

Minutes Network meeting SMLS at HOLM (23.09-24.09.2021)

Participants

Name	University/ function	Name	University/ function
<u>German colleagues</u>		<u>Jordanian Colleagues</u>	
Prof. Dr. Rudy Lohmann	TH Lübeck	Prof. Dr. Ralf Roszkopf	GJU, Vice President
Prof. Dr. Alexander Steinmetz	HS Würzburg-Schweinfurt	Prof. Dr. Luai Abu-Rajab	GJU, Exchange Coordinator International Accounting
Prof. Dr. Ralf Härtig	HS Aalen	Prof. Dr. Ismail Abushaikha	GJU, Professor
Prof. Dr. Julia Hansch	DHBW Mannheim	Prof. Dr. Serena Sandri	GJU, Exchange Coordinator Logistics
Prof. Dr. Abdulmuttalip Erduran	FH Bielefeld	Prof. Dr. Rana Sabri	GJU, Exchange Coordinator Management
Prof. Dr. Lutz H Schminke	HS Fulda	Prof. Dr. Bassam Maali	GJU, Professor
Julia Kölbel	PO Magdeburg	Iris Wildfeuer	GJU, IO

The network meeting of the School of Management and Logistic Sciences 2021 took place at the House of Logistics and Mobility (HOLM) in Frankfurt am Main. The meeting started with a general introduction round and welcome session. Welcome addresses were held by Dr. Sascha Barthel, department head of Innovation Management at HOLM, Prof. Dr. Ralf Roszkopf, Vice President of International Affairs at GJU and by the exchange coordinators of the school, Luai Abu-Rajab (Department of International Accounting) Dr. Serena Sandri (Department of Logistics) and Dr. Rana Sabri (Department of Management). The network heads Prof. Rüdiger Lohmann (TH Lübeck) and Prof. Dr. Alexander Steinmetz (HS Würzburg-Schweinfurt) for the German network also welcomed the participants.

After an introduction of the other participants the network moved on to its first point on the agenda

Updates from GJU - by Prof. Dr. Ralf Roßkopf

The GJU Vice President started his presentation with some general information about GJU. GJU is a university of applied science and its main pillars are two- fold, the German Dimension, supported by the DAAD, and the focus of employability and practical experience. There are currently 2500 students enrolled at GJU, of which each will spend one whole year in Germany during which they will study one semester at one of the 120 partner universities GJU has in Germany, and spend the second semester doing an internship. The vice president thanked the German partners for their collaboration which made it possible that the German year took place even throughout the pandemic. Since the situation is stabilizing the other mobility programs between the two countries such as Flying Faculty and Study Group Mobility are also starting again.

He then moved on to describe important changes that happened at GJU in the past year.

Due to the conditions of lockdown in the pandemic online teaching improved in quality and moved from initial emergency response to qualitative teaching. 15 smart classrooms were built at GJU. The smart classrooms open more opportunities in joint teaching, such as joint an blended teaching, a mixture of physical and asynchronous/ synchronous teaching. This will help Flying Faculty program as well since they now have the option to split their modules and teach part online before coming to GJU and teaching the rest in presence. In general the improvements in digitalization help to level the barrier between the two countries technologically as well as financially.

He moved on to some information about the German language Center at GJU, which is one of the biggest centers in the world, with around 2000 enrolled students in language courses daily. There were some changes at the GLC in response to the prevailing issue with the language level. A B2 track was established and should become the standard level goal in the future. For now B1 is the criteria for students to leave on their German year. German 1 to 6 courses were restructured, the official B1 exam is taken in German 5, and German six now focusses entirely on application and cultural training. Furthermore the possibility to take German language courses outside of GJU was eliminated and a successful B1 certificate became a requirement for graduation from the university.

German Accreditation - by Prof. Dr. Ralf Roßkopf

The effort to achieve the German Accreditation was started some years ago, two schools started the process and SMLS was one of them with the goal being to have every school at GJU accredited in the future. This is the first time that a university outside of Germany is undergoing this process, at the end of which GJU will receive a certificate of equivalency stating that the teaching level at GJU is on one level with that at the German partner universities. This will make student exchange much easier in the future and will also attract more students to GJU.

SMLS was a pioneer. An agreement was signed in 2019 with an accreditation agency. Their online audit visit is expected now in October and results will reach GJU next year. An on site visit already happened for other schools and so far feedback has been positive. Previously GJU regulations did not comply to the Lisbon convention but for the accreditation a 70% compliance in terms of content is necessary. This also implies that the previously used system of credit hours at GJU needs to be converted to ECTS.

