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ROB MOORE: Hello, everyone, and welcome to this very special session at Student Hub Live with me, Rob Moore. As you can see, they've let me out the sturdy shack again, and I'm back in the studio, which is great. Today we're going to be talking about the assessment of the end of your module. So it's a really key issue, and we're glad to see so many of you joining us today in the chat.

So on the chat, we've got Joanna and Tim, and they're going to be answering as many questions as they can. So if you've got specific questions, post them in the chat, and they've got some great tips and some great links to share with you. And of course, we've got the wonderful Heidi, who's here, who is going to be feeding in some of your comments and telling us what you're talking about. So Heidi, who have we got, and what are they saying already?

HEIDI: Very busy so far. I'm not actually on my own today, Rob. I just want to point out-- I've got-- I don't know if you can see in the background, but I've got my dog Martha. She's insisting on sleeping on the sofa, so if you can hear some snoring in the background, I do apologise on Martha's behalf. I don't think she's going to be moved any time soon

ROB MOORE: Oh, we love to have the study buddies involved. [LAUGHS] Definitely.

HEIDI: I know, they really help, don't they? Yeah, absolutely.

ROB MOORE: Definitely.

HEIDI: So to everyone that's new here today, hi, and welcome. I know that this session looks slightly different to Adobe Connect, if that's what you're used to. So Student Hub Live is a slightly different format. If you have any technical issues at all, then just pop some information in the chat, and one of our team will come to you and give you some support.

So I want to say some hellos this morning. So Brian and Tina are both joining us for the first time today. So welcome to both of you. We've got Adriana, who's joining us from Germany. Keira is joining us from York. We've got Melissa and Melanie in Lincolnshire-- not together, but both in Lincolnshire.

Erin is joining us from Scotland-- hi, Erin. I think you've joined on quite a few of these. Lovely to have you with us. Carol is in the Scottish borders. We've got Patricia in Perthshire, and we've got Sasha-- I do hope that I'm pronouncing your name correctly, Sasha-- from Exeter and has just come back from walking the dog. And we've also got Moses, Kate, and Nick. So hi to everybody.

As you are looking at the chat, if things are moving a little bit quickly, on the top right hand side, there's a little pin icon. If you click on that, it will just help you to be able to keep up with the chat. It kind of slows it down, and you can go through at your own pace. And just finally, I just want to say hi to Mel. So Mel's got the air ambulance landing nearby, so I just want to say I hope that you can hear us OK, Mel.

ROB MOORE: [LAUGHS] Wonderful, wonderful. Across the bottom of your screen, we've got a question we'd like you to answer, and put the answer in the chat. It's, if you've got an assessment coming up, what type of assessment is it? OK, so is it an exam? Is it an EMA? So if you know, put it there. If you don't know, tell us that as well.

So I'm really pleased today to have Ana with us. Now, Ana-- welcome, Ana.

ANA CHAPLIN: Hi.

ROB MOORE: Anna has worked with the OU for quite a few years and works in the Assessment Centre. So to introduce yourself quickly, Ana?

ANA CHAPLIN: Yes, so I'm Anna, and I've been working at the Open University now, as Rob said, for 15-- almost coming up for 15 years. I have been in the same area for all of that time, and I look after and process all of the end of module assessments. So all of the students that might submit a piece of work, it will come through us, and I've got a team that will help process and send your work through everything right through to the results.

ROB MOORE: Oh, thank you, Ana. Now, Ana's been having a few technical issues. So fingers crossed the gremlins will stay at bay until we get to the end of the session. But Ana, everybody has to complete an assessment at the end of the module of some sort. So can you tell us what's different about the end of module assessment compared to the traditional tutor marked assessments?

ANA CHAPLIN: Yeah, of course. So there's a few differences. So with TMAs, there's as of a bit more flexibility. So students can, in terms of deadlines, you can have extensions throughout the course. So if students feel that they need a bit more time, they can speak to their tutor, and those tutors will be able to give a week's extension or a maximum of up to three weeks.

With an end of module assessment, and there are kind of a bit more-- you aren't allowed to have extensions or anything. So there is less flexibility around those, and it is important that the results as well for TMAs as, you would get them straight away, once the tutor has marked them. And unlike an end of module assessment, it takes the-- you have to go through a certain process, so the student's results will be delayed a little bit.

ROB MOORE: Who is it who marks the end of module assessment? Who would be-- who actually sees the assignment?

ANA CHAPLIN: So unlike with TMAs-- so TMAs are marked by the student's tutors, whereas with the end of module assessment, they get marked independently, some depending on the assessment strategy. They can actually be marked by some of the student's tutors, but they do tend to be marked independently as well.

ROB MOORE: Yes, because I know that I work on a number of modules, and on one of the modules, because it's project-based, even though I'm the tutor, I mark the first pass of the EMA, but then it gets second marked by somebody else. So there's always somebody independent marks it, but depending on the topic, sometimes the tutor is involved. How would students know who's marking their assignment, whether it's their tutor or somebody else?

ANA CHAPLIN: So this would be within the assessment marking guidelines. So they would be able to see on the information that's provided whether or not if their tutor will be one of the markers.

