



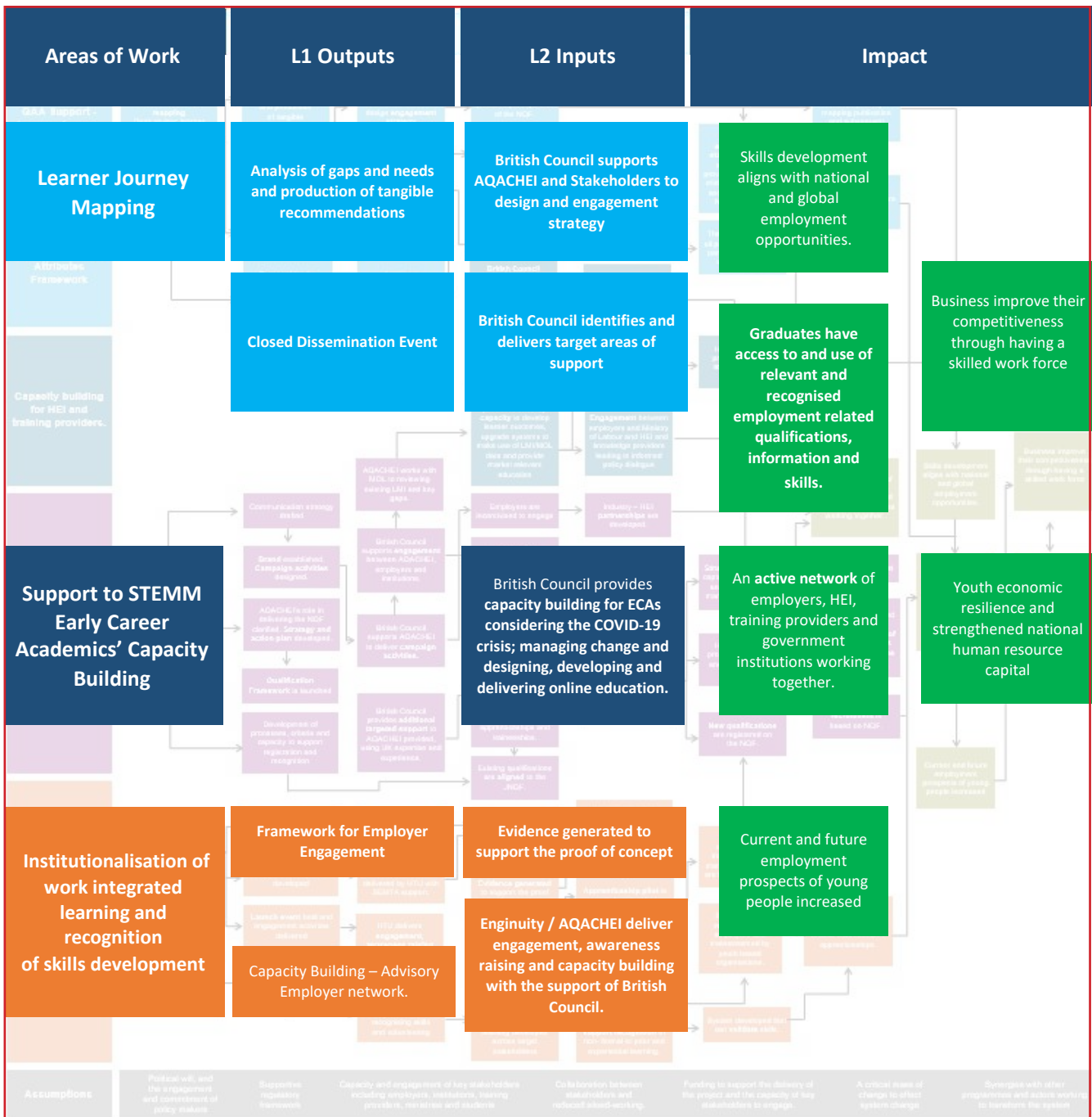
Policy Dialogue: The Jordanian Learner Journey

