**Aston University AU-LTC-17-1202-A.**

**Learning Analytics Policy**

**Introduction**

1. Aston University, in common with many other Higher Education institutions, is now looking at the use of learning analytics.
2. In the context of Aston University, learning analytics is the collection and use of data about students and their learning to present visualisations of student learning activity and engagement. These will be used at the University to support and assist current students in maximising their study goals.
3. Aston University will ensure that learning analytics is deployed for the benefit of students, with complete transparency about the data that is being captured, processed and used. All activities in this area will comply with the University’s Data Protection Policy.

**Responsibility**

1. Overall responsibility for learning analytics at Aston is held by the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
2. Analytics presented to students are intended to help them understand how their learning is progressing, and suggestions may be made as to how they can improve their practices. Students are responsible for assessing how they can best apply any such suggestions to their learning.

**Transparency and consent**

1. Students are informed about how their data will be processed when they agree to the Terms and Conditions of Enrolment upon enrolment. Data will be collected for learning analytics in compliance with these Terms and Conditions of Enrolment.
2. The data for learning analytics comes from a variety of sources. The Appendix to the Aston University Learning Analytics Policy will specify:
* The data sources being used for learning analytics
* The analytics used
* The interventions that may be taken on the basis of the analytics

**Confidentiality**

1. In accordance with the privacy notice provided to students, personally identifiable data and analytics on an individual student will be provided only to:
* The student
* Aston University staff members who have a designated role to support students in their professional capacity
* Third parties which are processing learning analytics data on behalf of the institution. In such circumstances the University will put in place contractual arrangements to ensure that the data is held securely and in compliance with current data protection laws.
* Other individuals or organisations to whom the student gives specific consent
1. Aston University IT staff will have access to systems and data in order to maintain proper functioning of systems rather than to access any individual’s data.

**Sensitive data**

1. The General Data Protection Regulation defines special categories of personal data (“sensitive data” under the Data Protection Act 1998) such as ethnicity or disability. Any use of such data for learning analytics will be fully justified, documented in the Appendix to the Aston University Learning Analytics Policy and require the consent of the student concerned.

**Validity**

1. The quality, robustness and validity of the data and analytics processes will be monitored by the University, which will use its best endeavours to ensure that:
* Inaccuracies and gaps in the data are understood and minimised
* The optimum range of data sources to achieve accurate predictions is selected
* Spurious correlations and conclusions are minimised
* The algorithms and metrics used for analytics and interventions are valid
* Learning analytics is seen in its wider context, and is combined with other data and approaches as appropriate
* Students will be able to notify the University if they believe that the personal data held about themselves is inaccurate.

**Student access to personal data**

1. Students will be able to access their personal data and the learning analytics performed on it, at any time in a meaningful, accessible format.
2. Students will also be able to view any metrics derived from their data, and any labels attached to them.

**Interventions**

1. A range of interventions may take place with students. The types of intervention and what they are intended to achieve are outlined in the Interventions Policy which can be found here: [[MyEngagement Interventions Policy](http://www.aston.ac.uk/clipp/documents/Quality/Attendance%20Monitoring%20and%20Learner%20Analytics/My%20Engagement%20Interventions%20Policy%202018-19.pdf)]

**Minimising adverse impacts**

1. The University recognises that learning analytics cannot present a complete picture of a student’s learning, and that analytics may not always be accurate and should only be used as a starting point for discussion.
2. Students will retain autonomy in decision making relating to their learning; the analytics are provided to help inform their own decisions about how and what to learn.

**Learner Analytics Policy Group**

**April 2018**

**Appendix to the Aston University Learning Analytics Policy**

**Introduction**

This Appendix to the Aston University Learning Analytics Policy provides details of what data is being collected, how it is being processed and what we will be doing with the information and will be updated as our use of learning analytics develops.

**Data sources in scope for learning analytics**

The following data are being used for learning analytics, in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and more specifically in accordance with the Data Protection Principles, and the University’s Data Protection Policy:

* 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 which is for ID purposes only
* Details about your course, the modules you are taking, and your tutors
* Details of your assessments, marks and grades obtained
* Details of your activity in University teaching and learning platforms such as Blackboard, Panopto, and Turnitin: logins, resources viewed, assessments submitted and graded, and session timeouts
* Details of your attendance recorded by SEAtS

**Data sources out of scope for learning analytics**

The University does not use the following data:

* Data on student appeals, misconduct, complaints or mitigation.
* Data created on external sites not owned by the University e.g. social networking sites.
* Records of contact with or the use of Student Services.
* Students’ Financial Data.

**The analytics used**

We already collect most of the data required, and use it to review aspects of courses and manage use of resources more efficiently. However the use of this data for learning analytics is new.

The University will use an appropriate system to manage the data about student activity and attainment. A score is shown for student ‘engagement’, calculated from details of student activity.

It is important to note that the engagement scores will always have a degree of inaccuracy, and simply help the University to provide additional information to students, lecturers, tutors and support staff.

The resulting picture can give students a better idea of how their learning is progressing.

It can also help the University to prioritise those students who are most likely to require additional help to meet their goals and achieve their full potential at the University. The University can then contact them to see if it can help.

**The interventions that may be taken on the basis of the analytics**

A range of interventions may take place with students. The types of intervention and what they are intended to achieve may include:

* Prompts or suggestions sent automatically to the student via email, SMS message or mobile app notification (subject to the student’s consent)
* Emails or text messages may be sent to students to suggest additional support or resources that could help their studies.
* Messages sent to congratulate students on good performance or improvement.
* Staff contacting an individual by phone, email or text message if is considered that the student may benefit from additional support or to arrange a meeting to review progress.

Interventions, whether automated or person-to-person, will normally be recorded.

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