: Yes. And this is something that I've been speaking a lot about to our colleagues, so our staff members. And we increasingly want to make students aware of this as well. So AI is something that can be very much a force for good, but it can be used to our detriment as well if it's not managed and it's not, then operated-- it's not analysed correctly. So AI will impact you day to day as you go about your studies. So it's being used to make phishing emails, as I touched upon, more believable.

They are adding deepfakes. So a deepfake, for instance, is where an attacker can superimpose another face on their own face. For example, it can make someone look like-- if they're sending you a video, for example, or it could be someone trying to impersonate your tutor, they could pretend to actually impersonate that individual through adding or superimposing any visual effects, or it could be text on to a screen, that makes you believe something more.

So, of course, to combat deepfakes, to make sure you can see how you can deal with that, you can spot those deepfakes from something that is legitimate, definitely look out for sort of then where that

correspondence has come from. Again, is it from a legitimate source? Have you taken on board some of the things I've said before in terms of spotting something that could be an illegitimate address to say around formatting, the time it's been sent, look around their spelling, has someone contacted you via that address before, and is it something you expected

And if it doesn't follow process, I think most importantly-- I think it's always worth to check in with-- again, this is where student support could equally help you as well. They can obviously point you in the direction of whether a certain process is being followed correctly. That can help you spot a scammer from someone that could potentially be a legitimate contact. AI is going to transform cybersecurity as well in multiple ways. So it's going to help us assist with defending the OU as well.

So we use AI day-to-day as well to actually protect you as students, so the entire OU community. So we're using AI to help with our threat protection. So we're analysing vast amounts of data on a day-to-day basis to identify potential vulnerabilities. So ways in which that we could get scammers trying to attack you, for example, or trying to compromise your accounts, and we're working day and night to ensure that that doesn't happen and the OU is a secure place as possible to ensure you study securely.

AI is constantly learning. Obviously, hence then with artificial intelligence, it's always a learning machine. And it's only going to be aided by human beings as well. So we are supporting AI becoming more sophisticated. Then the more it learns, the more it can predict and preempt and mitigate risk towards you. And it's going to ensure a more robust defence mechanism against cyber attacks, but equally, if it's helping us, it can be helping the bad guys as well.

So it's making the sophistication of not only attacks more prevalent, but it's also equally going to be more easy for them to execute more complex and harder to detect attacks. So as I mentioned, those techniques such as AI generated phishing emails, deepfake technology, they can deceive even the most vigilant individual. So making that impersonation a trusted entity is more convincing than ever. So to get over this, I think there are several things that you can do beyond what I've already mentioned to spot that particular correspondence.

So I would say, look to see if the email is purportedly-- if it's from the OU or from an OU individual, look at the language and are they following OU processes, I think it would be something that's quite important. Does the branding match what you'd expect? Even if the sending address is the same-- so if you look at the sender, even if the sending address matches, contact the individual via known contact point that you've used before and verify whether it was them, rather than just assuming that-- because, oh, that's the address, it should be them.

There's always better to be doubly sure rather than waste a few minutes and then potentially that could cause something quite severe if you didn't do that double check. So I'd definitely say check and check again, if there's a remote flicker of doubt. If they're from the OU, again, as I mentioned, are they following correct procedures? And do that check before you engage with any email, text, or call, for that matter. So sometimes what scammers are increasingly doing is calling you to catch you off guard.

So where you haven't got time to process words that you might see on a text or an email, they might try and call you instead rather than provide that email or text. AI can also imitate voices and physical appearance of trusted individuals. So even if you can hear a voice of someone you recognise, check that number they're calling from as well. Check the email address where they may have contacted you from and see if that can be verified and if they're following those OU policies and procedures.

If in doubt-- and if the correspondence is from outside the OU, for that matter, don't engage. Check with either the student computing helpdesk, as they're a fantastic resource, or, as I mentioned, information-security@open.ac.uk. Which we'll always be on hand to support you if you've got any doubts concerning AI, or anything else, for that matter.

