

Student Hub Live people



Margaret Greenhall is a study skills specialist. She has taught thousands of people about their memory. She tutors on science level 1 and 2 courses. She is also an OU student of geology. Her hobbies are baking, rowing and Lego.



Amanda Smith has been an OU Law School tutor at levels 1, 2 and 3 since 2009. During that time, she has discovered the pleasures and pitfalls of being an OU student by studying for an MA in Online and Distance Education, worked as an Educational Advisor, written tutorial, skills, and research materials.

In her (very little) spare time she can be found walking the hills, tending her garden, travelling Italy, ballroom dancing and knitting to keep warm!

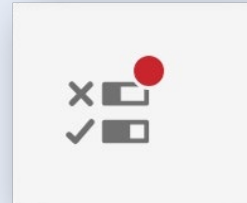
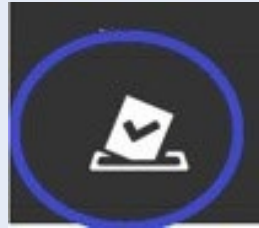
Online workshop basics



- 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 on a public facing website.
- Slides are available to download during the session(*may not be accessible on some mobile devices*) and from <http://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/>.

Mobile users

If you are on a mobile device 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



Chat pod icon



Today's workshop

- This is a live session with a guest to help you think about your communication in an academic environment.
- We'll give you some thoughts what academic communication is and what the expectations are
- There is a lot of interaction so please be ready to answer polls (questions) or add to chat pod during the session
- We can not give module or subject specific advice

Please be aware

- These sessions are large scale
- They are very busy
- There is lots of interaction
- They are not the same as other tutorials
- You can maximise slides on your own screen by clicking the icon (this will hide the chat)



Inclusivity

- We welcome all students at our workshops. Please do be aware that they can be very busy and some students may struggle with the non scripted nature.
- Slides are available to download within the live session and from the event page on the studenthublive website 24 hours ahead of every session to follow along or prepare for what will come up.

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 would not be able to make the recording available

Effective Academic Communication



This was our advert...

- How do you express your ideas in an academic setting? How confident do you feel navigating some of the unique traits of academic communication?
- Join us to learn about some simple techniques to help you explain your ideas in terms your peers and tutors will understand. We will focus on online and distance communication, and share tips to help you avoid misunderstandings and maximise your potential as an OU student.

Not covering writing for assignments

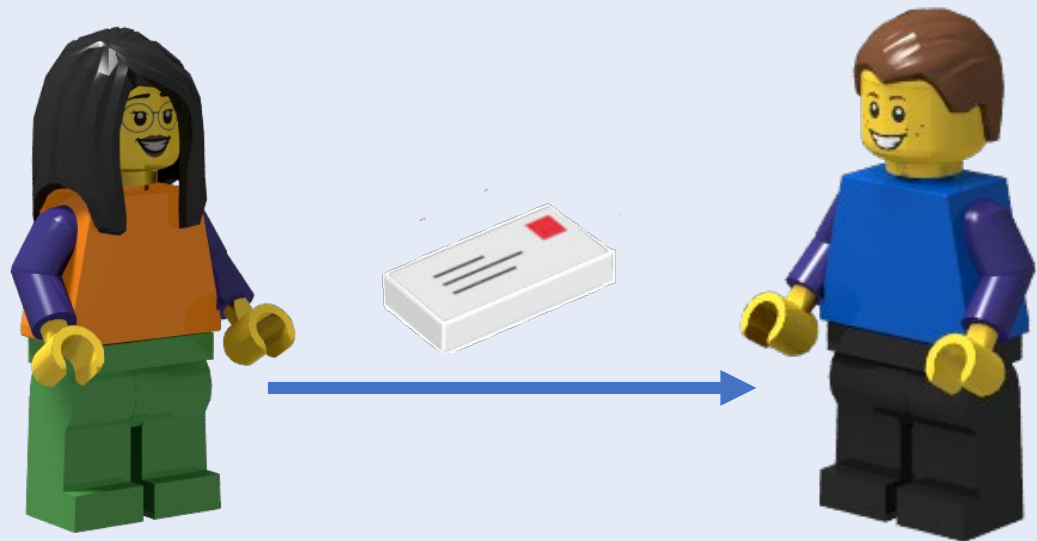
- Essay writing
<https://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/content/introduction-essay-writing-beginners-22-oct-2024>
- Essay planning
<https://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/content/introduction-essay-planning-beginners-101024>
- Writing short answers
<https://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/content/planning-short-written-answers-6-nov-2024>
- Academic writing
<https://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/content/improve-your-academic-writing-12-october-2023>
- Understanding questions
<https://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/content/really-understanding-questions-9-oct-2024>

First thoughts poll

- What does effective communication mean to you?

Communication minimum

- Sender
- Receiver
- Message
- Medium



Effective communication

- Purpose
- Right person
- Level of formality
- Polite
- Minimise back and forth –
include all the info necessary
- Tells the recipient what response is needed
- Medium both are happy with

Which medium?

