

What are SHL workshops?



- Studenthublive is non modular and focuses on study skills relevant to higher education
- This means all sessions are skills based and are not subject based. We cannot provide subject/ faculty related sessions
- SHL workshops do not take the place of 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 on a public facing website.
- Slides are available to download during the session and from <https://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/content/managing-your-time-better-09-jan-2024>.

Today's workshop



- This is going to be a structured workshop covering information about communication for academic contexts (not essay writing)
- We'll give some tutor advice about aspects that are important
- There is a lot of interaction so please be ready to answer polls (questions) or add to chat pod during the session
- You'll get the chance to discuss with others in a small group / or alternative discussion activity (dependent on numbers)

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



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 at <https://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/content/effective-academic-communication-23-january-2024> to follow along or prepare for what will come up.

Please



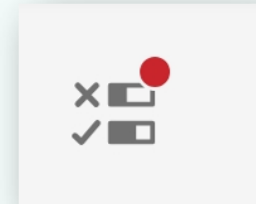
- Do NOT share any personal information in the chat pod during the session.
- On the recording names will be anonymised to user number.
- However, if you type anyone's full name or any other personal information in the chat pod it can be seen by everybody and it would also show up on the recording so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

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 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



Effective academic communication

Session description



- 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 and learn some simple techniques to help you explain your ideas in terms your peers and tutors understand. We will focus on online and distance communication, and share tips to help you avoid misunderstandings and reach your full potential.

Starting poll



- What is the main thing you find challenging about academic communication
- I'll make a list and try and provide suggestions or direct to appropriate resources where appropriate

First thoughts communication 1



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

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

First thoughts communication 2



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 your answer from the poll provided

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

Differences



- If there were differences in your chosen communication method from the previous 2 questions - please give any reasons you might have for that in the short answer poll provided.
- Then have a look at what others suggest (you may need to scroll to see other answers)

Academic communication



- Can be done ad hoc but some planning is a good idea to ensure you communicate what you need / want to and that it is appropriate to the situation
- This is particularly the case if you need to evidence something

Communication...



- Communication (verbal and written) is what marks humans out as intelligent beings and there are a variety of types.
- Part of your skills development in Higher Education is to work out which types of communication are appropriate and develop these in a way that supports your study goals.
- The end aim is to ensure the knowledge you have carefully understood during your studies can be communicated effectively and you can demonstrate that understanding.

Poll time - feelings



- How are you feeling right now having been communicating in this studenthublive setting?
Select any that apply
 - Really relaxed and chatty
 - I like this format of giving my views
 - I feel part of a big group / community
 - I feel what I am saying is helpful to others
 - I feel like what I have to say matters
 - People say the same things as me so I am not alone 😊
 - Others seem to find this easier than me!
 - I'm not always sure what to say
 - Overwhelmed by the choices!
 - Some people seem more popular than others
 - Feel a bit anxious than I am going to be tested
 - I'm not chatting because I'm worried people may think I look foolish

We are chatty 😊



- One of our main remits in these online workshops is to build community
- Interaction is important
- We are passionate about skills development
- Sessions can be very busy
- We are probably quite different from tutorials
- We do recognise this can be scary
- Do what **you** feel comfortable with

Why different?



- We (Isabella and those within SHL) are different from tutorials as these are workshops, but we are the same people as we run tutorials too
- Different settings have different norms
 - Communicating with someone you know really well at home / work / on social media may well be different than communicating with your GP
- Similarly communicating online depends on the setting and scenario

A note of clarification



- Academic communication within assessment and modules needs to use evidence effectively to support points.
- Academic communication is objective, which means it is not personalized or emotional.
- It is for a purpose and therefore needs to be considered.