New study track „Forensic Accounting“ -By Dr. Luai Abu Rajab

-Discussion on collaboration

After the general updates about GJU the exchange coordinators took the word to speak about updates at their departments. Dr. Luai Abu Rajab first spoke and took the opportunity to introduce the new study track in “Forensic Accounting” at the International Accounting department.

On average 30 students from the department travel to Germany every semester. Many of them find jobs and internships after, generally graduates are very satisfied with the experience which attracts more students.

There was no master in accounting so far with the idea arising in the last year to create a different and trendy program instead of a run of the mill master. This is how the “Forensic Accounting” master was conceptualized. The approval form the university was given and in 2022 the department hopes to get the accreditation from the Jordan Ministry of Higher Education.

The idea of the master is to connect accounting with technology and offers a variety of courses in the field of financial crimes such as classical accounting, information technology, data science and data and image mining with a general strong focus on technology. A challenge they face at the department is in procuring the right teaching staff for this master, for this they will rely on the German network who can support maybe though Flying Faculty. Dr. Ralf Härting (HS Aalen) thanked for the presentation and agreed it is a great topic for a study program with a promising future. Dr. Peter Haller was mentioned by the network as an expert in the field who should be contacted for consultation.

Updates in the Department of Logistics- by Dr. Serena Sandri

The exchange coordinator for the Logistics department first explained to the network that GJU is the only university in Jordan that offers programs for logistic sciences. At the current moment more students wish to apply than can be admitted. 65 students will travel for their German Year in the new semester. She is happy to inform the partners that now, post- Covid pandemic, other mobility programs are running again. This is also aided by the technological improvements at GJU which is another means of expanding cooperation between Jordan and Germany. The pandemic was a tough time around the world but the improvements show that it can also capitalized on.

Prof. Dr. Ralf Roskopf added that the department is in high need of staff which is difficult to find in Jordan. The added difficulty is that a qualified full time professor is needed also in order to obtain the accreditation. Attempts to inspire someone from Germany to join the team had so far failed due to the salary gap. The new idea is to look for a retired professor who might be interested, since the German pension and a Jordanian salary together might be a more attractive prospect. An alternative would be a professor on sabbatical. The German network head Dr. Lohmann pointed out that the same shortage of professors also affects Germany. He also provided the network with a name, Dr. Koch, who is a logistics professor about to retire.

Updates in the Department of Management – by Dr. Rana Sabri

15 students are currently in Germany, and in the new semester there are 41 students scheduled to travel from the management department. The exchange coordinator also mentioned the advantages of the improved digitalization at GJU for her department. Thanks to this a larger number of mobility projects will be possible in the future. She also thanked the German colleagues who taught classes online during the pandemic. She also mentioned that before covid 19 the integration of Dual Studies was on the plan- this will now be initiated again. She does not think it will be difficult to find companies in Jordan who will want to collaborate in this. Generally the plan of the department is to integrate the knowledge field of business analytics into the study plan, as well as topics like technology, big data, data mining etc.

Dr. Bassam Maali added to this presentation that they also lack supervisors for the bachelor thesis in the 4th year. Maybe this would be an opportunity for a collaboration since supervision does not need to be physical. Dr. Lohmann asked how the thesis works at GJU – usually in Germany students do their thesis with a company, which is not the case in Jordan. He is interested in the idea of thesis supervision and asked for a good paper as a best practice example.

Dual studies- update and discussion – by Dr. Serana Sandri

Dr. Serena Sandri started her presentation by explaining that everywhere in the world a gap between academia and industry is observed. This is shown by the problem of low employability rates of graduates, especially in Jordan where the curricula of universities are very removed from practical life in the profession. This is why the Dual Studies program was launched, to bridge this gap and to help students find jobs after they leave GJU. The need for the new concept was known, the king even wrote a paper on the urge of modernizing education and bringing it closer to the industry, still it was all on a theoretical level. Actual implementation faced some challenges, although the context for innovation was favorable many rigid laws and restrictions that made it complicated. Although the concept has been established in Germany for a long time, in Jordan this is an absolute novelty.

Dr. Sandri then laid out the study model for the network. It was decided that students would spend the non-compulsory summer term period working in the company and study otherwise in the regular courses during the summer and winter semester. A student would stay with the same company during the duration of their studies and return every summer. The company pays the student 200 JOD monthly and in turn for the training the student is later obliged to accept if an appropriate job offer by the company is made. She also shared a names of the companies that GJU has a collaboration with, the list is still expanding. The idea is that the GJU students enrolled in dual study tracks also continue this during their German year.

Dr. Lohman asked if it is fixed what the students do in the company, is there a plan. This depends on the contract. Generally the company decides in which department the student will work and there is flexibility for the company.