MARGARET GREENHALL: Brilliant. Thank you so much, Mark. Heidi, I think we've got time just for a couple of questions. Do you want to? Have you got anything the students have been asking?

HEIDI: I certainly do. Yes. Lots of questions coming through, so I'm going to have to choose carefully if we've just got a couple of them. So really interesting question that's come through from Andy to Mark. So how many attacks are you currently dealing with per week at the OU?

MARK HUGHES: Oh. So that is an evolving picture, I think first and foremost. When we say attacks, obviously I don't want to spook people. So an attempted attack isn't necessarily us being compromised. So to give a little bit of reassurance, we have been compromised in single digits across all our estate in the last year, and those compromises have not led to anything that's been reportable to any higher body. So just to reassure, there have been very few incidents that have actually led to any sort of level of compromise.

And that pays tribute to both our colleagues and students for all the diligence they take. But in terms of the threats we face, we face around-- so, so far this year, we've received, goodness, in the tens of thousands of attempts. That could be through phishing email attempts, equally ransomware-- that's something I've not actually touched upon really today.

But that's something where someone would email you with a threatening note to say, if you don't pay the ransom, therefore they're going to release some information about you, or they'll try and threaten you. At the OU, if you ever get something like that, always report it. Just report it to us. Report it to your tutor in the first instance, if you're in doubt, or the student computing helpdesk, but never pay the ransom, because ultimately there's never a win-win with paying the ransom.

It's always going to be a lose-lose. Because ultimately, they never normally give back data, even if you do agree to pay the ransom. It's also going to lead to potential mental harm, physical harm, and then more broadly, potentially harm to the wider organisation. So definitely that's something that we're very wary of in terms of protecting day-to-day. But yes, I know that's a very convoluted answer to your question, but ultimately, yes, tens of thousands we face.

HEIDI: OK. Thank you so much. So I'm going to quickly squeeze these two questions together because I know we're running short on time. So question from Pauline, is accepting cookies safe? And question from Sam, is using Google autogenerated passwords OK?

MARK HUGHES: Yeah. So on the cookies function, well, less is more in this case. If you reject cookies, that's absolutely fine in this case. If you have essential cookies, if that's sometimes something you can select, go for essential cookies only rather than saying accept all cookies in that regard. So if there's one thing you can select, just do essential. Or if you can reject cookies, please feel empowered to do so. And then the second part of that question, I think, was around autogenerated passwords.

So we encourage anyone, if you can do and if you're able to, to have a password manager. So this is where it makes it far easier to remember passwords. So you can have one master password is what they call it, and then those Google autogenerated passwords will be absolutely fine because then they are all autogenerated by your password manager and you don't have to remember them. And at that point, the only password you have to remember is the master password in your password manager.

So I appreciate there might be a lot of questions around which password manager should I get, does it cost any money. To reassure you, there are free password managers, and Google has a free password manager that you use by default with a Google account. But there are better ones. So we don't recommend one, per se, but I would say definitely having a password manager is far better than not having one. And that makes it far easier to, as I say, if you get those autogenerated passwords, yes. Fundamentally, yes, you can use them with that.

MARGARET GREENHALL: Brilliant. Thank you so much, Mark. I'm not sure I've heard of having a password manager before, so I certainly haven't used it myself. So I might look into that, because it does get sort of a huge number of passwords to manage. So very useful bit of information there. If anybody has any more questions for information services, I think their contact details have been put in the chat, so you should be able to contact them with any more questions.

So thank you so much for joining us tonight, Mark. And I would like to say that they do try and test us too. So they sent us some phishing emails pretending to be from outside, and if you click on them, we have to go on a training course. So they do keep testing us just to make sure we know what we're up to as well, which is quite-- the first one, I rang up and said, I've got this phishing email. What do I do? And I was panicking about it.

