

# Disabled community – maintaining enthusiasm

# Starting notices

Who we are, ground rules and practicalities

## This was our advert...



In this, the second of our new series of community workshops for students with disabilities, we will look at maintaining enthusiasm for study during what is often a miserable time of year for many of us – the cold, dark winter months.

Our student guest will share their experiences of studying with disability and how they stay focused, maintain enthusiasm and keep going, even when it might seem better – and a lot easier – to just curl up under a blanket and let your brain ‘switch off’ for a while.

There will be practical advice on how and where to source additional help as well as plenty of opportunities to share ideas.

# What are Studenthublive workshops?



- Studenthublive (SHL) is non modular and focuses on study skills relevant to higher education.
- This means sessions are skills based and are not subject based.
- SHL workshops do not take the place of subject and skill related tutorials provided by your modules.
- All events are always advertised on our website along with studenthome news, social media channels and careers sources.
- All events are bookable; workshops do fill up as they are popular.

# Online workshop basics



- Polls are anonymous to other participants but the chat box will have your logged in name associated with your comments during the live session.
- All online sessions are recorded and available to view on catch up from the studenthublive online room.
- Slides are available to download during the live session and from the event page on <https://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/content/studying-disability-how-maintain-enthusiasm-and-keep-going-28-jan-2025>

# SHL is lively!



- These sessions are large scale
- They are often busy with lots of interaction
- They are not the same as other module-based tutorials
- You can maximise slides on your own screen by clicking the icon
- You can return to the recording from <https://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/content/studying-disability-how-maintain-enthusiasm-and-keep-going-28-jan-2025> after the event to revisit if needed



# Please



- Do not share any personal information in the chat pod during the session.
- On the recording names will be anonymised to user number.
- However if you type anyone's full name or any other personal information in the chat pod it can be seen by everybody and it would also show up on the recording so we may not be able to make the recording available.

# Today's workshop



- This is going to be a structured community workshop to help you consider study issues relating to disabilities, and keeping going to progress on your module.
- Tazzy will be sharing her experiences and together you can consider your own
- We will not tell you what to do, nor what will definitely happen. We will discuss experiences and you can decide what may work for you.



# Comfort break scheduled



- The workshop is scheduled to run 11-12:15 with a comfort break.
- I (Isabella) will make it clear when that comfort break will happen for those who are unclear.
- The slides do mention the presence of the break for those who like to be aware ahead of time.

# Initial poll

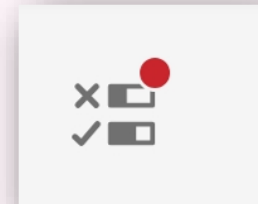
The same one starts each workshop 😊

# What do you want to learn?



Using the short answer poll provided please say what you are hoping to learn from today's session

(If you are on a mobile app remember you need to tap into the polling option)



To come back to these slides after completing a poll click on the share pod slides icon



# Practicalities

Practicalities and who is involved today

# Disabled community events



- This workshop is the second in the 2024-25 year suite of events to support the Open University disabled community.
- Each event will focus on a specific aspect of study and has been developed with the support and input of current OU students who have disabilities.
- If you would like to be involved with future events then please contact us at [studenthub@open.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@open.ac.uk)

# Session format



- Each of these sessions will talk to a student guest about their experiences of studying.
- This will include relevant questions about how disabilities impact them and their study.
- There will be opportunities for all attendees to consider their own situation and peer sharing of possible strategies.
- Today's session is about considering how to maintain enthusiasm and keep going despite other impacts

# Isabella Henman – me!



- I am the presenter of the workshop and events for the SHL disabled and ND community.
- I have been an OU tutor since 2005 and have led the SHL workshops since they began in 2018.
- I have an active interest in supporting students with various challenges and have undertaken specific training relating to neurodiversity.
- I am not an expert but I am interested and continually update my knowledge.