ROB MOORE: And I know every year we have the end of module assessment, and my students come back to me after about two weeks and say, "Where's my result? I haven't had it yet. Have I passed? So-- [LAUGHS] and I say to them, no, it's going to take a lot longer. Do we have rough timescales for the process? Because I know it's very-- because of our quality control process, it takes a lot longer. But what sort of time does it normally take?"

ANA CHAPLIN: So it can take between sort of six to eight weeks from when the cut off takes place. And it has to go through many processes and many checks. It has to go through the marking criteria. And then there are certain processes that the work will go through. And then at the very end, there's a module result panel where the student's results will get determined, and then after that, all the results will get finalised and then get released. So it can be a few months from when students submit their actual final piece of work.

ROB MOORE: Yes, and I know that the module teams are very heavily involved-- and that the level of scrutiny that goes on to make sure that we've been as fair as possible that nobody's been unfairly marked. And I also know that if a student fails, that assignment has been looked at by at least three people. So, what--

ANA CHAPLIN: Oh, definitely.

ROB MOORE: So what happens in that case? What I want to explain is that the odd tutor can't just have an off day and somebody fails because we're very careful about this. So what would happen normally with a script that just didn't quite make the grade?

ANA CHAPLIN: Well, there's many things that the module result panel would look at, and they would go through-- markers, all of their work will be checked to make sure that they're not too lenient or too harsh, and there's certain criteria within the module result panel that they would look at. And they might-- they would look at students, perhaps, that fall within the boundaries of a pass or just pass or just failed-- and especially students who may have submitted special circumstances. So there are lots of criteria around. So it's not just a case of looking at students and thinking, oh, they've just failed. And those students would be looked at to ensure that those results are actually correct and that's the right.

ROB MOORE: Absolutely and we really want students to pass. We are doing everything--

ANA CHAPLIN: Absolutely, yes, of course.

ROB MOORE: --we can get students through. So just rest assured that you won't fail by accident-- that-- although it could just-- that's the thing. You just mentioned special circumstances. What's that? What are special circumstances?

ANA CHAPLIN: So special circumstances is what students would submit if they felt that anything had happened to them in the lead up to the end of module assessment. So not just that, but also it can be throughout their tutor-marked assessments as well. So it's just an opportunity for students to explain if they've perhaps fallen poorly or there's been an unfortunate death within the family-- anything that they feel that's affected their work.

| we always encourage students to submit special circumstances before they submit their work and not afterwards or once they've had their results. Because once they've had their results and they feel-- that they look at them and feel, oh, I wish I'd explained the situation or circumstance that had happened.

They have to tell us before and not after once they've got those results. I think sometimes students feel that if they tell us about their special circumstances that we may judge them in a certain way or it might affect them, but it's independently looked at. The markers don't see the special circumstances. It's something that gets looked at when determining their results. So I think sometimes--

ROB MOORE: Oop, it looks like we've [LAUGHS] lost Ana there. The special circumstances are really, really useful if something goes wrong towards the end. And if you feel you need to, there is a really clear description on the Help Centre on how to complete and submit special circumstances. I believe we've got some questions coming through, Heidi.

HEIDI: Gosh, we've got loads of questions coming through, actually, Rob. There were a couple there for Ana, and I know that we've lost her at the moment. But I've got a couple that I think that you might be able to help us with, Rob. So one of the questions that Melanie has asked-- I must just say, actually, the majority of our guests are working towards EMAs at the moment. And like I said, lots of questions. So Melanie says, "What happens if you fail the EMA? Is there a reset option?"

ROB MOORE: I believe we've got Ana back. So Ana, did you get that question?

ANA CHAPLIN: I did, yeah, I'm so sorry. I don't know how much of that you caused me explaining about special circumstances, so I do apologise.

ROB MOORE: --most of it. So the question was-- oh, it's gone out of mind. Heidi, what was-- just remind me-- so we get the question right-- again?

HEIDI: Of course. Yeah, no problem at all. Lovely to have you back, Ana.

ROB MOORE: I remembered it. It's OK. The question was, if somebody fails their EMA, do they get to reset? What are the arrangements for a reset for an EMA?

ANA CHAPLIN: Yes, so a majority of modules-- they are depending on the criteria, and if they've met all other pass criteria through the module, there is an opportunity to resubmit their end of module assessment. So there will be still certain criteria depending on if you're perhaps an undergraduate student or a postgraduate. And yes, there could be an opportunity to resubmit. Some modules may well also provide an advisor.

ROB MOORE: Clearly, it's going to be down to the specific module, and there will be specific guidance on where a reset is applicable. So that should be in the assessment guide for each module. And Heidi, what's the next question?

HEIDI: So we've got one from Janine here. So if special circumstances are used, is this noted on the certificate at the end? It's a great question.

ANA CHAPLIN: Yeah, so when you get your result, it will say-- it will advise that special circumstances were presented to the module result panel. If they were looked at, it will also tell you that they were taken into consideration and also if any decisions were made on the basis of your special circumstances submitted.

ROB MOORE: Oh, good question. I hadn't even thought of that one. Excellent. So any more questions, Heidi?

HEIDI: Yes, we've got quite a few coming through. So I'll keep going. Ann has asked a question. So what happens if there is a strike affecting the marking of our EMAs? We've got a couple of people in the chat that have also said that they're feeling a bit nervous and a bit anxious about the EMAs. So just to reassure everyone, we're all in this boat together. Everything's going to be OK. We're going to work everything through. So yeah, what about the possible strike action affecting the marking of the EMAs?