And then after that, I've realised, and I do know how to recognise them, hopefully, and I'm hoping I won't click on it and have to go on the training course. But they are testing us as tutors as well to make sure we're keeping your information secure. So thank you so much, Mark. Very kind of you to join us. So we're now going to move on to our final guest of the evening, and that's going to be Lucy. She's a fellow associate lecturer. She also does other roles within university, as well as being an associate lecturer. But she's going to mainly talk about for a viewpoint as being associate lecturer, which is what the Open University call our tutors. So hi, Lucy, and welcome to this evening. She works for Student Hub Live, so you might see her in the chat as well during the year. Tell us a little bit about your role as an associate lecturer.

LUCY ANDERSON: Hi, Margaret. It's lovely to be here. It's lovely, actually, to be on screen for a change because, as Margaret mentioned, normally on Student Hub Live, I'm hidden away in the chat box on an Adobe Connect workshop somewhere, so it's nice to be out and see faces for a change. So yeah, as Margaret said, I worked as an associate lecturer, a tutor, for about nine years with the Open University. I've worked across levels one, two, three in STEM, which is science-- this is going to test me now. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. My little field is mostly human biology and neuroscience, so I tend to be on the health sciences and biology qualifications. So if any of you are taking those, I look forward to seeing you. I used to combine my OU roles with working in research and lecturing at a brick university, so I've seen both sides of that coin.

And I also work at the Open University as a staff tutor, which means that not only am I working with students directly, but I'm also working behind the scenes helping tutors with their students. So sort of helping that student-tutor relationship from both sides. And finally, my last little bit is I work on modules. So I help design module content, deciding how many tutorials you might have in a module, writing the assignments, writing your exams, that side of things. So I'm afraid if you get tricky exam questions, that might also partly be my fault.

MARGARET GREENHALL: I'm not sure you should have admitted to that last one, Lucy.

LUCY ANDERSON: No, I'll keep that quiet, shall I.

MARGARET GREENHALL: So the theme of tonight is about questions. And one of the things students are unsure of, because they've perhaps only have ever been in education at school is, what type of question is it OK for them to ask their tutor?

LUCY ANDERSON: Honestly, I would say, if it relates to your OU journey, you can ask absolutely anything. What tutors really, really love is engaged students. So if you happen to read through your module and you're struggling a little bit with section three and topic two, if section three and topic two is really, really basic or it's really advanced, email your tutor, say, hello, I'm struggling with this bit. I'm not quite sure where to go, where to turn. Your tutor will be able to help.

If they can't answer your precise question, there'll be somebody else on the module team who will be able to and they'll be able to refer you back. They might be able to point you in the right direction. They might be able to signpost you to different resources, different people, different departments. So you might be struggling with content. You might also be struggling with skills. I know a couple of students who have got in touch with me already and say, I've looked at my first assignment and it involves an essay question. I've not written an essay since 1992.

But that's absolutely fine. Email your tutor. Say, I'm concerned about this. I might be struggling with this particular aspect of skills development. And invariably, what they might do is they'll say, oh, well, we're running a tutorial on that, or there are some resources on Student Home, there's some resources on the OU Helpdesk. They'll point you to places where you can go and look for various bits of information that will help you along your way. Another thing that students quite often get in touch with us about, especially higher up the levels, is things about employability and professional development.

So you might be halfway through your qualification and then a little change of heart and think, oh, what am I going to do with this? So it's perfectly fine to have a chat with your tutor and say, I don't know what I'm doing. Can you give me suggestions? I'm filling out an application form, maybe, and I don't know the best aspects to put in this box. Have a chat with your tutor. And again, if your tutor isn't the right person, they will forward you and signpost you to somebody who is. So never be afraid to talk to your tutor. We're human and we actually really like talking to people and waving our arms around.

MARGARET GREENHALL: OK. And you've talked about the students asking you questions, but how would a student usually get in contact with their tutor?

LUCY ANDERSON: So round about now-- we had a question about this actually earlier from a student. Round about now, we're having what we call a tutor student allocation. So you'll be finding out about your tutor. If you haven't already been assigned a tutor, that's absolutely fine. It'll happen within the next couple of weeks. It's nothing that you need to worry about your end. It's just we have a lot of students and a lot of tutors.