# Today's student guest



- Tazzy is our student guest today
- I have been an OU Student since 2020, I am on my 3rd module; A215 Creative Writing towards my degree in Creative writing and English Literature.
- Alongside my OU studies I am learning Welsh and I aim to write Welsh children's books for second language learners.
- I was diagnosed with lifelong mental illness at the age of 16 and not diagnosed with dyslexia until 2024.
- For me it is important to talk about mental illness which is why I am here today, as not everyone is different and we all need support in different ways.



# Support and advice

What the university offers

# Terminology - 1



- Terminology today has been taken from the University's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Inclusive Language & Image Guide.
- This follows the social model of disability in which people are disabled or limited by society and provision, rather than a deficit-model approach whereby the person has a deficiency.
- <https://help.open.ac.uk/browse/disability> covers a lot of information about disability support.

## Terminology - 2

- It is important to note that everyone is an individual and how one person describes their experiences may / not be how another does. Please be respectful of each individual's choice



# Disabled students allowance 1

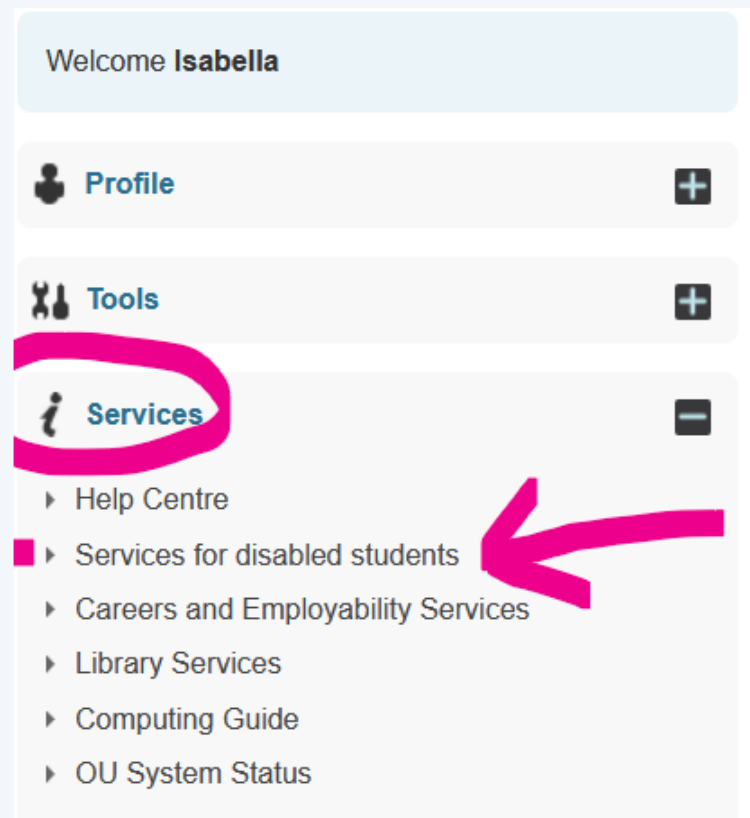


- DSA
- <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa>
- <https://help.open.ac.uk/dsa-overview>
- Please note that the OU can not apply on your behalf but all students who declare a disability are encouraged to apply for the DSA as it is there to support them.
- The OU also does not govern what is provided and cannot guarantee what would be provided.

# Disabled students allowance 2



- We can not guarantee anything but do encourage you to engage with your disability support team. Contact them through the option from studenthome in the services option
- <https://help.open.ac.uk/browse/disability>



# Study related costs



- <https://www.open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding/study-related-costs-funding>
- Examples may be support with broadband, provision of a large white board, special overlays to support reading on screen.
- Note we cannot guarantee anything but it is worth exploring and asking – you never know 😊

# OU community and support



- <https://community.open.ac.uk/> showcases community within the OU (including studenthublive!)
- [OUSA disabled students group](#) have regular meet ups as well as other support
- OUSA have various [events](#)
- [National support network](#)