ANA CHAPLIN: Yeah, it's a really good question. So at the moment, we're trying to ensure everything that we can do to avoid any impact that it does have on students. We're working very closely with module teams to ensure that marking isn't affected, and we do have measures in place. And a lot of markers just taking on additional marking as well. So hopefully students won't see an impact or a delay on their results.

ROB MOORE: By impact-- on the turnaround time, possibly.

ANA CHAPLIN: Correct, yes.

ROB MOORE: Right, lovely. So next one, Heidi. We're on a roll today.

HEIDI: We are. So Nelima-- can you submit special circumstances the day after you submit the EMA, so the day after the cut off? Is that an option?

ANA CHAPLIN: It is, yes. So students have three days after their end of module assessment. So once the cut off has passed, they will have three days to be able to submit the special circumstances.

ROB MOORE: OK. Any more before I jump in with my questions, Heidi?

HEIDI: No, I think that's the questions for Ana for now, Rob, yeah.

ROB MOORE: So just a quick one, Ana, about submission. So when you submit your EMA, you've got a cut off. Can you talk me through what the cut off means, what the grace period means, and what the penalty period means for an EMA?
[LAUGHS]

ANA CHAPLIN: Sure, YEAH.

ROB MOORE: It's all about that cut off point.

ANA CHAPLIN: Of course, yeah, it can be quite confusing in terms of deadlines. So the actual deadline is midday, and then there's a 12-hour grace period. So this allows students to submit their work and then cater for any technical issues or anything that they-- they may incur. Also, if it's a cut off day, then sometimes there might be heavier traffic as well. So there might be a slight delay in submission. It's not always instant. I mean, I'm talking, like, sometimes, like, a couple of minutes.

We do encourage students to not leave the submission right up to sort of 5 to midnight, just in case they may incur internet issues, technical issues. Because if anything it takes over literally a minute past midnight, then they fall into the 24-hour grace penalty period. So that means that the day after the cut off date, if students do submit within that time frame, they incur a 10% penalty. And then if anything beyond that, it will mean an instant fail.

ROB MOORE: OK, so that's nice and clear. And I'm absolutely with you about the submitting at the cut off point. Every year, I get students phoning me up in a panic at 5 to 12:00 on the cut off day-- 5 to midday-- saying, the system's down! And it's simply because so many people are trying to submit at the same time.

ANA CHAPLIN: Exactly. A lot of students do leave submissions sort of to the last minute, which I-- they want to try and get as much as they can. So one thing I would probably perhaps suggest is kind of putting something into the sys--

ROB MOORE: Oop, Ana has gone again. [LAUGHS] I normally suggest using the cut off as the day before and treating that-- and then it gives you 24 hours to make up with any issues. Because it only takes a technical issue on the day to really mess up your entire module, if you've got an end of module assessment. So artificially, bring the cut off a day forward. Then you've got the grace period. If Ana was here, I'd be asking you about re-submissions. And what I mean by that is, how many times can you submit your EMA? How many times can you send it in? So Ana, are there-- is there a limit on how many times a student can submit an EMA.

ANA CHAPLIN: Yep, so they can submit-- before the cutoff, they can submit as many times as they like, and it will just keep overriding the previous submission. And then whatever that latest submission that's in the system, that's what will get-- that is what will get marked.

ROB MOORE: What in-- if you think you might have problems, submit early [LAUGHS] to make sure there's something in. You can always override it later.

ANA CHAPLIN: Yes.

ROB MOORE: Now, we've got a new ticker question going across, asking you what your concerns are. And we'll try and deal with those as we go through. So what I want to get from you now, Ana, is some of your tips. So what tips have you got for our students who are due to submit an EMA or an end of module TMA? What would you advise them to do?

ANA CHAPLIN: So I think the main one is just making sure that you do submit on time. I think that's really important. Also to check that the work you are submitting is correct. We have quite a lot of students that may well be studying multiple modules-- may submit-- may upload the incorrect piece of work. We've had students that have submitted TMAs, and--

ROB MOORE: OK, [LAUGHS] and Ana is off again. Just on that point, in one of the modules I work on, I work on the reset forum for a module. And last year, we had six students who failed on this one module just because they sent in the wrong form. They sent in their wrong assignment. And I think what Ana was going to talk about then was going to be the fact that when you submit your EMA and you go through all the little tick boxes to say it's your own work, et cetera, there's an option there to download the file you've just submitted.

And that is probably the biggest single tip I would give you when submitting an EMA or a TMA-- that is to download the file you've just submitted and make sure it's the one you're meant to send. Six students last year ended up failing because they sent the wrong file in on this one module I was involved in, which after you put all that work in, seems criminal. So what other tips, then, Ana? What else should students really be making sure that they've done?

ANA CHAPLIN: I'm really sorry. My internet just keeps-- it keeps breaking up, and I was chatting along then. And I'm not quite sure what it was that you caught on that or not about--

ROB MOORE: That's fine. Don't worry.