January – March 2021

The Pathway to Renewed Engagement through a Partnership Approach to Raising Employability (PREPARE) programme, is the British Council, Jordan's direct response to the challenges Jordan's Higher Education system faces. A youth population exceeding 60%, with high unemployment, the British Council's Global initiative to enhance young people's education outcomes has been well adapted in Jordan to improve graduate outcomes and enhance the standard and quality of higher education through capacity building activities. The programme incorporates five key areas of activity:

1. Learner Journey Mapping
2. National Graduate Attribute Framework
3. Capacity Building for HEIs and Training Providers
4. Support to AQACHEI for implementation of the NQF
5. Institutionalisation of work integrated learning and recognition of skills development

Each of the areas' activities are aligned to underpin, inform, and support the achievement of the same objectives (see figure 1). Prior to the outbreak of COVID 19 the programme's activities and progress were on track and effective and influential networks were being established nationally and internationally. The impact of COVID placed a temporary pause in activities to review consider and adjust the programme to address the COVID context of working in 2020. Due to the immense efforts of the British Council, Jordan Team and their local, national and international partners, this delay had little impact on the proposed inputs for Level 2 of the PREPARE Programme.



To achieve these outcomes an intense period of activity was demanded of all involved from January to April 2021. This incorporated 14 virtually delivered events, the co-ordination of 6 partners from UK and Jordan, 22 speakers, national and international, and meaningful engagement with stakeholders, partners and target audience of 307.

Our partners



Event formats

Pre Briefing Meetings



Interactive Webinars



Experiential Workshops



1:1 Mentoring Sessions

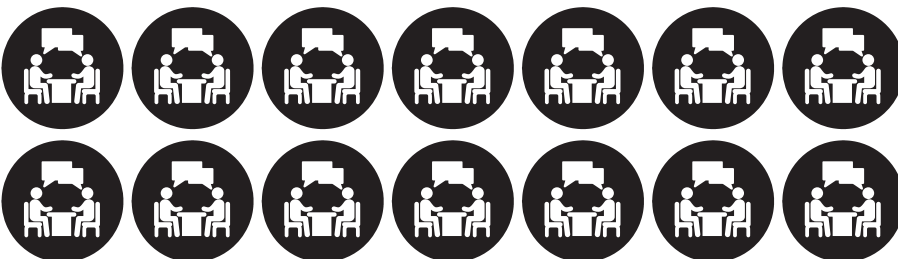













Table 1: List of PREPARE Programme Events
2021:

PREPARE Area	Date	Event Title	No. of participants
Learner Journey Mapping	27/01/2021	Stakeholder validation consultation – pre dissemination event for The Learner Journey Report Findings	
Support to STEMM Early Career Academics	01/02/2021	Introduction to experiential online learning	
Learner Journey Mapping	09/02/2021	The Higher Education Learner Journey in Jordan – Policy Discussion	
Support to STEMM Early Career Academics	15/02/2021	Online engagement and curriculum design	
Support to STEMM Early Career Academics	01/03/2021	Online engagement and assessments	
Support to STEMM Early Career Academics	08/03/2021	Experiential online learning and assessments: Revisiting curriculum design	
Institutionalisation of Work Integrated Learning and recognition of skills development	09/03/2021	Exploring skills policy and infrastructure landscape in Jordan to support employability	
Institutionalisation of Work Integrated Learning and recognition of skills development	18/03/2021	How to develop work ready graduates in Jordan	
Support to STEMM Early Career Academics	22/03/2021	The importance of reflection in experiential online learning	
Support to STEMM Early Career Academics	29/03/2021	Forward thinking and forward planning	
Institutionalisation of Work Integrated Learning and recognition of skills development	31/03/2021	The future of skills development in Jordan	

