

Model Student Guide to Learning Analytics¹

This guide sits alongside the [University's] Learning Analytics Policy [link]. A key principle of the Policy is to be completely transparent about all aspects of our use of learning analytics. We want you to understand exactly what data is being collected, how they are being processed and what we will be doing with the information. This document provides these details, and will be updated as our use of learning analytics develops.

What is learning analytics?

The “digital footprints” left when students use [LMS name] and other institutional systems can be combined with data such as grades and past academic history to form derived variables that are important in student success. We already collect most of the data required, and use it to review aspects of our courses and manage our use of resources more efficiently. However, the use of these data for learning analytics is new and will provide additional information to you, lecturers, tutors and support staff.

The resulting picture can give you a better idea of how your learning is progressing. It can also help us to understand how we can best support you to meet your goals and achieve your full potential at the [University].

Another use for learning analytics is to make predictions by comparing a learner's patterns of activity and achievement with those of previous groups of students. These can help us to identify those who may be struggling academically. We can then contact them to see if we can help.

How can learning analytics help me?

Many learners, particularly when starting [University], don't have an accurate perception of how their learning is progressing. The **Learning Analytics Student Web site/dashboard** helps you to view information on your learning activities.

Your ‘attainment’ i.e. marks and grades are displayed, though these are provisional. That means that they must be confirmed by a Faculty Board, and, until confirmed, may change.

Emails or text messages may also be sent to you automatically to suggest additional support or resources that could help your studies. Messages may also be sent to congratulate you on good performance or improvement.

How can learning analytics help my tutor?

The other main way that learning analytics can help you is by giving your tutors better information on your progress. Your tutors may contact you by phone, email or text message to check that you feel you are on track or to arrange a meeting to review your progress. Tutors have access to data about your engagement and attainment that can be used to provide a focus for conversations between the two of you.

¹Sclater, N. 2016. <https://analytics.jiscinvolve.org/wp/files/2016/11/Jisc-Model-Student-Guide-to-Learning-Analytics-v0.1.pdf>

Tutors or members of support staff may also receive automated alerts about students who might be at risk, helping them to decide if they should make contact. It is important to note that the risk alerts are only diagnostic: the model will always have a degree of inaccuracy, and cannot indicate with certainty what outcomes a student will achieve. It simply helps us to prioritise those students who are most likely to benefit by consultation or additional help.

What data are being collected for learning analytics?

The following data are being used for learning analytics, in compliance with the POPI Act 2013, the University's Data Protection Policy [\[link\]](#) and Data Consent information [\[link\]](#):

- Background information: your name, identifiers used by the [\[University\]](#), date of birth, ethnicity, gender, declared disabilities, contact details, whether your parents were in higher education, your socio-economic background, whether you are an overseas student, contact details, and a link to the photo we hold of you
- Details about your programmes, the modules you are taking, and your tutors
- Details of your assessments, marks and grades obtained
- Details of your activity in [\[Moodle / Blackboard\]](#): logins, resources viewed, assessments submitted and graded, and session timeouts

Is my personal information safe and secure?

Your data are subject to strict security procedures in compliance with the POPI Act of 2013. Only those members of staff who have a professional requirement to support you are permitted to view the data and any analytics reports or dashboards about you individually. In particular, your tutors will be able to view data about your engagement, attainment and any predictions made. If you have any concerns about the [\[University\]](#) using your data for the purposes of learning analytics, do discuss these with your tutors, lecturers or Deans.

Your data are also combined with data about other students to help us improve our courses and to support students better overall. These data are not individually identifiable. Data are first "de-identified" i.e. fields such as your student ID are encrypted. It is then sent to a central learning records system managed by the [\[University's\]](#), and hosted on servers in physically secure, multi-tenanted private cloud arrays.