ANA CHAPLIN: Yeah. So I'm not quite sure if I'm going to be repeating myself. But yeah, it's just to basically ensure that the work you are submitting is correct. It is quite common for students to upload incorrect files, but also to ensure that the format that you're sending your work in is correct as well. Because we do sometimes get perhaps corrupt files or incorrect files that may be not well-- that might not be supported. Also students that may embed files within a document, which some markers may have difficulty opening.

ROB MOORE: So as well as the right file, make sure everything's attached.

ANA CHAPLIN: Correct, yeah.

ROB MOORE: I would know. I've been burnt with this. It was on an assignment, not an EMA. But I once scored 0 on an assignment because I forgot to attach an unmarked piece of work that was an essential. So make sure that you're sending in everything that's required, everything that's needed.

ANA CHAPLIN: I think it's also important to add as well that if you are sending multiple files, that you zip them up as well. Because if you try and upload individual files, each file that you submit will override the previous submission. So just making sure that if you have multiple files, they're all zipped up correctly, and you're submitting it as one file.

ROB MOORE: And there's lots of information on the computing help site that can explain how to do that if you're not quite sure. So I'm going to go back to Heidi and see if we've got any concerns. So we might have a chance to answer a couple of questions before the end. So Heidi, what are the biggest concerns that we're getting about EMAs?

HEIDI: Yeah, we've had a few through. So I'm going to start with Debra-- "So my main concern for me is how best to approach the EMA without getting overwhelmed with it being a larger piece of work across the module." I can relate to this, Debra. I did my undergraduate with the OU. I've been through the whole process. I know how overwhelming it is when you initially make a start on that EMA. So yeah, I'll hand that one over to Rob and Ana to come back to you on.

ROB MOORE: Well, I'll take that one because we also run Student Hub Live sessions aimed specifically at helping you to prepare for your EMA. On the 2nd of May, Isabella ran a session looking at-- just getting the title right-- Preparing Your Best EMA. So that recording exists. You can watch that now.

And next week, there is a session being run specifically on helping you prepare for your exam. So those two sessions would be really helpful in helping you get the content right for your EMA. So this is more about the process today, but those other sessions focus on the content. So any other concerns, Heidi?

HEIDI: Yeah, so Sally is concerned that the EMAs are marked so much more fiercely than the TMAs.

ROB MOORE: Oh, an interesting one. As a marker, I wouldn't say they're marked more fiercely. I think you have to accept that the EMAs tend to cover the whole of the module rather than specific elements. So I wouldn't say more fiercely. I think there's a lot more goes into making sure we've got them right. So every EMA, we have coordination to make sure everybody's on the right page and we agree.

But I wouldn't say more fiercely. I wouldn't say my marking change is because it's an EMA rather than the TMA. I think there's just a lot more discussion between the tutors and a lot more focus-- because there's so much more weight put on an EMA than there is on a TMA. Any other points that they-- or comments that they've raised, Heidi?

HEIDI: Yeah. So Pauline has said, I'm finding the volume of material to choose from quite hard for this EMA. I'm finding this module harder than last year's. So I don't know if you've got any reassuring words on that, Rob.

ROB MOORE: Reassuring-- I don't know. And people hate me saying this, but you're on a journey. You start, and at level one we're introducing you to your academic skills and your approaches. As you move through to level two and level three, we're expecting you to be more critical and to develop those skills.

And part of that is that, at level one, we'll give you a lot more guidance on what to choose from. Level two, you get a lot more freedom. And at level three, there's even more freedom. So yes, it is more of a challenge, but actually, it's the development of your academic skills. So just back to Ana for a second. Hopefully we've got Ana with us. Anything to add to that, Ana? Does that agree with your views?

ANA CHAPLIN: Yeah, no, absolutely. I think, just kind of going back to that question before about the EMAs being marked more harshly, I think you're right. It is an examinable piece of work, whereas obviously TMAs are to do with certain sections of the actual module. And yeah, EMAs are kind of an overall view and of what students have displayed.

ROB MOORE: The only thing I would want to add to this now before we get to the end of the session is that we've talked a lot about EMAs-- we've only talked about EMAs and the way they're marked. But that's exactly the same way that exams are marked, isn't it? So there's no difference in the way that we treat the assessment at the end, whether it's an EMA, an ETMA, or an exam, the actual process they go through is exactly the same. So I'm just checking I'm right with that, Ana. That's a correct statement, isn't it? There's no difference in the process.

ANA CHAPLIN: Sorry, I lost [LAUGHS] you, just for that beginning part of that question there.

ROB MOORE: There's no difference in the way that we mark exams to the way that we mark end of module assessments.

ANA CHAPLIN: No.

ROB MOORE: So whether you sit an exam or an EMA, the process from once it's been submitted is exactly the same.

ANA CHAPLIN: It's exactly the same, yes.

ROB MOORE: Right, so thank you for that. And thank you for persevering through all those technical issues that we've had. We're going to move on to the next session in a moment.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Hi, and welcome back to this second session where we're going to be talking specifically about remote exams. So you might want to look at the ticker question that's going across the screen now and tell us what worries you. If you've got a remote exam coming up, tell us what is worrying you at the moment, and we'll try and deal with that.

We're going to get to Heidi in a second and see what you've been saying, but this session today I've got Helen with me. Now, Helen is the senior manager for remote exams development, and it's great to have the real expert with us. So welcome, Helen. Tell us a little about you, and then we'll see what our viewers have been talking about. So tell us about yourself.

