

QUALITY ASSURANCE HANDBOOK

2019 Edition – Part A

Section 2: Overarching Policies (EXTRACT)

2019

2.8 Learning Analytics Policy

| Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH) Part A | |  |
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| Document Name | Learning Analytics Policy | |
| Policy Document Number | 037 | |
| Version Reference | 1.0 | |
| Document Owner | Data Analytics and Reporting Manager | |
| Roles with Aligned Responsibility | Data Analytics and Reporting Manager, Student Engagement Officer, Head of IT | |
| Applicability | All DBS programmes | |
| Approved By | Senior Leadership Team | |
| Approval Date | 10/12/2019 | |
| Date Policy Becomes Active | 10/12/2019 | |
| Revision Cycle | At least every 5 years | |
| Revision History/Amalgamation History | N/A | |
| Additional Information | See Student Guide to Learning Analytics Policy | |
| References/ Supporting Documentation | Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area ¹ National Forum, 'Developing Learning Analytics Policies to Support Student Success', May 2019 ² . | |

2.8.1 Policy Overview

This document sets out DBS policy relating to the gathering and use of learner data to inform learning, teaching, assessment and learner support. As an institution, DBS is aware of the volumes of data gathered day-to-day relating to learners and their activities, both operationally in terms of day-to-day running of programmes, at a more systematic level relating to on-going monitoring and review of programmes and outcomes. Since 2018, DBS has been employing analytics to increasingly monitor student success, improve outcomes and stage early interventions for at-risk learners. It is a priority for DBS that, in so doing, the rights of learners and staff are protected and data used in a way that is fair, transparent and at all times with the best of intent to support learners.

DBS Privacy Policy and adherence to GDPR legislation will apply at all times and where there is any conflict in policies, real or perceived, GDPR will take precedence.

¹ https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf

² <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/publication/developing-learning-analytics-policies-to-support-student-success/>

2.8.2 Policy Statement

The National Forum for Teaching and Learning Insight Paper on 'Developing Learning Analytics Policies to Support Student Success' states that:

Data-supported approaches to student success give HEIs a significant opportunity to strengthen their engagement and partnership with students. However, any approach that does not fully respect students' autonomy and privacy risks alienating students and damaging trust. Likewise, policies that are not sensitive to the needs and concerns of staff risk negative effects. Further, HEIs must ensure that any use of student data is fully compliant with data protection legislation.

National Forum, May 2019

As a learner-centred third-level institution DBS seeks at all times to use data to improve the learner experience. Further, as a modern, innovative institution DBS embraces technological advancement and the benefits this brings for staff and students.

In response to this increasing focus on the use of data to enhance the learner experience and outcomes, and in accordance with the National Forum guidelines, DBS has therefore developed a set of principles for learning analytics, in line with the institutional strategy for innovation and student success.

2.8.3 Seven Principles for Learning Analytics in DBS

1. Collection and use of data will comply with GDPR and privacy legislation at all times.
2. DBS recognises the limitations of data analysis and the biases that may be contained therein.
3. DBS will take appropriate steps to ensure that data is accurate, verified and rigorously analysed by qualified persons.
4. Use of data analytics will be with the intent to understand, support and improve the learner experience.
5. Data relating to learning analytics will not be used to sanction negative behaviours by learners or staff.
6. DBS will never react to individual records or apparent short-term trends without completing due diligence and with full consideration of wider impacts or consequences.
7. The learning analytics policy will be kept under review on an on-going basis.

2.8.4 Roles and Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for learning analytics at DBS is held by the **Data Analytics and Reporting Manager**. Responsibility for relevant areas of activity is allocated as follows:

- The data to be used for learning analytics - **Data Analytics and Reporting Manager**.
- The analytics process to be performed on the data, and their purposes - **Data Analytics and Reporting Manager**.
- The interventions to be carried out based on the analytics - **Student Engagement Officer and Level Manager**.
- The retention and stewardship of data used for and generated by learning analytics - **Head of IT**.

2.8.5 Transparency

Learners are informed about how their data is collected, used, shared and protected in the [DBS Privacy Notice](#). Data will be collected for learning analytics in compliance with the Privacy Notice.

The data for learning analytics comes from a variety of sources, including the student information system, the library management system and the virtual learning environment. The Student Guide to Learning Analytics will clearly specify:

- The data sources being used for learning analytics
- The specific purposes for which learning analytics is being used
- The metrics used, and how the analytics are produced
- Who has access to the analytics, and why
- Guidance on how learners can interpret any analytics provided to them
- The interventions that may be taken based on the analytics.

2.8.6 Appropriate Interventions

A range of interventions may take place. The types of interventions and what they are intended to achieve are documented in the Student Guide to Learning Analytics. These may include:

- Prompts or suggestions sent automatically to the learner via email, SMS message or mobile app notification.
- Staff contacting an individual based on the analytics if it is considered that the learner may benefit for additional support.

Interventions, whether automated or human-mediated, will normally be recorded. The records will be subject to periodic reviews as to their appropriateness and effectiveness.

Metrics derived from data sources input into the learning analytics system will not be used for assessment purposes. However, some of the original data sources owned by DBS may be used

separately for assessment purposes and for monitoring of attendance, outside of the learning analytics system.

2.8.7 Additional Documents

- [DBS Student Guide to Learning Analytics](#)

QAH Extract as of AQR 2021