Student Guide to Learning Analytics

What is learning analytics and what is it used for?

The "digital footprints" you leave when you use Blackboard and other institutional systems combined with grades and past academic history provides additional information to you and staff to support your learning. The University collects and uses data in order to improve student experience and learning.

The resulting picture can give you a better idea of how you are engaging with your learning experience. It can also help the University to understand how it can best support you to meet your goals and achieve your full potential at Sheffield Hallam University.

Learning analytics will not be used for:

This data will not be used to predict outcomes and it will not be used for any assessment purposes and will not contribute in any way to grades. It is simply a tool to improve engagement and learning experience.

What data is being collected for learning analytics?

The following data is being used for learning analytics, in compliance with the Data Protection laws, and more specifically in accordance with the Data Protection Principles, the University's Information Governance Policy and Student Privacy Notice.

- 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 on your SHU card
- Details about your course, the modules you are taking and your tutors
- Details of your assessments, marks and grades obtained
- Details of your digital footprint, such as activity in Blackboard: logins, resources viewed, assessments submitted and graded and Library access and use of resources

How do I engage with learning analytics?

Many students, particularly when starting university, do not have an accurate perception of how their learning is progressing. Sheffield Hallam's use of learning analytics and student access to the Study Goal app, will give you access to information on your engagement in:

- Blackboard
- Library
- Assessment
- Attendance

Relevant staff will also have access to your overall engagement based upon the above listed data sources.

The Study Goal app can be downloaded from the Apple App Store and Android Play Store.

When you download the app, 'geolocation' will be switched on. This only provides a relative measure so if everyone checks in from one location and someone else checks in from another, that person is considered absent. It does not provide the University with data on where you are on campus or elsewhere.

Your geolocation data should be provided with your consent and just like any app, you can choose to switch this off. Switching off geolocation will not stop you from checking in to lectures.

How can learning analytics help me?

You can also use the app to record your own study data, set goals and work on your own time management if you wish to. Your 'attainment' (i.e. marks) are also displayed in the app when they come out.

Learning Analytics also helps you by giving your Academic Adviser richer information on your progress, which they may use to discuss your progress in regular meetings, or contact you to check you are on track, or to arrange a meeting to review your progress.

If you have any concerns about the University using your data for the purposes of Learning Analytics, do discuss these with your Academic Adviser.

Data security

Your data is subject to strict security procedures in compliance with the Data Protection laws. Only those members of staff who have a professional requirement to support you are permitted to view the analytics about you individually. In particular, your Academic Adviser will be able to view data about your engagement and attainment.

This guide sits alongside Sheffield Hallam University's Learning Analytics Code of Practice. A key principle of the Code of Practice is to be completely transparent about all aspects of our use of learning analytics. The University wants you to understand exactly what data is being collected, how it is being processed and what we will be doing with the information. This document provides these details and will be updated as our use of learning analytics develops.

Sheffield Hallam's learning analytics and the Study Goal app were done in collaboration with Jisc, the UK's leading expert body for digital technology and digital resources in higher education.

Student Experience, Teaching and Learning

August 2021