# Getting into today's workshop

Sharing experiences from student guest and you



# Tazzy Q1



- Please tell us what your longer (and shorter term) disabilities are and how they impact you

# Wonky wiring



- Naming it owns it

# Painful



# Can't sit still



# Disability word cloud



- Using the option to type in where it says enter word here **'what is the disability you have declared to the university?'**
- Note that answers need to be a single word rather than a phrase / multiple words, if you press the space or enter button your word will go through (if the disability it is multiple words please use the acronym or share in chat pod).
- A word cloud is built up with common answers being larger so we can see if there are commonalities.

Enter word here

# Tazzy Q2



- Tazzy please tell us about your study journey and how disability has impacted your study

# Be honest up front



- Email tutor to keep them updated
- Say how disability impacts study

# Extensions



- Consider what is actually worthwhile and in your longer term best interest.



# Deferring 😞



- The reality.

# Poll for everyone 1



- Please use the short answer poll pod provided to answer the question – **how does your disability impact your ability to study?**
- Please only share what you feel comfortable with but remember the poll is anonymous for other users.

## Tazzy q3

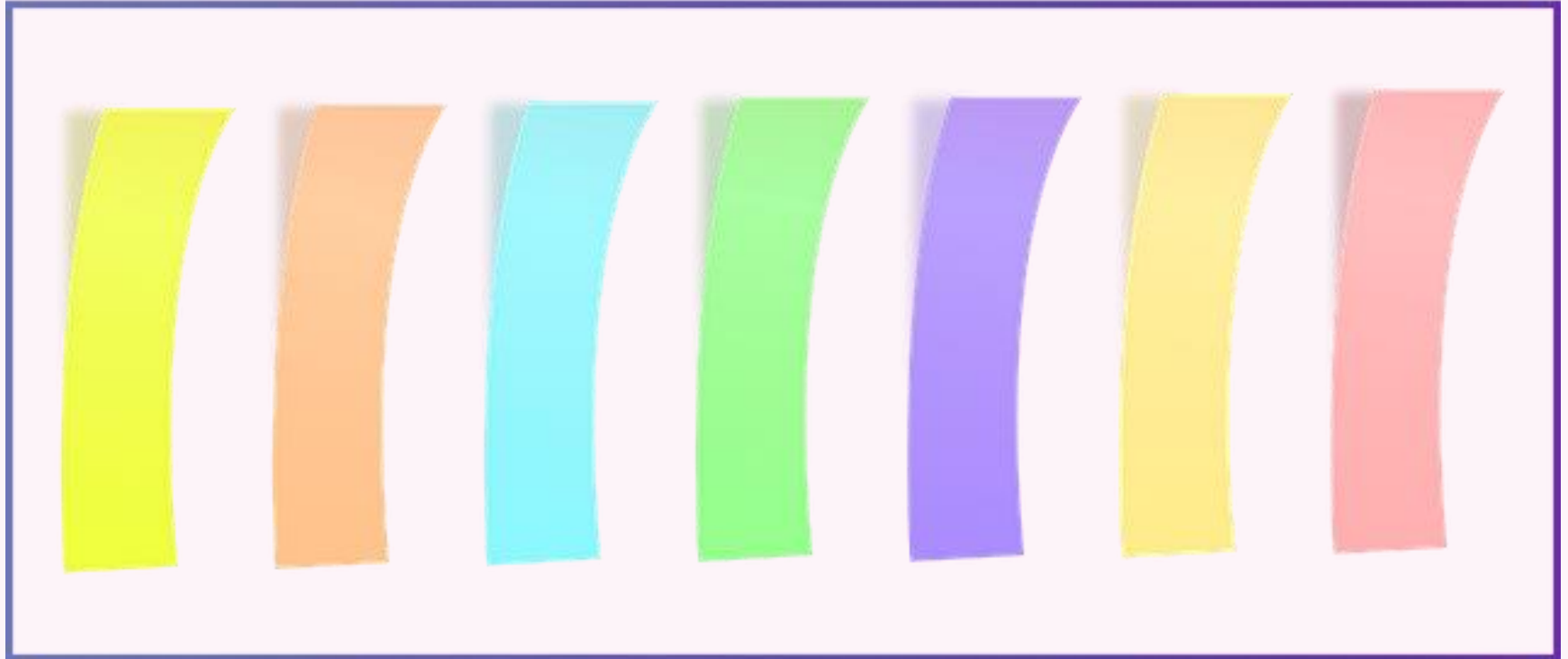


- How have you adapted your study to suit you and your situation?