Speakers

His Excellency, Professor Ma'Moun Al Dibe,
Secretary General of MoHESR

His Excellency, Professor Thafer Y Assaraira,
President of AQACHEI

Professor Mohamd Othman,
Vice President of AQACHEI

Muhannad Al Khateeb,
Director of Unified Admissions Unit MoHESR,

Piers Wall,
Quality Expert QAA

Dawn Lees,
Student Employability and Development
Manager, University of Exeter

Zaid Tarboush,
Graduate Software Engineering

Dr Qais Safasfeh,
Director of TVSDC

**Alan Inglis, Dr John Lanham, Dr Ben
alexander Dunn, Alan MacDonald,**
International Skills / LMI / Forecasting Experts

Professor Ismael Hinti,
President of Hussein Technical University

Dr Moussa Habib,
Assistant to the President for Academic Affairs,
Hussein Technical University

Zein Habjoka,
Director of Industrial Links and International
Relations Unit, Hussein Technical University

Anita Davenport,
People, Culture and Compliance Manager,
Lander Automotives

Colin Yoshioka-Smith,
Director of Innovation, Trainer, Careers and
Apprenticeships, EYC Global

Professor Zaid Ahmed Al-Anber,
Assistant to the President of AQACHEI

Dr Wael Massarweh,
National Skills Consultant

Dr Jaqueline Hall,
Head of Policy and Strategy, Enginuity

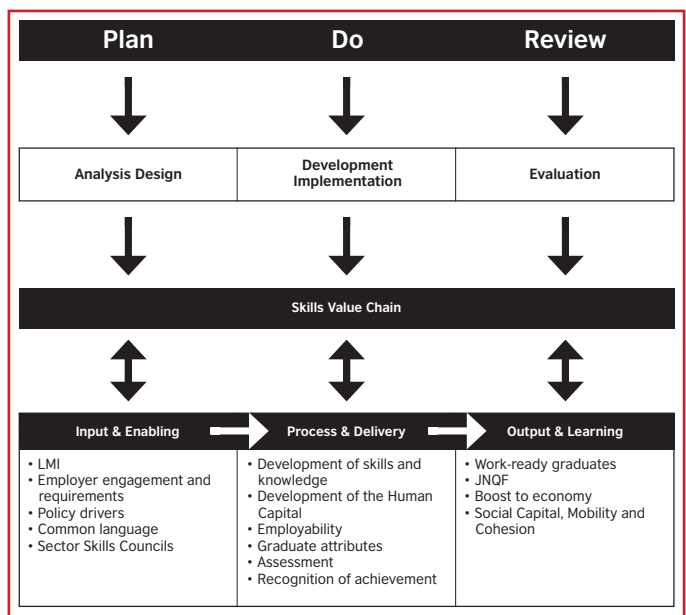
Outputs



Outcomes achieved

As a result of the events and activities that took place and the outputs that have been published and disseminated a number of outcomes have been achieved:

- Raised awareness of the different activities currently ongoing in the development of skills in Jordan, in both the HE and TVET sectors.
- Event participants had the opportunity to consider, review, reflect and comment on international practice and if and how it could be applied in the Jordanian context.
- Normalisation and socialisation of key concepts that support effective implementation of a skills development strategy; such as the importance of the Learner Journey / Graduate Attribute Framework / Assessment of Work-based Learning / Recognition and Assessment of Employability Skills / Professional Development of Teaching practice for Higher Education.
- The Learner's Journey was a key theme throughout all the activities and the following key areas of policy that focussed on enhancing the learner journey and improving employability outcomes throughout were identified for further development:
 - o Graduate Attribute Framework / Concept of Meta Skills in Jordan
 - o Identifying the Skills Value Chain – essentially mapping the input / processes / outputs of current activities and the responsible stakeholders in Jordan to connect the dots and ensure a co-ordinated and aligned approach to skills development across all sectors of education
 - o An emphasis on the role of Higher Education educators and academics in skills development consider incentives to support the development of teaching skills through Professional Development / Centre of Excellence for Teaching and Learning
 - o Identification and development of clear and coherent LMI to inform ongoing skills development and to set a foundation for skills forecasting.
 - o Pro-active Career Guidance and development throughout the learner journey from Pre-University admission to Graduation/employment.



