WP3 – Data for Student Success:
Overview of Learning Analytic Policies
Prepared by the MU 'Data for Student Success' Work Package. August 2021.

Overview

The purpose of this resource is to give an overview of some of the themes and purposes that feature in each of a set of policy exemplars from both national and international sources.

This exercise builds on the methodology of the National Forum's ORLA resource *'Overview of themes in international LA Policies'* ([link](#)).

Purposes

Purposes Covered	Open University (2014)	Charles Stuart Uni. (2015)	Uni. Of Sydney (2016)	Nottingham Trent Uni. (2016 Rev. 2019)	Lancaster Uni. (2016+)	Uni. Of Ulster (2017)	Uni. Of Wollongong (2017 Rev. 2020)	Uni. Of Essex (2018)	Uni. Of Edinburgh (2018)	Uni. Of West London (2018)	GMIT (2019)	TU Dublin - Blanch (2019)	Dublin Business School (2019)	Uni. Of Gloucestershire (2021)	Uni. Of Limerick (2021)	Flag Count
Intervention	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		14
Teaching & Learning Improvement	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔		13
Student Success	✔	✔		✔	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔			10
Achieving Learning Goals / Outcomes	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		10
Service Improvement	✔				✔	✔	✔		✔		✔	✔	✔	✔		9
Personal Responsibility	✔	✔				✔		✔	✔		✔	✔		✔		8
Retention		✔		✔		✔			✔		✔			✔		6
Progression & Completion		✔			✔	✔					✔			✔		5
Feedback					✔			✔	✔		✔	✔				5
Equity across Population	✔	✔							✔		✔	✔				5
Student Engagement	✔			✔				✔				✔				4
Partnership		✔			✔			✔		✔						4
Evidence	✔			✔					✔			✔				4
Student Reflection	✔	✔				✔			✔							4
Institutional Efficiency & Quality	✔								✔		✔	✔				4
Tutor/Learner Relationship				✔								✔		✔		3
Skills Development									✔		✔	✔				3
Attendance									✔					✔		2

Themes

Themes Covered	Open University (2014)	Charles Stuart Uni. (2015)	Uni. Of Sydney (2016)	Nottingham Trent Uni. (2016 Rev. 2019)	Lancaster Uni. (2016+)	Uni. Of Ulster (2017)	Uni. Of Wollongong (2017 Rev. 2020)	Uni. Of Essex (2018)	Uni. Of Edinburgh (2018)	Uni. Of West London (2018)	GMIT (2019)	TU Dublin - Blanch (2019)	Dublin Business School (2019)	Uni. Of Gloucestershire (2021)	Uni. Of Limerick (2021)	Flag Count
Purpose/Explaination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		14
Legitimacy/DP Compliance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		14
Openness/Transparency	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		13
Responsibility	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		13
Intervention (At Risk)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		13
Data Access (Tech Aspect)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		12
Benefience (participant welfare)	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		12
Consent	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		11
Oversight & Ethics	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		11
Listing of data used (or signposted)	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		11
Bias	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			11
Data Validity & Accuracy	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		10
Students as Individuals	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		10
External Partners / Sharing	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓		9
Implementation & Communication	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓			9
Rights of Learners (Duty of Care)	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓				8
Data Access (User View)			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		8
Data Privacy		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		7
Anonymity	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓						7
Policy Review Proceedure	✓				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			7
Human Interaction/Intervention				✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		7
Stakeholders & Consultation	✓	✓			✓			✓		✓	✓	✓				7
Data Security		✓					✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		6
Staff Training/Development	✓				✓			✓	✓	✓		✓				6
Alignment to Institutional Values	✓				✓	✓			✓			✓		✓		6
Data outside Scope of LA	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓							5
Data Retention & Disposal			✓		✓				✓			✓				4
Outlining of LA practices						✓						✓	✓	✓		4
LA Activity Approval Process							✓		✓	✓		✓				4
Future Usage	✓											✓	✓	✓		4
Dashboard (Specific mention)				✓							✓		✓	✓		4
Rights of Staff (Duty of Care)											✓	✓	✓			3
Resource Impact (Staff, Finances)	✓				✓							✓				3
Specific detailing of Interventions							✓						✓	✓		3
Student Complaints	✓		✓													2
Privacy Breaches			✓													1

Analysis

Dominant Purposes: 6 Purposes were dominant (flag count >9) among the policies.

- Common across all policies was the purpose of LA instigating data-driven interventions (in-personal or electronic) on an individual level with students.
- Almost every policy was expressly stated that LA activities should work to enhance Teaching & Learning practices.
- On a student level, the concept of LA enhancing Student Success was dominant alongside the purpose of enabling students to achieve their stated learning goals.
- LA as a driver for institutional service improvement beyond Teaching & Learning is also common.

Emerging Purposes: Several purposes have emerged in more recent policies that were not as common in earlier work.

- Personal Responsibility relates to how students are recognised as agents of change in their own learning; responsible for consenting to and engaging with LA practices for the betterment of their own experience.
- Feedback generally relates to LA as a driver for developing the relationship between learner and teacher and providing opportunities for personalised or enhanced feedback opportunities, building on existing practices.
- Equity across Population relates to the potential for LA to analyse large student numbers and provide insight and analysis at cohort and individual level across the student body.

Dominant Themes: 11 themes were dominant (flag count >10) among the policies.

- Common across all policies were sections which introduced LA, set out the purpose(s) of LA use within the institution, and addressed data compliance.
- Almost every policy was expressly stated that LA activities should be transparent by design and their purposes well communicated to students.
- On a practical level, almost all polices outlined responsibility for LA use within the organisation and address technical aspects relating to data access.
- On a student level, the theme of LA being used to benefit student experience, rather than in any negative fashion, is common. Also common was reference to student consent and personal interventions for at risk students.
- In relation to data analysis, common themes related to outlining what data is collected, that analysis methods should be aware of bias, and the ethical considerations around collecting and analysing student data.

Emerging Themes: Several themes have emerged in more recent policies that were not as common in earlier work.

- More recent policies have outlined the concept that LA should not replace human interaction and that careful consideration be given as to how interventions should be delivered.
- Outlining LA activities and planned/potential activities (inc. approval processes) is increasingly common, although many policies address these issues through a related LA strategy rather than in the policy itself.
- The use of data dashboards is increasingly mentioned along with recognition that staff will need training and resources to effectively engage with new LA activities and tools.