Learning Analytics Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The University of Newcastle (University) acknowledges the need to support students throughout the duration of their studies. The University uses learning analytics to monitor students' academic engagement and performance, and contribute to identifying students determined to be 'at risk' of not completeing their studies.

(2) The University will monitor students academic performance at the course level, as required by the Higher Education Support Act 2003, to determine engagement,appropriate outreach activities, and comply with reporting obligations.

(3) In the event of an inconsistency between the Learning Analytics Policy and a Rule or a Schedule to a Rule, the Rule or Schedule to the Rule made by the Council will prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

Section 2 - Purpose

(4) This Policy provides principles for the use of learning analytics, and an evidence-based approach to monitoring of academic performance and engagement at the course level and connecting students with appropriate support services.

(5) This Policy is designed to:

a. provide guidance to students on the use of learning analytics to monitor and evaluation academic performance and engagement, especially academic success and access to appropriate support services;
b. provide guidance to staff on the use of learning analytics to identify students who are at-risk of not successfully completing their course.

(6) This Policy is an accompanying document to the Support for Students Policy and is supported by the Learning Analytics Procedure which should be read in conjunction with this Policy.

Section 3 - Scope

(7) This Policy applies to students enrolled in an enabling or coursework program at the University, and should be read and understood by the academic, professional, and executive staff who oversee and support student learning.

(8) This Policy applies to the Joint Medical Program (JMP). In the event of an inconsistency between this Policy and the policies and procedures specific to the JMP, the policies and procedures of the JMP will prevail to the extent of the inconsistency, unless the matter relates to a delegation of authority.

(9) This Policy does not apply to Higher Degrees by Research (please see Higher Degree by Research Policy).

Section 4 - Principles

(10) Under the Higher Education Support Act 2003, the University must have a process for identifying students that are at-risk of not successfully completing their course and for providing access to available supports.

(11) The use of learning analytics brings together existing data and information to support an evidence-based method of identifying student needs and to connecting those students with appropriate support services relevant to their course or program.

(12) The University's approach to learning analytics to evaluate academic performance, engagement and related outreach activities will be managed in accordance with the University's:

a. Digital Security Policy;
b. Information Security Access Control Policy;
c. Information Classification and Protection Policy;
d. Privacy Management Plan;
e. Privacy Policy; and
f. Records Governance Policy.

(13) Students are provided with information regarding the reason for the collecting personal information for learning analytics.

(14) The collection, use, and disclosure of information used in the University's approach to learning analytics is included in the Terms and Conditions of Enrolment, which are accepted by students annually.

(15) Students are also provided with information about learning analytics via:

a. course outlines; and
b. the learning management system.

Use of Learning Analytics

(16) The University will maintain an evidence-based approach to the evaluation of student academic performance and engagement through the use of learning analytics.

(17) Learning analytics data will support:

a. the early identification of students at-risk of not successfully completing their course or program;
b. identifying pertinent support services aimed at maximising positive educational outcomes and reducing negative educational outcomes;
c. continuous improvement of teaching and learning activities.

(18) The Learning Analytics Procedure provides details on how learning analytics dashboards are to be used in the learning and teaching context and the provision of education and learning experiences for students.

(19) Data used for the purpose of learning analytics is subject to existing data access protocols.

(20) The provision of access to learning analytics dashboards is the responsibility of Strategy, Planning and Performance. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education Innovation will approve access to Learning Analytics Dashboards. Staff who may be granted access to data includes, but is not limited to:

a. relevant academic staff will have access to data that applies to their roles, including:
    i. Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience;
    ii. Course Co-ordinators;
    iii. Heads of School;
    iv. Program Convenors; and
    v. Associate Dean (Education).
b. Relevant professional staff from:
    i. Learning Design and Teaching Innovation;
    ii. Office of the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global);
    iii. Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education Innovation;
    iv. Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience;
    v. Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre (PALS);
    vi. Strategy, Planning and Performance (SPP); and
    vii. Student Central.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	25th June 2025
Review Date	22nd April 2027
Approval Authority	President Academic Senate
Approval Date	25th June 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Karen Blackmore Pro Vice-Chancellor Education Innovation
Enquiries Contact	Josh Davies Quality Enhancement Project Manager

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Academic staff" - A person employed as an academic staff member or appointed as an academic honorary appointee (including adjunct, clinical conjoint, visiting, honorary and conjoint appointments), but does not include persons who are employed solely as teachers or professional staff.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Personal information" - Has the same meaning as in the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW).

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Program" - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"Learning Management System" - The web-based system used to help facilitate online interactions between staff and students in their learning and teaching activities.

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