Other writing sessions



We run sessions on:

- Essay planning (beginners / advanced / expert)
- Essay writing (beginners / advanced / expert)
- Critical thinking (beginners / advanced / expert)

Please see the main

<https://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/> for details of sessions as they are announced and sign up to mailing list to be the first to know

Academic communication



- Academic communication has various forms (not including assessment such as essay writing)
- Please use the short answer poll pod provided to say who you may need to communicate with academically and the purpose of the communication (make sure you answer both parts of the question before pressing return otherwise it won't make full sense)

Communication - My ideas



- 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 1



- When communicating with those working within the university you want something (usually)
- 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

Clarity and courtesy 2



- Example email sent to tutor as follows:
To tutor@ou.ac.uk
From chocolatefan@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.

My ideas



- Which module and who is the student to begin with? (no indication of the module code or the student's name – just a random email)
- What part of the module?
- What have they already done?
- What are they looking for from the tutor?

Emails –tutor 1



- Some (hopefully obvious) basics for email communication with your tutor:
 - Be real – it is not an academic or assessed exercise, but being open and honest is the best strategy.
 - Be clear exactly what you are asking about as whilst you might realise which task /which TMA / other you are referring to, it might not be obvious to your tutor.
 - Clearly identify yourself and your module and remember to check the email for a reply.

Emails –tutor 2



- Some students benefit from a rolling list of questions - very often we find the answer to the question as we progress or when we understand the exact question we are asking.
- It might be helpful to keep a folder of email communication so you can refer back and check answers and instructions rather than asking the same thing multiple times because you have deleted an email with only a quick glance.

Tutor group forum communication



- In tutor group forums the style can be more 'playful' / casual as it is in a smaller group
- There may well be notices and assessment related information and tasks but chat threads can be there for support and to get writing overall
- One useful idea is to get away from thinking of all written communication as right and wrong, but communication to help you communicate and practice writing
- You could think about ways of exploring ideas and developing your thinking

Openlearn course



- 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 communication



- As with tutors, be clear if you are looking for ideas or support
- If you are providing peer feedback be mindful of being complimentary but also constructive – it isn't helpful just to say I liked it – what did you like and why? What can be changed and why?

Larger forum communication



- Be aware about the timing of the message – e.g. if you post at midnight don't repost at 4am asking why no one has responded
- Be realistic about the remit of the communication – sometimes module wide forums are not the best place for long personalised posts
- Check netiquette guidelines and module specific messages – asking for answers is not appropriate as is directly discussing the questions in many cases
- Check if a question has already been asked and answered

Academic communication overall



- Remember – you are studying in Higher Education so your communication needs to be appropriate for that
- If you have dashed off a quick message along the lines of 'I don't understand', but then read the instructions and are clear – do make sure that you follow up your initial message to avoid the person / people spending time trying to help when there is no longer the need

So...



- So far we've mostly looked at direct and obvious communication elements, e.g. actual messages but communication goes further than that and include assessment tasks (TMA / iCMA).
- Academic English is a whole subject in itself but I'll cover some key aspects now to fit in with the idea of effective academic communication.

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>

Other support 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>

Discussion activity



- There will be 2 specific questions in chat pods for you to explore some of the elements we have discussed further.
- Academic communication will work well for me when ...?
- I'd like to improve the way I communicate academically 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'

Final questions



- Tying up any further questions about academic communication – please use the chat pod and I'll do my best to answer (although remember this session is not about essay writing)

Take home message



- Communication at university level does need to be appropriate for the purpose so is different from common methods such as social media
- Horses for courses – communication can vary depending on the platform and remit
- Be clear about what you mean (and who you are if email) and carefully read information and answers so you know what to do

Feedback



Please complete the feedback form that is available at

<https://forms.office.com/e/n2rZgwh64u>

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

(Please remember that as studenthublive is non modular we cannot provide subject based sessions- sorry!)

Upcoming events



- 31 Jan 11am Neurodiverse community – progressing effectively
- 13 Feb 7pm Introduction to essay planning (Beginners)
- 15 Feb 7pm Developing your essay planning (Intermediate)
- 20 Feb 11am Tackling procrastination successfully
- 28 Feb 7pm Introduction to essay writing (Beginners)
- 6 Mar 7pm Developing your essay writing (Intermediate)
- 13 Mar 11am Understanding your assignment questions

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