Once you have been assigned your tutor, you'll find on your Student Home page you can have information about your module, and there will be a link that essentially says, email your tutor. You follow that and it's a Ronseal moment. It does exactly what it says. You'll be taken through to a email option. The other thing you might find soon is your tutors will start to email you out your welcome email. And this is a bit of a generalisation because various tutors do this in different ways, but most tutors will send out a welcome email to say, hello and welcome. My name is this and this is the best way to get in touch with me. These are the best times to get in touch with me. So some tutors might prefer email, some might be very happy for you to call them. Some, as I say, might be working somewhere else during the



day or have family responsibilities during the day, so there'll be perhaps specific time of, if you want to get in touch, please use these particular times.

But your tutor is also likely to have a forum. So third option might be to contact them via your tutor's tutor group forum. Just a note to remember is your tutor group forums are obviously more public, so if you've got something very personal and private, you wouldn't want to post it on your forum.

MARGARET GREENHALL: Brilliant. Thanks, Lucy. Now, one of the things I find is sometimes students don't give me enough information when they send me an email. And in particular, I had to warn four students last year. I had one called Christopher, one called Christina, one called Christian, and another one just called Chris. And I had to say, tell me, which one of those you are. But what other sort of information should a student be putting in the email to their tutor?

LUCY ANDERSON: Yes. It's really, really helpful if you can put your module code in your subject line of your email. As Margaret mentioned, we have multiple different students. Often we're working across multiple different modules. And so if you can make it as clear as possible who you are, that really helps us and helps us to get a response to you quicker.

It's nothing to do with us not knowing who you are. It's much more a case of just remembering which Chris or which Joe Bloggs you might happen to be. My favourite was a lovely one line email I had that just said, hey, can I have an extension for my assignment, please? With no indication of which module, which assignment. They hadn't signed their name and the email address didn't relate to any of the email addresses I had registered as my OU students.

So if you can try and make it as explicit as possible-- if you go by a nickname, that's absolutely fine, but just pop at the end your OU registered name. So for in your student and subject you could have your module code, say, SK299, and then perhaps what your email is going to be about, so assignment or section two or something. So just make it easy for us poor souls at this end.

MARGARET GREENHALL: Is there anything, any such thing as a silly question? I know some of our students are a little bit afraid of asking us questions.

LUCY ANDERSON: No, absolutely not. Ask me silly questions. I like silly questions. They're the ones that are easy to answer. It really doesn't matter what you're asking. If it relates to your OU journey and you're worried about it, it's not a silly question. And I know it's something that's very, very easy to say, but we generally mean it. Again, we're interactive people. We like students to be engaged. And if you are concerned, then it's something we'd like to help you with.

MARGARET GREENHALL: We're going to go to questions from the chat in a few minutes. Heidi will be collecting those for us. So just to finish off before we go to questions, what's your best advice for a new student?

LUCY ANDERSON: Best advice, I think, would be to have a really good read through those initial pages of your module website. So a lot of module websites start to open slightly early, so slightly in advance of that October date. So go in, have a read around, have a read through any pre-module start information. So just get a feel for how the system works, because we talk about forums and we talk about online tutor rooms. You'll find there's about three or four of each of these. So just go in and just work out how the system works.

Then when you get your email from your tutor welcoming you into your module, email them back, have a chat. If there's anything that you think your tutor needs to know about you, please tell them. So it might be that you have a particular disability, you might have a visual impairment, you might like the large font on

your emails, you might want a colour in the background of slides and in tutorials. If you can tell your tutor as much as possible about you, it gives them the best possible chance of helping you. So that would be my top tip for getting going.

MARGARET GREENHALL: Thank you very much, Lucy. Yeah, I would suggest-- because, I mean, one of the things that students assume is that, first of all, what we see from disability services is exactly what their needs are. And secondly, that we can remember them all, because we may have some people-- I know some people I know doing six modules, so they may have up to 120 students. So just having something individualised saying, this is what I need, is so helpful to us as a tutor. So Heidi, what's been going on in the chat and what questions do you have for either Lucy or myself?