The presentation about Dual Studies was finished with the screening of the promotional video made by the Office for Industrial Links at GJU, to be found here

[About Dual Studies | German Jordanian University \(gju.edu.jo\)](https://www.gju.edu.jo)

Prof. Dr. Roskopf explained to the network that in the process for the German accreditation which was explained previously, the Dual Study tracks will also present a challenge. This is in part due to the fact that the system is being analyzed and changed in Germany at this time as well, and secondly due to the duration of the in-company phase which is expectedly shorter in Jordan.

Dr. Schminke (HS Fulda) stated that only in the worst cases an application for accreditation receives a complete rejection. He recommends to stay optimistic and wait for the report after which GJU can make as many of the suggested changes as possible.

Establishing “research cluster” cooperation with German network

- By *Dr. Serena Sandri*

The vice president spoke a few words about the idea behind the research clusters at GJU. While GJU is now ranked 2nd best on the list of universities in Jordan, it is still not very visible what the GJU's strength and expertise is in terms of research. This is where the idea of the research clusters was born, also with the idea to support research between Jordan and Germany and to take advantage of the many partnerships GJU has in Germany. A project was piloted by the Deanship of Scientific Research at GJU. All clusters will focus on topics of common interests in the respective fields and seed funding has already been shown as possible to achieve.

Dr. Serena Sandri then presented a concrete idea of a project that the research cluster for SMLS could focus on. She proposed the “Green Energy and Entrepreneurship” research cluster, which would aim at producing interdisciplinary cutting-edge research that contributes to a better understanding of Green Economy and Entrepreneurship, envisioning ways towards the transition to more environmentally sustainable and socially equitable economic development while creating an impact both on academia and the Jordanian Economy. The researches who would join this project would be part of a community who would apply for funds together and would benefit from the existing GJU network.

Dr. Sandri ended her presentation by saying that the GJU Research Clusters will be officially launched in November 2021 during the German Week at GJU. She asked the network members to get in contact with her if someone is interested in joining the cluster.

After this last presentation of the day the floor was opened to an open discussion on general topics concerning the network. As a first issue the learning agreement of students in their German Year was brought up. Exchange Coordinator Dr. Sandri informed the network that there was a change in the regulations and students were only allowed to take two course in English during their time at the German partner universities, meaning that the majority of their subjects should be taught in German. This is something the partners should watch out for. Dr. Härting mentioned that this may become an issue in the future since due to internationalization strategies more and more courses at his university are only offered in English. At some point the amount of English lecture classes might

outweigh the ones taught in German. It was further communicated to the network that the option of the modified learning agreement should be an exception. This issue was brought forward by the International Office and seconded by the vice president who expressed that in the ideal case the learning agreements should be signed by both sides before the start of the exchange. The network members agreed that modifications can be avoided through earlier communication.

The vice president also advised the partners not to make compromises with extra exams and advantages for the Jordanian students. If too many steps are taken to create exams and texts in English for them their motivation to work hard on their German might diminish. He also explained to the network that if a student fails an exam during their German Year they can also register for this course again. A failed course of a student is not the partners responsibility and there are solutions for the students at GJU if this does happen.

This led to the next topic, the general German level of the GJU students. Dr. Härting asked what the likelihood was of a student passing any exams with the B1 level German that they have and how this was handled by the colleagues. Dr. Lohmann explained that for him participation and showing effort is what is expected of the student, if the students present for the classes he will give them a passing grade. Dr. Steinmetz reported a similar system at FHWS Würzburg-Schweinfurt, where students are encouraged to sign up for courses without a final exam from the start. The final grade is then based on a paper and a presentation of which a part needs to be in German.

The GJU VP asked the partners to encourage students to speak German outside the classes and involve them in projects and group work. More incoming students from partner universities at GJU for more German practice would also be helpful. Increasing their German skills during the study semester will also help the students with their internship where they will certainly need the language even more.

The first day of network meeting ended with the vote for a new Network Speaker from the German side. The network thanked Dr. Rudy Lohmann who had carried out the task for many years. Afterwards Dr. Ralf Härting was unanimously voted for the position by the network.

DAY 2 of network meeting SMLS, 24.09.2021

The second day of the SMLS network meeting begun with a presentation on joint projects demonstrating existing German-Jordanian collaborations

JOINOLOG project Introduction and update, collaboration GJU and HS Fulda -by Dr. Ismail Abushaikha

Joinolog stated in 2018 at HOLM when the question arose of how HOLM can benefit the GJU. It became clear quickly that something like HOLM, and umbrella association for logistics, does not exist in Jordan, which led to the idea of founding something akin to HOLM. They received funding for the conceptualization and structure of the project and also for research assistants and German colleagues functioning as consultants. The second phase of the project will start this year. The

project will benefit Jordan by making it more competitive in the market within the region. It will help to cluster the industry and bring people with expertise together while improving research conditions in a collaborative environment.