HELEN Hello, so I'm Helen. I've worked at the university for just over 11 years now in lots of different roles, but I've been
BARTON: working on remote exams for the last year. So my job is to try to improve remote exams, make them better, make the processes better, and make you have a better experience. So I've worked in lots of different areas, but it's really interesting, remote exams, it's moved very quickly. So there's lots to learn. And I think we've almost moved too quickly, that we've not told you enough about exams, which is why we're here today.

ROB MOORE: Excellent. And Heidi, what are people saying? Are they mentioning the remote exams yet? Because we really want to find out if anybody's experienced one, what they're thinking about it. So what are they saying at the start? No doubt they'll say more later.

HEIDI: Yes, we've had lots and lots and lots of questions through. So prepare yourself, Helen. I've got a long, long list here of questions that have been coming through over the last half an hour, so I'm not going to dive into those just yet. But I think there's just a general sense of anxiety at the moment. So hopefully over the next 25 minutes, we can really reassure a lot of people in the chat.

Mark, for example, says, "All of it is quite overwhelming. I get really anxious around exams but seem to do better in them than on an EMA," which is interesting. I know personally I perform really rather poorly with exams and much better when it's a marked assignment that I've got more time to focus on, and we're all different. So yeah, like I said, over the next 25 minutes, hopefully you'll go away from this session feeling a lot more confident

ROB MOORE: Interesting. I was the other way around. I tended to do better on the exams than on the EMAs. So it's different how different things suit different people. So Helen, remote exams-- what is a remote exam, and is there just one type of remote exam?

HELEN So a remote exam is an end of module assessment that you sit in a fixed time period. So for an EMA, you might
BARTON: have quite a long time to complete it. For a remote exam, you'll have a lot shorter time. So we do have a few different types of remote exams, so it could be that you have a full 24 hours, you have a full day between when you get access to it and when you submit it, or it might be down to even having it at a fixed time. So it could be that you start at 10:00 and finish at 1:00, or it could be that you have 12 or 24 hours where you can pick where you start, and then you'll have three hours or four hours to complete the exam. So you complete it wherever you like. You just need to make sure you've got an internet connection, that it's quite quiet, that you're not going to be interrupted. So it's a little bit more flexible to what you might have previously sat as an exam, maybe, in school, where you sit in a big exam hall and you're all at your little desks, and you have to hand write everything. That's not what a remote exam is. You will do it-- in some way, you're a little bit more comfortable, so at home. Maybe you could do it at work, if work have got a space you can use. So you choose where to sit it, and then we've got all these different types of exam, and that depends on your assessment strategy and what's appropriate for your module.

ROB MOORE: So am I right in saying it's more like an unseen EMA that you get a short timescale to complete? Is that a reasonable--

HELEN Exactly, yes. Yes. So we'd release-- we release the paper to you, and then you'll have-- however long you have

BARTON: for your exam, you will then have to submit it. So the maximum we have now is 24 hours. A lot of them are a bit shorter or less in flexibility, so it might be a little bit more timed.

ROB MOORE: And have we got virtual big brother spying through webcams to make sure people are all on their own? Do they need to make sure they've put the laundry away before they've started to do their remote exam?

HELEN No, so we don't have any sort of remote proctoring you might have heard it called. We don't have a webcam

BARTON: watching you so you don't need to put your face on or dry your hair before you do it. You can be as comfortable as you like in your pyjamas to do your exam. Nobody's going to be watching you. There's not going to be any lockdowns on your browsers or what you can use. So you can use the internet. You can use your course books. It is open to use them. What we would say, a little word of caution, don't spend ages googling the answers or looking things up because you're going to waste the time you've got for your exam. It's really important that you're focused on writing the answers you need to write, not looking up the answers on whatever services you've got or whatever books you've got.

ROB MOORE: Yeah, I'm going to come back to you later for tips on preparing for an exam, but let's see if we've got any quick questions, some early questions from Heidi, which we'll deal with first. Then we'll come on to some hints and tips later. So Heidi, what's really worrying people or what's-- have we got any good experiences, even, where people have sat remote exams?

HEIDI: Well, one of the themes seems to be concerns around IT issues and connectivity. So if it's OK if I start with that one, so issues with internet connection-- "What happens if the connection drops off, and how will it affect the exam for the student?"

HELEN So you would access your question paper-- so normally you'd download a PDF. So if you lost internet connection

BARTON: while you were completing the exam, it probably wouldn't matter too much as long as you were able to keep typing into your Word document or whichever service you're using. You need to make sure you've got internet access to upload it and make sure that you can submit it. It's sort of the beginning and the end, I think, are the areas that you really want to make sure you've got internet connection. I would say maybe have a plan B.

So if you've got a neighbour, you can pop round to theirs to submit-- or a family member or a cafe down the road. But maybe think about, if you really worried that your internet will drop out at that point you need to submit, make sure you think about a backup option, even tethering to your mobile phone. I think-- like I say, during the exam, you're probably going to be focused on thinking about the answers and not necessarily needing access during the middle. Some of them do require you to add answers on screen. Those ones, you probably would need to keep the internet connection going if you can.

ROB MOORE: OK, and where will students get the information on this? How will they know whether they need a continual internet connection or whether it's-- you download it, complete it, then submit it in separate stages? Where would they find that information?