HEIDI: Well, they're all coming in. There's so many of them. I'm just quickly getting the latest ones coming in because we've got lots. And I know we've only got 10 minutes left, so I'm going to rattle through these. So I've combined. So two of our students asked the same question. So Chana and Muna. They've asked, are our tutorials recorded, first of all?

LUCY ANDERSON: I'll take that one. So yes, normally they are it will depend slightly on your module. So a lot of the modules I'm on have core recorded tutorials, but they might also have things called drop-ins or Q&A sessions and they are much more informal. They're much more encouraging students just to come and ask those silly questions. And so we tend not to record those ones so people can just feel free to come and ask anything and not feel that it's going to be recorded forever and ever and held against you or anything. So check your module for the precise answer. But normally, I'd say the core ones normally are recorded.

HEIDI: Great. Thank you so much. So a question from Cheryl. She says, Lucy, in tutorials, is this the layout that we'll have, or do we have face to face with everyone and can we physically talk?

LUCY ANDERSON: So you won't be on a system like this. You'll be in Adobe Connect, which is a slightly different layout. Again, it will depend slightly on your module, but the majority of tutorials are now online. You are always welcome to put a microphone on. Students tend not to put the microphones on, but again, as you can probably tell, I like to talk to people and I really like people to talk back to me. So we'll be delighted if you put the mic on and have a chat. If you're scared or feeling apprehensive about putting the mic on, you absolutely don't need to. You can type away in the chat or you can just sit and absorb. But if you'd like to talk, you are very, very welcome.

HEIDI: Lovely. And Elliot says, typically, how active are tutors when help is required?

LUCY ANDERSON: We do tend to require you to come to us. So quite a few tutors will perhaps send out an email to say various points, especially at pinch points where we know assignments are due in, hello, is everything OK, is there any help you might need. We have access to something called Early Alert, so we can see whether you've been active on the module website. And if we see that you've been quiet, we might check in with you and say, is everything OK, is there a reason we haven't heard from you for a while if you haven't attended tutorials.

If you come to us and say, I've got a problem, then we'll absolutely do what we can to help you. And if you find, for whatever reason, your tutor isn't being this helpful as you might like them to be, that's an opportunity to contact somebody like the SST, the student support team, because there might be a reason. Your tutor might be ill themselves. They might be away.

So it's worth noting your tutor is not on a 24/7 call out, so they will have times when they will be able to respond to you and they might also have periods of time when they can't, and they will normally let you

know. So it's not, I'm afraid, an instant response, but if you haven't heard from tutor in a couple of days then you're starting to get a bit concerned, perhaps an assignment deadline is due, you can always get in touch with SST, who will reach out and make sure that, if you need help, it's given to you.

HEIDI: That was great. Thank you. And then that leads on. So Siobhan had a question that is quite similar to that in the sense that Siobhan has asked, can I request a different tutor if the current one isn't working for me? So can we replace, can Siobhan replace her tutor with a different one?

LUCY ANDERSON: Potentially, yes, she can. And again, that would be a case of reaching out to SST in the first instance to say that you would like to request a tutor. Probably what would then happen is we would have a chat either with the tutor or with the student to find out why the relationship has broken down. Obviously what we really want to do is keep that relationship going, because it can be quite disruptive to move a student to another tutor group.

So we might look, is it best for the student to continue with the tutor, or is it better to move them to a new one? So we won't just pick you up and move you. But if we feel that things aren't working for you, then yes, we can move you. Sorry. It was a bit of a wishy-washy answer, but in principle, yes, it is possible.

HEIDI: That's really helpful. Thank you so much. So Charlotte has asked, do we have the same tutor throughout all of our studies? So the same person throughout all of your learning journey with the Open University.

LUCY ANDERSON: No, I'm afraid not. Your tutor is associated with each module. So you might find multiple tutors do multiple modules. So you might discover that you have a tutor in level one who you suddenly re-find in level three. But generally, you'll find that they are associated with modules and you'll move between tutors as you go through your OU journey. So you'll get to meet lots of different tutors and tutoring styles as well, which is also very helpful.