# Pomodoro



# Colour coding



# Whiteboard



- TMA question
- List of tutorials

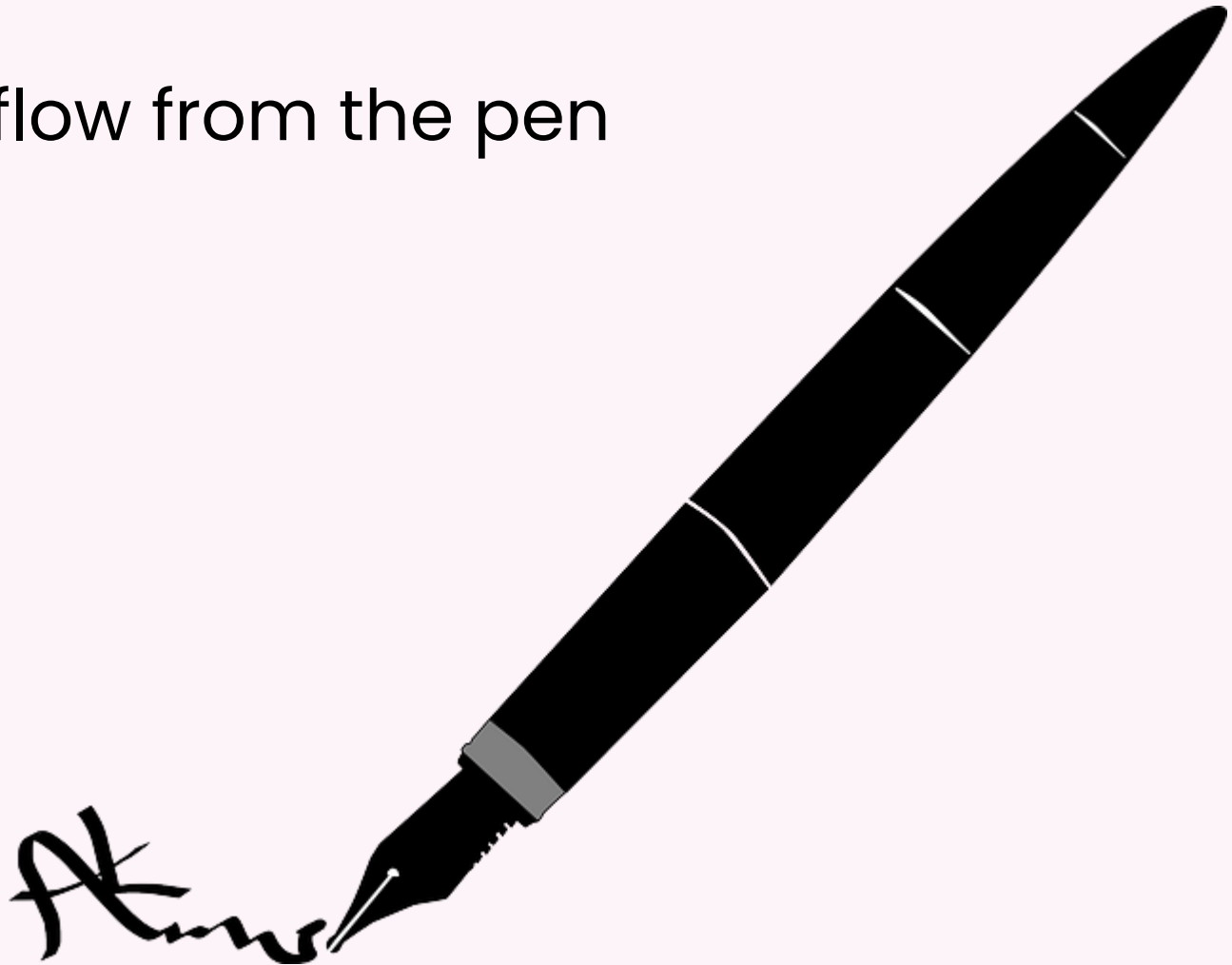
# Tinted paper



# Type not talk



- Fingers connect to brain better than mouth does!
- Words flow from the pen



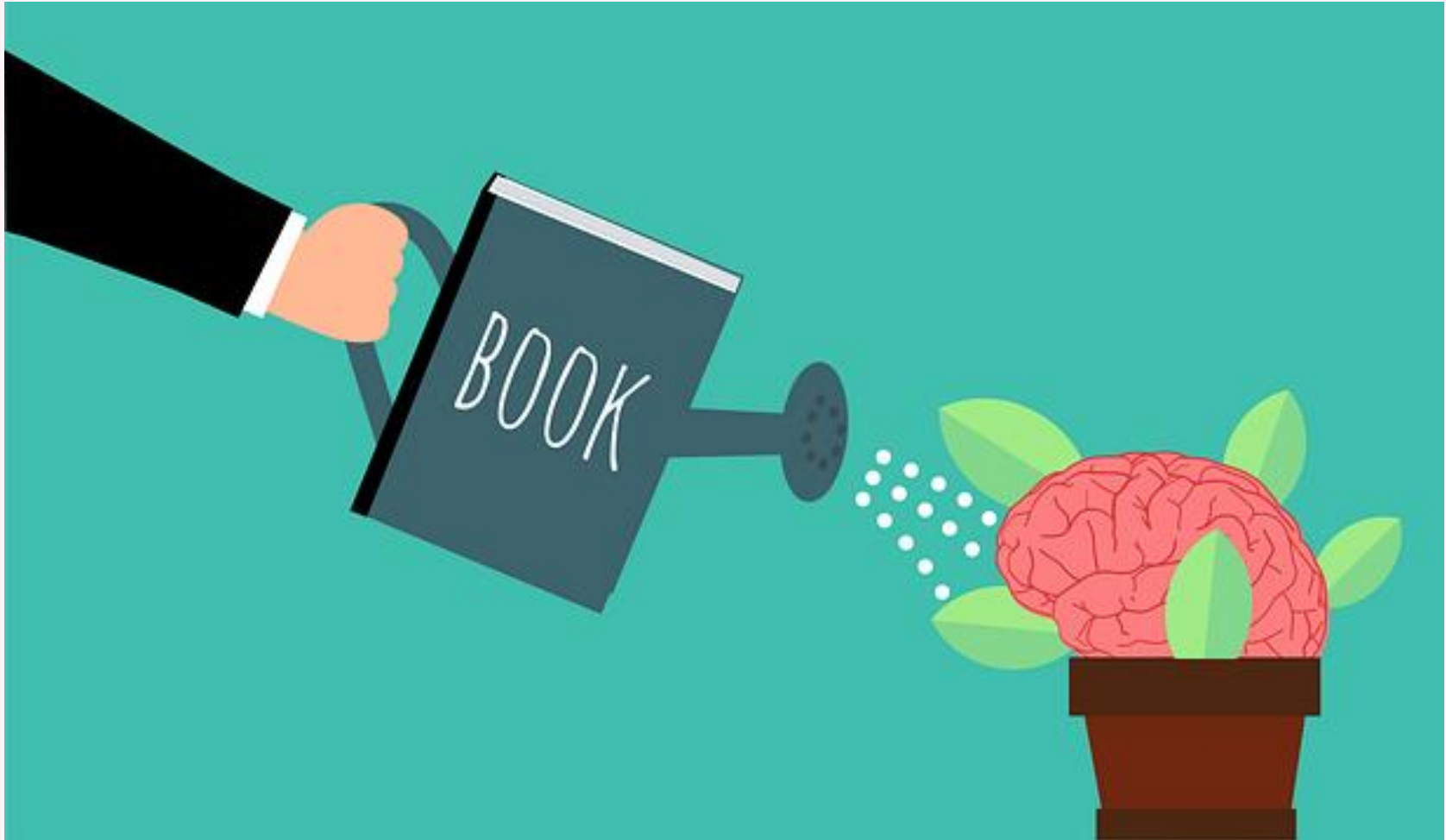


# Time around medication

- Know when works



# Study mode brain



# Dog cafe

- Study from a place that helps focus and supports mental health



# Use advance slides



- Download in advance and use a focus

# Turn phone off



# Remember



10 minutes  
is better than  
0 minutes

# Comfort break

We will now have a 5-6 minute comfort break during which the recording will be paused. Please feel free to go and stretch your legs, visit the loo, grab a snack, make a drink or anything else you need to. The timer will count down until we come back

## Poll for everyone 2



- Now you have heard Tazzy's suggestions please answer in the poll pod provided **How have you adapted your study to suit you and your situation?**
- It isn't about right or wrongs but you may find ideas that could work.



## Tazzy q4



- How do you make use of support? This could be provided by the university or elsewhere?

# Studenthublive 😊



- Studenthublive 😊
- Sharing and talking
- Interacting live