Dr. Abushaikha elaborated on the involved partners and the timeline of the project. A first event will take place in November 2021, a workshop joined by the German partners. A hackathon is planned for 2022 in collaboration with the Office for Industrial Links at GJU. The members of the network congratulated on the development of the project. Ideas for further funding were discussed as well as a possible overlap between Joinolog and the previously presented Research Cluster. It was also mentioned that maybe the project could also be an attractive topic for PHD candidates from Germany since both Fulda and Kassel have PHD programs and students are always looking for topics. The idea of a Jordan- German Energy Platform was also mentioned, as a platform where institutions can submit real industry problems which are then solved by students in their thesis or via group projects.

Alumni student report

Hazar Hassam

Graduated from GJU in 2018 and has been in Germany since then. She first thanked GJU for the time at the university and the opportunity to go on her German Year in Fulda. She later procured and internship at BOSCH in Stuttgart in the Communication Department where she learned a lot and was able to gain hands- on experience. Afterwards she decided to move back to Fulda and stay in Germany. She improved her German and is planning to start a master in international management in the summer semester. She elaborated on the challenges that GJU students face such as the language level and living alone for the first time in a foreign country. She suggested a preparation course at GJU for students who would like to stay in Germany after their mandatory German Year, an insight into contracts and laws and regulations. German Year preparation should also start from the earlier semesters on, also more courses taught in German at GJU would help the students.

Exchange coordinator Dr. Rana Sabri asked her what the most important thing on the CV was in order to find work in Germany, to which Hazar replied that it was without doubt the internship in Germany. The one month internship in Jordan was in her opinion not enough.

The logistics industry in Turmoil: how will Covid-19 impact the logistics industry in Germany and Jordan? - *By Prof. Dr. Julia Hansch (SGM Project with DHBW Manheim)*

Last presentation on the network meeting agenda was the presentation of the Study Group Mobility project on the impact of Covid 19 on the logistics industry. The group of 10 students from DHBW Manheim travelled to Jordan in the week after the network meeting, the students are enrolled in a Dual Study track and while at GJU will also introduce the concept there by each giving a presentation about their company. Dr. Hansch started her presentation with an overview of the logistics department at DHBW. She then moved on to the mobility program with GJU. The project consists of 10 students who are working on two different projects, one on how Covid will shape the logistics industry and the second one on food logistics in crisis contexts.

The schedule of the Study Group while in Amman will include 2 days of collaboration with the Jordanian students on campus but also visits to logistics companies DHL and Aramex (both Dual Study partners with GJU). The final projects will be presented at a logistics conference in Germany on the 8th of December at which the Jordanians will take part online.

After the last presentation the network was informed of from updates from the vice president. Just the previous night GJU received some feedback on the German Accreditation status of the School of Applied Technical Science, which will also apply to SMLS as well. The final report presented two issues that will need to be addressed, one a thesis will need to be introduced for the comprehensive study track and second the Dual Studies program needs some adjustments.

The network then spoke about the necessary extension of the network in an open discussion round. Dr. Steinmetz inquired if maybe more of the 120 partner universities that GJU has could become a partner in logistics and management. Dr. Härting added that the extension in his opinion depends on the right marketing and maybe there could be a separate meeting to which new partners could be invited.

The last point discussed were general industry trends observed by the members of the network in their countries and what these industry trends would imply in terms of future collaboration. Dr. Steinmetz stated that at his university the trend is moving towards more digitalization. The professional field is changing due to this and in his opinion the curricula will need to be adjusted to this, Dr. Härting seconded this and added that the new study plans should include not only data science but also big data, data mining etc. Hazar the alumni student agreed with this, she herself wished she would have had more IT courses in preparation for the labor market.

Exchange coordinator Rana Sabri added that the same trends can be observed in Jordan with the difference that classes for data science would be hard to offer as there are not many professionals working in this field, research is also scarcely done. The idea was brought forth that maybe this lack could be addressed through JOINOLOG or in the Research Cluster.

Dr. Härting mentioned that the same shortage of professionals exists in Germany. Maybe the Train the Trainer program at GJU could take this into consideration by sending staff to the locations where a training in this specialty is possible.

This discussion on the changing future of the industry wrapped up the 2021 network meeting

- Date for network meeting 2022- 22nd and 23rd of September
- Possible host venue HS Fulda