

Student Learning Engagement Policy

Introduction

1. Improving students' engagement with their learning is one of the four pillars of Queen Mary's Education Strategy and a key enabler to open the doors of opportunities and be the most inclusive university of its kind. To achieve this, we have formulated this policy to improve the educational experience for our learners, and by using Learner Engagement Analytics (LEA) to measure and analyse learner engagement data.
2. Learner engagement is a multi-dimensional concept strongly associated with learning, retention, attainment, and success. Measuring it can provide insights into the learner's experience on a module or programme.

Purpose

3. This policy requires schools and institutes to monitor student engagement, which will make it possible to identify students who could be at risk of not progressing and provide interventions and support to ensure academic success and a positive student experience.
4. This policy sets out the options for the monitoring of student learning engagement for schools and institutes to apply to their modules. The procedures will be used flexibly in order to ensure that the most appropriate measures for each discipline are used.
5. The policy aims to empower students to understand how their data is used in relation to their engagement and be partners in their learning process.

Scope

6. This policy applies to all students, other than postgraduate research students, unless the specific regulations of the programme dictate otherwise. All schools and institutes should follow this policy. Our requirement to effectively monitor the engagement of those students who are sponsored on a Student visa (previously known as a Tier 4 student visa) are outlined in separate guidance.

Key Principles

7. This policy is governed by a [Statement of Principles](#) developed in consultation with staff and learners:
 - We will use LEA to help all learners reach their full academic potential.
 - We will be transparent about data collection, sharing, consent and responsibilities including to learners
 - We will abide by ethical principles and align with our university strategy, policies and values.
 - LEA will be supported by focused staff and learner development activities.
 - LEA will not be used to inform significant action at an individual level without human intervention.
 - We will actively work to recognise and address any potential negative impacts of LEA.

Procedures

8. Engagement metrics may vary based on several factors, and since each module is different, each school and institute will utilise a range of engagement markers to gauge learner engagement accurately.
9. Schools will closely monitor learners' engagement and active participation in various activities that are pertinent to their programme. These activities could include (but are not limited to):
 - Attendance at selected timetabled teaching events such as large or small group sessions, labs and/or relevant teaching placements
 - Assignment submissions (formative and summative)
 - Use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) (i.e. QMplus) and engaging with the resources on the platform
 - Meetings with staff members such as academic advisors, supervisors and the student support team.
 - Evidence of other engagement with learning e.g. lecture capture recordings
 - Recorded engagement in co-curricular activities or development sessions e.g. Academic Skills
10. This monitoring *may* only apply to certain aspects of the relevant programme as deemed most appropriate by the school or institute, for example core modules, as long as a cross section is included sufficient to give an accurate presentation of engagement.
11. Insights from the engagement data will be used by schools and institutes in various ways to provide support to learners, which will enable them to prosper in their studies, for example through setting up meetings with Advisors, directing students to access specific learning resources or agreeing a referral to support services.
12. Learner engagement is measured primarily through the University's analytics platform. However various measures may be used if they are confirmed to provide accurate data. The measures used will be agreed by each School or Institute.
13. Where the data implies students are disengaging, interventions will be dealt with by the appropriate staff member in the school based on their agreed process, and this process will be communicated clearly to students. When an issue is highlighted in which intervention might be appropriate, there will first be discussion with colleagues about the nature and appropriateness of any intervention.
14. Interventions will be supportive and constructive to identify the support the student needs, confirm the reasons for the disengagement and the options for the student to re-engage.
15. If the data evidences that students are disengaging based on the measures outlined above then every effort will be made to contact them to clarify the facts, understand the cause of the disengagement and identify any support required. Every attempt will be made to establish contact and to re-engage them - including by university email, personal email, phone call, checking all digital data e.g. log ins, swipe access to buildings etc.
16. Students should respond to attempts to reach them as soon as possible to discuss their circumstances. If the student does not actively engage with any of these attempts and there is no evidence of any engagement for a sustained period of time

then the School or Institute will invoke the [Enhancing Support for Students' Fitness to Study Policy](#).

Making supportive interventions

17. The University recognises that analytics can never give a complete picture of an individual's learning and may not take into account personal circumstances. It also recognises the importance of individual conversations alongside data analysis to obtain a more complete view of a situation. Steps will be taken to ensure that trends, norms, categorisation or any labelling of students do not bias staff, student or institutional perceptions and behaviours towards them, introduce discriminatory attitudes or increase power differentials.
18. Learning analytics systems and interventions will be carefully designed and regularly reviewed to ensure that:
 - Students maintain appropriate levels of ownership and autonomy in decision making relating to their learning, using learning analytics where appropriate to help inform their decisions;
 - Opportunities for "gaming the system" or any benefit to the student from doing so are minimised through use of large data sets, and monitoring of trends and patterns;
 - Knowledge that their activity is being monitored does not lead to non-participation by students or other negative impacts on their academic progress or wellbeing;
 - Adverse impacts as a result of giving students and staff information about the students' performance or likelihood of success are minimised;
 - Staff will have an opportunity to engage in the understanding of legal, ethical and unethical practice.

Roles and Responsibilities

19. Each School or Institute will identify at least one learner engagement lead to monitor delivery within the school or institute who will be provided with appropriate training and guidance.
20. It is the responsibility of each school and institute to ensure the Student Learning Engagement Policy is implemented effectively across programmes. Faculties will monitor this implementation via learner engagement leads.
21. It is recognised that implementation will include differentiation across programmes and modules and that appropriate levels of engagement and intervention will be agreed at School/Institute level and applied by relevant leads.
22. Schools will be responsible for communicating to their learners in multiple ways – e.g. Student Handbooks, Module Tutor briefings, QMplus, slides in classes, emails to module groups - what the minimum expected levels of engagement are with the chosen metrics, and what the interventions will look like, including who will make them.
23. Students will have access to their data and it is their responsibility to access it if they wish to. They will be given support and guidance on how to do this.
24. For students studying on joint and interdisciplinary programmes it is the 'Home School' who has the responsibility to address engagement concerns and be responsible for communicating with the 'Contributing School(s)' wherever necessary.

The 'Contributing School(s)' should still monitor the academic engagement for the modules and if these students are not engaging with their studies should alert the 'Home School'. The 'Home School' should then reach out in a pastoral capacity to help the student to re-engage.

Support requirements and signposting services

25. Student Support operates within the framework of the university's core function as an educational institution. Our aim is to facilitate and empower students to actively participate in all aspects of their student lives, eliminating obstacles as needed. This is to ensure they can reach their maximum potential and thrive in both their academic pursuits and life beyond Queen Mary University of London.
26. Our primary student support contacts, usually known as 'Student Support Officers', or sometimes 'Student Support Managers', are based in our schools and institutes. Among their functions is to monitor student engagement and, where appropriate, signpost students to the range of specialist support services which are based in central Professional Services directorates such as Student Experience (<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/student-experience/>).

Complaints

27. If a learner would like to complain about the way their engagement is monitored or the interventions proposed have been handled then they may complain through the [Student Complaints Procedure](#), although informal resolution via the school or institute is always preferred

Use of Data

28. All personal data will be treated strictly in accordance with our [Data Protection Policy](#) and data protection legislation.