If you could choose any method to communicate with someone you know well which method would you use? Select one answer from the poll and have a look at what others have chosen

- Face to face
- Phone
- Text
- Social media
- Email
- Letter



Which medium?

Now, if you could choose any method to communicate with someone you don't know well, e.g. for employment, study, finance which method would you use? Select one answer from the poll

- Face to face
- Phone
- Text
- Social media
- Email
- Letter



What challenges does the medium create?



Who and why might you communicate with in the university?



Who you might communicate with

- Tutor – discussing study, feedback, tutorials – usually semi formal for clarity and courtesy
- Peers on module – discussing specific activities / assessment – smart casual
- Peers on module – discussing general points such as progress, tutorials, feedback etc – polite casual
- Support teams in the OU e.g. student support / disability team – usually semi formal for clarity and courtesy

Clarity and courtesy

- When communicating with those working within the university you want something to happen
- Unless you are clear about what you want and why the person you are contacting is likely to be able to provide it, then you may not get be successful
- If you have lots of questions as you study collect them in one email then at the end of your study period decide which ones to actually ask

Student services

- Make notes before you ring them
- Contact them early with your problem
- Explain the background step by step
- Ask for specific help
- Contact them when you have plenty of time

Tutor contact

Example email sent to tutor as follows:

To tutor@ou.ac.uk

From brickfan@email.com

I want help with my module. What am I supposed to do?

- Please use the short answer poll to suggest what could make this more clear to the tutor.

What to include when emailing your tutor

- Question:
 - Full name (first at end and then full below)
 - Course name
 - Link to the part of the course your question is about
 - What precisely you need help with
 - Be honest and polite
- Extension:
 - Your name
 - Course name
 - Why you need an extension
 - How long do you need

Not so soft

- **Questions**
 1. I want
 2. You must
 3. I haven't had time to read but
 4. You're wrong
 5. I don't like

Softeners

- **Questions**

- I'm puzzled about
- I was hoping you might be able to help
- I was wondering
- I hope you're well
- I'm curious about

- **Forums**

- Have you considered
- Is it possible that ... is not correct
- Perhaps
- What inspired you to
- What interests me is

Forums

- What sort of activities happen on your forums?
- What advice do you have for working on them?

Forum etiquette

- Tutor group / cluster / topics
- Subscribe so you can see the reply
- Remember whatever you put goes out to everyone subscribed
- Give boundaries if you're doing team work – when you might be available
- Apologise if you are catching up
- Start threads if there is a bit of the course that you're struggling with it's probably not just you

Forum help

If you are new to forum communication we recommend the openlearn course **Building confidence in using online learning forums**

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/education-development/building-confidence-using-online-forums/content-section-overview?active-tab=content-tab>

This gives some great advice about helping you build your confidence.

Peer feedback

- Constructive
- Specific
- What did you like?
- What could be improved and why?
- Feedback sandwich
- Be considerate of others' circumstances

Academic English support



- Studenthome help centre – core skills

<https://help.open.ac.uk/developing-academic-english>

- Openlearn course English skills for learning-

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/education-development/english-skills-learning/content-section-overview>

Helpful links



- Knowing what is required

<https://help.open.ac.uk/understanding-the-question>

- Writing appropriately

<http://www.open.ac.uk/libraryservices/beingdigital/objects/57/index.htm>

- Spelling and grammar

<https://help.open.ac.uk/grammar-spelling-and-punctuation>

- Academic specifics like referencing and word count

<https://help.open.ac.uk/referencing-skills> and

<https://www.open.ac.uk/libraryservices/beingdigital/activity/XK1131#page1>

- The good study guide:

<https://help.open.ac.uk/booklets#good-study-guide>

Your thoughts

- There will be 2 specific questions in chat pods for you to explore some of the elements we have discussed further.
- *ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION WORKS FOR ME WHEN....*
- *I WILL IMPROVE MY COMMUNICATION BY....*
- You are welcome to add your thoughts and we will then pick up some of the themes and talk through them.
- Chat does have names on but the recording will be anonymised so you will appear as 'user number'

Take home message

- Have a clear purpose for your communication
- Keep it polite, respectful and direct
- Have a system for filing
- Put details to help the receiver understand what you need
- Remember tutors and support systems only exist to help you
- Follow up if no reply

Feedback please

Please use the following link to provide feedback to help the studenthublive team to continue to improve what we do

<https://forms.office.com/e/XnvGfnNW4G>

Selected upcoming events



- 28 Jan 11 am Studying with disability, keeping enthusiasm
- 29 Jan 11 am Neuro-diversity Progressing effectively
- 04 Feb 11 am Managing high intensity study
- 05 Feb 11 am Freshers: Welcome to the OU (live video)
- 06 Feb 6.30 pm Freshers: 'Furs' day night social
- 11 Feb 7 pm Understanding graphical data
- 13 Feb 11 am Tackling procrastination
- 18 Feb 7 pm Fundamental maths skills
- 20 Feb 11 am Support and well being for student carers
- 25 Feb 7 pm Logical problem solving

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