

1. Use of learning analytics to support student success

Nottingham Trent University (NTU) generates and analyses student data for the purposes of improving student learning opportunities. This policy outlines how the University uses learning analytics¹ methodologies to improve the use of this data.

- 1.1 The purpose of learning analytics at NTU is to:
- a. improve student retention, by alerting staff and individual students when a student is potentially at risk of early withdrawal;
 - b. improve the working relationship between tutors and students by providing tutors with timely, meaningful information to enable more informed discussions with students;
 - c. improve student engagement and achievement by providing students with personalised information about how they are engaging with their studies;
 - d. improve the efficiency of University support networks through better early warnings and more-targeted support, and
 - e. provide useful data for researching the experience of student cohorts that can be used to subsequently improve the learning experience.

Requirements

- 1.2 In this policy the practical application of learning analytics is described through the use of the NTU Student Dashboard.
- 1.3 The Dashboard is used to support the student learning experience. It must not be used for the purposes of assessment.
- 1.4 The Dashboard can alert students and staff to the risk of low engagement. Although staff can advise students of the risks of low engagement, students remain responsible for their own learning and engaging with their studies.
- 1.5 Learning analytics can only provide a partial picture about the student. Staff members are expected to use their professional judgement and use the Dashboard to enable, not replace, dialogue with students.
- 1.6 Course teams should encourage students to use the Dashboard as a means to reflect on engagement with their studies. Use of the Dashboard must be explained as students early in their time at NTU: during induction, an early tutorial or other appropriate means.
- 1.7 Course teams, particularly those individuals with tutoring responsibilities, are expected to use the Dashboard as one of the tools to support and advise students, including the notes functions.
- 1.8 A limited number of administrative and professional services staff members (for example Student Support Service) also have access to the

¹ Learning analytics applies lessons from big data practices in an educational setting. The most frequent use is to identify students who may be at risk of early withdrawal or underachievement by comparing their current patterns of engagement with those of previous students.

Dashboard for the purpose of supporting students and may use the functionality including the notes functions.

- 1.9 The Student Dashboard Steering Group, a subgroup of ASQC, will manage on-going Dashboard developments. This group will also monitor the dashboard's use, efficacy and ethical considerations. It will produce a high level report to be used as part of the institutional oversight process.
- 1.10 As part of their enrolment conditions, students give permission to the University to use and process data. It would not be possible to deliver courses or manage support for students without this data. It is therefore not possible for students to opt out from having their data in the Dashboard or other University core information systems.
- 1.11 Access to the Dashboard is restricted as follows:
 - a. Students can only see their own personal Dashboard.
 - b. Academic staff can only see the dashboards of students within their academic team and those they teach in other areas. Access is not granted to hourly paid lecturers.
 - c. Additionally, designated managers and senior academics in each school can access dashboards for the whole school.
 - d. Administrators can see dashboards for students within their College.
 - e. Designated staff providing academic or pastoral support to students can access dashboards across NTU.
 - f. Designated staff involved in Dashboard development also have access to student dashboards across NTU.
- 1.12 Data about individual students will only be shared with third parties where it can provide useful information in an emergency (such circumstances are explained by the Student Support Services document 'Policy for crisis intervention – students causing concern/ students at risk').
- 1.13 Student data generated by the Dashboard will be used to research into the student learning experience. Where such data are used, the Student Dashboard Steering Group will ensure that such data can never identify individual students.
- 1.14 Other practices are currently precluded. However this is a new and evolving field. Any further developments will only take place following consultation with students.

Notes

- Much of the practice needed to responsibly utilise learning analytics is governed by UK data protection legislation. The University's data protection policy forms part of students' enrolment conditions.
- As with all data sources about individual students, staff users must carefully consider their own reactions to the data presented. They must take great care not to allow unconscious bias to creep into their relationships with students particularly with regards assessment.