- Start to feel part of a community
- Feel less alone

# Tutor



- Sends a welcome email with information.

# Forums



- Discuss study related issues through forum to get input

# Tell friends and family

- I am a student and need to focus



## Poll for everyone 3



- Having heard Tazzy's suggestions please use the short answer poll pod to answer the question **Where do you go for your support?**
- You may see some examples that you could consider.

## Tazzy q5



- How do you maintain enthusiasm and keep going?

# Reward - day





# Reward - TMA



# Reward – module 1



- New Pyjamas and a book– can relax now

## Reward – module 2

- Cake with friends



# Reward - dog



## Poll for everyone 4



- How do you reward yourself or otherwise help maintain your enthusiasm?

# Take home message



- What works for one may / not work for another
- Find what works for you
- Make use of practical support
- No one is totally alone – there is a student community

# Would you like to be involved?



- If you would like to share your experiences and take part in future studenthublive sessions then please get in touch
- I (Isabella) will host a variety of sessions in 2025 which will involve student guests for disabilities as well as the neurodiverse community series and other study skills including reflection. If you or any other OU student you know might like to be involved please contact us
- [studenthub@open.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@open.ac.uk)

# ND / disabled events (24-25)



- 09 Apr 11am Planning to complete your module with success
- 10 Jun 11am Reflecting and consolidating learning
- 03 Apr 11am Disabled community session 3 (Planning to complete)
- **Note all ND and disabled workshops are now 11-12:15 due to popular demand for longer sessions 😊**

For more information on all past and upcoming events, go to <http://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/>



# Selected Upcoming events



- 4 Feb 11am Managing high intensity study
- 11 Feb 7pm Understanding graphical data
- 13 Feb 11am Tackling procrastination successfully
- 18 Feb 7pm Fundamental maths skills
- 25 Feb 7pm Logical problem solving

For more information on all past and upcoming events, go to <http://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/>

# Feedback



Please complete the feedback form that is available at

<https://forms.office.com/e/g8HEwmTV5Y>

This is immensely valuable to provide information on how studenthublive is beneficial to students as well as to help us plan our future programme