HELEN So that should be on the Assessment tab of your module website it's probably also in some of the tutorial

BARTON: information and definitely in the specimen paper. So all modules will have a specimen exam. You can go and try it out, and that will be exactly the form that you will follow to do your exam. It will be really clear there if you need to add the answers on screen or whether you need to write them and then upload them.

ROB MOORE: And again, that's a different-- with the EMAs because you do get specimen papers for remote exams, which you don't with the EMAs. In terms of the submission, how strict are you with the submission time? So if it says it must be submitted by 6:00 PM or whatever the time is, how strict is that?

HELEN BARTON: It's pretty strict. So you need to make sure that you are submitting by the deadline. There is a late penalty period. For most modules, they have some form of late penalty period, and it will depend on the kind of exam as to how long that is. But even a second over, you'll be in that late penalty period, and that might mean that you lose 10% of your marks. So I would always say, try to upload early. Try to make sure you've got time to check it's the right file, a bit like Ana said. But yeah, it is a hard deadline. So really try to get it in on time.

ROB MOORE: So don't leave it to the last 15 minutes. Make sure you put it in a little earlier. Heidi, any other questions? What else are people wanting to know?

HEIDI: Yes, so question from Susan and Elaine. They had a very similar question, each of them. So what are the OU's thoughts on exams going forward? Can we be assured that next year exams will continue to be remote?

HELEN BARTON: So this is a very topical question. There's due to be a communication come out to students soon, so hopefully this week. We are keeping online-- remote-- for the moment. And we're doing-- you might be aware, we're working on some new systems to improve our exams and assignment systems. They're looking into what we can do. So obviously, we've moved really quickly in the last few years with everything since COVID about getting exams online. We need to make sure that we've got everything right, so we're going to stick how we are, keep going for now. And so basically, until further notice, you'll be keeping with remote and online exams.

ROB MOORE: For me, that sounds like a real step forward. I think back to when I did an exam in Nottingham, and I was convinced I knew where the exam Centre was, and I got lost. And I missed the first 20 minutes of the exam because I got lost in the middle of Nottingham.

HELEN BARTON: And that's one of the great things about remote exams, is you can choose where you are. You don't have to stress out about getting to a certain place and parking and travelling. And I know some of our students who maybe have disabilities or mobility issues or get really anxious. It takes a load off your mind if you can just do it at home and sit in your pyjamas. It's great, and that's one less thing to worry about.

ROB MOORE: Yeah, I did actually go to my exams in my pyjamas, so that wouldn't have impacted my thing. So we're going to have a look at some of your top tips, Helen. So we'll look at some of your top tips, and then we'll come back to Heidi for some more questions in a few minutes. So if I was one of your students, and I said, "Give me your top tips, your top 5 for dealing with remote exams," what would they be?

HELEN BARTON: So I think the first thing is make sure that you have got a space you're comfortable in with the internet connection. Get child and pet care, if you need to, to make sure you aren't interrupted. So for example, so I'm not interrupted now, I've had to close my dog away. Otherwise, she would be on me and really distracting.

I imagine it's the same with children. So get child and pet care. Maybe put a sign your door so the postman doesn't knock, so you're not interrupted and you can really focus. I would then say, try out the specimen paper. Know what to expect and what you're dealing with so that you can just focus on the questions themselves rather than worrying about the systems or where you access something. There will be lots of prep information.

There'll be tutorials in most modules. You can have a go and make sure that you know what to expect. And that will help you plan and help you work out how you revise and how you can do a timetable for a revision. And I would say, if you think you might have any additional requirements-- so maybe you've got a disability or some additional needs-- maybe you're a carer or you're pregnant, there's things we can put in place so that you might be more comfortable and be at the same advantage as everyone else in taking your exams.

So we could give you some extra time, for example, or some rest breaks. If you think you need that, contact us in advance. So if you've got an exam in June, contact us now. Tell us what you need, and we can make sure it's in place in time. If you've declared a disability with us-- sorry.

ROB MOORE: Who should they be contacting? Who should the-- who should students be getting in touch with?

HELEN BARTON: Student support team. So if in doubt, get in touch with your student support team. It's worth saying, if you have a problem during the exam as well, contact your student support team. And actually, it's really, really, really important, if you do have a problem, you tell it as soon as you can. So bearing in mind some of our exams have got really fixed time scales, when you contact us might impact what we can do to help you. So if it's before the deadline, we might be able to offer you more help than if it's after the deadline.

So contact us as soon as you can. So the student support teams are available out of hours up until 8:00 PM, so there is a number that will be-- I'm sure Jo will put in the chat-- which is available until 8:00 PM, and you can call and speak to somebody. The IT help desk-- they're available 24/7, so you can call them any time. So if you've got a problem, tell us about it. Might be worth having those numbers to hand before you start so that you know exactly what to do if you do have a problem.

ROB MOORE: And of course, those details are all on Student Home, so when you go to your student home page, your student support team details are all on there. Am I right in thinking that you've cancelled all holiday entitlement for the student support team and the IT support team for the duration of the exam periods? [LAUGHS]

HELEN BARTON: Yeah, so they will be available throughout those exam periods, and there will be somebody available. I know that I'm going to be on call for some of that time as well, in case there's any problems, so that we can fix them quickly. Similarly, if we know there's a problem, we'll tell you. So there'll be a message on your bulletin board, on your module website. We'll email you. So if we know-- if something goes wrong-- hopefully it doesn't-- touch wood. But if it does go wrong, we'll tell you. So just keep in contact with us, basically, if there's a problem.