HEIDI: Great. And I don't know if Margaret wants to come in on the next question that I've got coming up, although this is one that, Lucy, you'll be able to answer, of course, as well. But yeah. So Muna has asked, how exactly does an OU tutorial work?

LUCY ANDERSON: Again, that's very different depending on what module you're on. So some of them are a little bit sort of chalk and talky. Some of them are very interactive. And again, it depends a little bit on your topic. So if I was running a tutorial, I might start by refreshing some of the module materials, and then I might take care not to knock a map on my head, and then I might get the students to think about particular aspects, ask them questions.

We put up polls and different widgets and things to play with. But again, that's very individual to the tutor. Normally what happens is we have a template of a tutorial that we have to follow, but it's entirely up to the individual tutor how they go about following and covering that material.

MARGARET GREENHALL: Brilliant. Thank you so much, Lucy. I think you fielded some really difficult questions, so I'm glad you were on the end of those. I think I got off lightly there. So we're coming to the end of our session tonight, so I'd like to say a big thank you to all our guests we've had on tonight. Just to tell you a little bit more about the Student Hub Live events that are coming up in the next couple of days, we've got some more freshers events.

So on the 25th, which is tomorrow, we've got one tomorrow at 11:00 AM called Finding Your Way Around. So that'll be a lot more telling you a little bit more about how to find your way around the university systems. And then if you're a student carer-- so if you're not only a student but you also care for somebody else, we've got a special session on Friday the 27th at 11:00 AM. And it's actually a small

group that Rob runs throughout the year, so it's not just one-off. You will actually be able to interact with people, so other people like yourself who also care for people.

And Friday evening at half past 6:00, we've got the Freshers Week Social. So this is where we don't have a huge amount of intellectual content, but I'm sure whoever's running it will have lots of fun things to do. I think last year I ended up doing a memory thing, I think going round my room and having umbrellas and beanbags or something that I had to remember. So a lot of things. Quite a few of you have been asking about tutors and tutorials and things. We've got a specific session on that next Tuesday at 11:00 AM. And also the week after that, we've got something about 10 years of Student Hub Live. And all of our Student Hub Live sessions are recorded. And if you just go to our Catch Up page, then you can find them there and have a look through. You can wait for them to come on live so that you can take part in them, but if there's something you're really interested in, then you can probably find it on our Catch Up page. Not everything, because each year we bring new tutorials in and different things, so there'll be new things coming in this year.

The other thing we do like to do is gather feedback from our students about whether they've enjoyed the session, what sessions they would like to see, and somebody will be putting in the chat now a link to the feedback form for this session. So if you could just take a minute or two to fill it in and tell us what you thought about the session and some of the things that you're hoping to be able to do with Student Hub Live.

And very importantly, if you want to get a place on some of our courses, we do fill up quite frequently, do sign up to our email that will tell you what we've got going on that month and give you a heads up about what to sign up for. So I wonder whether there's any other questions that have come up in the chat, Heidi?

HEIDI: Yeah, we do have some more questions. I'm just conscious of time, but yes. Yeah, I have got more. Actually, you've just responded to a couple of those already. Sorry. It's thrown me slightly there at the very last minute.

MARGARET GREENHALL: Oh, sorry. Sorry.

HEIDI: No, no, that's absolutely fine. Oh, I see. OK, so from Nicole. Do tutors want students to message at the start of the year to introduce themselves? And if so, what do they want to know from students?

MARGARET GREENHALL: Yes, we would love it, because then we get to know you as an individual. And your tutor will tell you a bit about themselves. You kind of respond by telling them similar things about yourself. Nothing too personal. Just sort of generally what your life's like and what your family's generally like.

But don't go too personal on it. We don't need to know the intimate details of all your medical stuff unless it's very important to your studies. So thank you very much for that question. So thank you very much, everybody, for joining us tonight. I do hope you found it very useful. And welcome to the Open University and best of luck with your studies. Thank you very much.

[MUSIC PLAYING]