ROB MOORE: Absolutely. So keep in touch. Now, Heidi, have we got any more questions? Anybody got something they'd like clarified or any comments?

HEIDI: I think we've got about six hours worth of questions, but I'm going to reduce them down slightly. I'm going to start off with a tip, actually, from Alex. I really like this one. "So from my own experience, make sure your router is updated. I recently had an issue with my internet connection. In the end, we phoned up our provider, and we had an outdated router, so we needed to have a new router. And the internet has since been nothing short of perfection." So I thought that was a really good tip, something to do to plan ahead in advance.

And then in terms of questions, so Sharon and Heather have a very similar question. "Where will I find the specific questions being asked on the day?" And Heather asks, "How does the exam paper come through to us? So kind of very similar question there.

ROB MOORE: Good questions.

HELEN BARTON: Yeah, great question. So on your model website, there should be an Assessment tab along the top. And within that, your exam will appear. So there will be a link to that, and that will have a PDF question paper, in most cases, that you will download. So it is on your model website. It should be really clear.

And your specimen paper should be in a similar place. So hopefully, you'll be able to see it. In terms of then uploading the answer, it will be through the same thing-- through your assessment tab. It might be on either the same system you've done your TMAs or on a slightly different system, depending on the type of exam you've got.

ROB MOORE: OK, so you can check and make sure. If you're not clear, ask your tutor. That's what we're there for. So just to put you at ease a little bit, tutors want you to pass. Our job is to help you pass. So any questions, any concerns you got, come and ask us. Because we really do want to help.

I like the one about the router as well. So when I'm in the study shack back at home, one of the things I do before I connect remotely is I reboot my router because it does make a difference to the speed I get out of it. So rebooting it, basically turning it off and on again-- typical IT solution-- really helps with your speed. So next question then, Heidi.

HEIDI: So from Steffi-- "Do we have the answers to the specimen exam papers so that we can see what the perfect answers should have been?" So afterwards, will they get to see what would have been, I guess, A-star.

HELEN BARTON: So in most cases, there should be some specimen answers. It might be that a tutor works through them in a tutorial. I think we're-- sometimes we might delay when those answers come out so that you actually have a chance to do the exam without cheating. But I think, in most cases, that, yes, it will be available.

ROB MOORE: Excellent. We don't issue results afterwards, though. So after an exam, we don't issue the correct answers and submit-- make those available, do we?

HELEN No, we don't, no.

BARTON:

ROB MOORE: But you can-- again, I'm checking back to when I studied. I used to be able to access previous exam papers through the Student Association. Is that still possible for remote exams?

HELEN BARTON: Absolutely, yeah. And especially because remote exams are obviously out there with you, it's a bit different to when you went to an exam hall and the exam paper stayed in the room. They're out there. So as soon as you've got your question paper, anyone could have it really. So there are all kinds of questions out there. They're definitely still available via SA for most modules. So absolutely, go and find our previous papers.

ROB MOORE: And I'm sure Isabella is going to deal with this when she talks about preparing for your exam, but working through previous exam papers is a great way to get yourself ready and get yourself prepared for the remote exams. Next question, then, Heidi. I'm enjoying this. [LAUGHS] The questions that are coming in-- some fantastic questions.

HEIDI: This one came in quite a bit earlier. So Stephen, it's taken me a little while to get to your question, but I'm going to ask this one now. Love this one. So "How does The OU you assess the risk to academic integrity of remote exams, particularly with the recent introduction of ChatGPT?" And we did a session all about ChatGPT a couple of weeks ago. So it would be really great to respond to Stephen's question about that-- academic integrity.

HELEN BARTON: I'm getting a grilling today, aren't I? So we've got a lot of checks in place. So we do some-- we have some software, which we use wherever we can. So we run through to check any matches with other answers with published material with the internet. And we also have verification by tutors. So if a tutor marks some work, they might say, yes, this looks like some other work this student's done.

And we've got a lot of quality assurance processes in place to make sure that we are checking what's happening. We know the world of ChatGPT is moving really quickly, so we're trying to do as much research as we can and make sure that there are robust methods in place to maintain integrity of those exams. So we're working really hard to do that at the moment. And I know the university's got a big group working on it. So we're very, very conscious of it and doing what we can.

ROB MOORE: Absolutely. And I know we're very keen-- as soon as we've got some solid policies and some solid advice to give you on artificial intelligence, we'll be running a session on it. So as soon as we know, we'll be letting people know. But I think from my point of view, it's-- at the moment, the artificial intelligence is unlikely to give you a better answer than you're going to come up with yourself. [LAUGHS] So I think there's--

HELEN BARTON: Absolutely.

ROB MOORE: --you'll be doing yourself a disservice. Plus, you haven't paid your fee [LAUGHS] to get a computer to write your assignments for you. You've paid your course fees to learn and develop those skills. Any more, Heidi? It sounded like you still got quite a few to So we've got a couple more minutes.

HEIDI: OK, yeah, we've got a couple more. So we just touched on there, obviously, about possibly somebody interrupting you, and there was great advice there about getting child care and locking dogs away. And my dog is still in the background over there. But noise-- so this is something that's come up-- a question. So a couple of our guests are asking about this.

So Mark said that he lives in a very noisy location so has some concerns about noise in the background when doing the exam. And Alan-- so Alan lives on the Isle of Man, and he has just found out that unfortunately the exam day is the exact same day the TTA races will be taking place across 8 to 10 hours.

So Alan's house is just a few yards away from the road on which the TTA is raised, and motorbikes will be passing at 160 miles per hour. As you could guess, they're extremely noisy, which is likely to make concentrating on the exam a little stressful. Might this count as special circumstances? And if so, what are the steps to submitting a form about that?

ROB MOORE: Oh, good question.

HELEN BARTON: Ooh, good question. I think it-- I think anything that impacts your exam that you, on the day, impacts you, absolutely submit special circumstances. Tell us something was happening. Because otherwise, we don't know. And like Ana said earlier, that will go as part of the module results panel, who work out your result.

And I would say, if you know there's going to be noise, maybe consider if there's any other locations you can take the exam. I appreciate that might be quite hard when you're on the Isle of Man, and the whole island is motorbikes. But I think, try to work out. And there are some options, if you really don't think you can take that exam, you could see if you could postpone it or you could almost like defer, so you postpone to the next period. There are some strict criteria around that.

So you might-- you really would need to meet them, and it's in terms of illness stopping you, for example. And I think special circumstances is probably the best way to go. If you have been impacted during the exam and you-- due to noise around you-- let us know about it, and then the module results panel can consider that when they think about your results.

ROB MOORE: I personally think that if you know there's going to be something like that in the vicinity, it might be worth putting the effort in and going to a friend's house, using their connection, or something else-- and making--

HELEN Absolutely.

BARTON:

ROB MOORE: --some changes. You spent nine months getting ready for this point, so it might be worth considering and anticipating-- and it's part of your preparation, the same as perhaps getting grandparents to look after children for the day or making sure you put the sign on the door to stop [LAUGHS] the postman knocking.

So think about-- and I think it's really useful to anticipate things that could cause you a problem. But once you've anticipated it, what can you do about it? You can them in business and law-- all about risk assessment and assessing the risk for your exam and taking the appropriate action. But if something unusual happens and something happens on the day, definitely.

There's no penalty for putting a special circumstances form in and it being ignored. So if in doubt, put one in. There's no problem with that. But just be aware that, yeah, we do have to try and put ourselves in the best position that we can for the exams. OK, I think we're almost there. So Helen, any final points before we bring the session to a close-- any final tips?

HELEN I think, just, make sure you give yourself time to prepare. So have a timetable. Know when your exam is. Have a go at the specimen paper so you know what to expect. So put yourself in the best position. And I would say that that's the best thing. I like to make sure that I'm-- I'm a planner, so I like to make sure I'm really prepared.

BARTON:

So exactly like I would find my route to the exam Centre, and I'd maybe look on Street View to see where it is and what it looks like, I'd be doing the same thing with my remote exam. So I'd be having a go at navigating where it is, having a go at the specimen, planning what areas I need to revise more than others. So that would be my top tip.

ROB MOORE: And can you just confirm again for us, Helen, when is the student support helpline open? So what are the opening times for that?

HELEN So they will be available from 8:00 in the morning-- so if it's between 8:00 and 5:00 call the normal student support number that you get on the Help Centre on your Student Home. Between 5:00 PM and 8:00 PM, it's a slightly different number. So it's 0108541291. I've got it up on my wall. I'm sure that will be put in the chat as well. And that will also pop up on the top of the Help Centre so you can see it during exam. So that is out of hours up till 8:00. And the IT help desk are there 24/7 all the time.

ROB MOORE: Thank you, Helen. And just back to Heidi for some light last minute comments from the team. What have people been saying? What are their thoughts now? Hopefully they're feeling a little better.

HEIDI: Yes, seem to be, which is good. And there's been some lovely suggestions and support messages coming in, just to the comments that Alan and Mark made about noise. So lots of suggestions around headphones. Cara said, "Get some noise cancelling headphones." White noise as well in the background.

And then just to finish off, we had this really nice comment from Mark, who said, "Top tip-- post exam, sounds obvious, but plan something nice to do afterwards. I'm going to go out for dinner, hopefully. I did it last time." And lots of people in agreement and really liking that idea. So a way to celebrate and treat yourself after all the hard work.

ROB MOORE: Absolutely. You've got to have something to look forward to. And as for noise cancelling headphones, I think my stomach needs some. I don't know if it's been coming through on the audio, but goodness me. So thank you to all my guests today. It's been great to talk about all things exams and EMAs. There should be some links to some brand new videos that are out there, giving you some hints and tips on EMAs and exams.

And just a quick request from us about your feedback forms-- we need to know what you value from these sessions, what helps, what hinders. So if you could complete the feedback form that's in the chat or that you can find on the website, that really helps us to plan these sessions and take them forwards. So Thank you to Ana, Helen, and Heidi. It's been a lovely session. And thank you all for watching. And I look forward to seeing you again soon. Cheers, bye bye.

[MUSIC PLAYING]