- Institutions were able to consider and reflect on potential actions and changes that could be taken forward alone and in collaboration with other universities in Jordan and the UK around the key themes:
 - o Effective induction activities / programme to provide Careers Guidance and student support to ensure engagement of students in the development of employability skills as well as CV writing / Interview techniques / entrepreneurship / innovation.
 - o Recognition and assessment of employability skills that are developed independently and / can be embedded in the assessment of academic courses.
 - o Effective employer Engagement – the development of an employer engagement framework to manage and maximise the interactions effectively.
 - o Providing Work-based Learning opportunities and assessment of those.
 - o Development of LMI.
- Identification of potential national champions to support the establishment of Communities of Practice that can enhance practice and provide an evidence base to inform policy development and implementation.
- Establishment of a Community of Practice and network for Early Career Academics, to share best practice and innovation in teaching technical and applied education online.
- Enhanced confidence and capacity of all participants to develop and deliver online teaching and learning in an experiential and applied manner.
- Enhanced innovation and creativity in the development and delivery of online teaching.
- Publication of the “Booklet” sharing best practices in online teaching and learning endorsed by the MoHESR and to be available to the entire Higher Education sector in Jordan.

Key themes

- **Governance and partnerships (at policy and operational levels)**
- **Clear roles and responsibilities**
- **LMI (gathering, coordination, analysis, impact on policy/operations)**
- **Quality Assurance**
- **Common Language**
- **Meta Skills**
- **Employer Engagement**
- **Foresight (research)**
- **Holistic approach**
- **Skills Value Chain**
- **Skills eco-systems**
- **JNQF as a strategic and operational tool**
- **Graduate Attribute Framework (NGAF)**
- **National Occupational Standards (NOS)**
- **Employability**
- **Assessment**
- **Communications strategy**
- **What does good look like for Jordan?**

Having identified cross cutting themes, priority areas and effective practice for further review, it will be necessary for AQACHEI, MoHESR, the Universities and Employers to consider how best to move the conversation forward to ensure the development of practical solutions and effective policy and implementation to enhance employment outcomes of graduates in Jordan.

There is continual ongoing review and enhancement of the higher education sector, by both the MoHESR and by AQACHEI. There are clear efforts being made to address the challenges in delivering online learning and the disconnect between industry requirements and current programmes. The MoHESR are developing a platform “The Open Access Repository” to share resources to support innovation and creativity in the Higher Education sector, and AQACHEI are establishing a platform “Employability Hub” to enhance the employability outcomes of higher education programmes. What is key to continual progression and engagement in the key themes, is transparency and openness of the different actions. Consideration of the “whole picture” is essential as well as effective and facilitated engagement of not only the sector, but the industry and the students and their families, to encourage them to stop, listen, review, accept and/or take forward the different concepts, and opportunities being developed and presented.

Both the MoHESR and AQACHEI actively contribute to events and opportunities to continually share and learn from national and international best practice. To further support this, one consideration is the development of a Festival of Practice and Learning. Potentially engaging with AQACHEI, and the MoHESR to collaborate on and develop the event. The festival can continue the discussion on the key themes raised, to create, share and present effective activities that can enhance the employability of graduates.

The “Festival” provides an excellent platform to establish Communities of Practice in the key areas, identifying clear objectives, KPIs and terms of reference to ensure momentum is maintained. The festival will also provide an opportunity for the Early Careers Academics to share the good practices they have been developing and delivering in their classrooms and signpost back to the MoHESR’s new platform. In addition, consideration should be given to the potential of working collaboratively with those who participated in the Early Careers Academics programme to highlight the challenges in developing teaching and learning expertise, and consider how these can be addressed. Potentially drafting a plan of action to build awareness and mechanisms to ensure development in this area.

AQACHEI’s continued communication and dissemination of the JNQF through the ongoing development of the employability hub could potentially provide the central focus and core of the individual communities of practice. It could inform and underpin the different foci of each area as well as providing a central platform to share findings enhancing transparency and engagement.

The main take away from a review of the activities is the need to reflect and align the key themes of skills value chain, national graduate attribute framework, meta-skills, NOS, to current activities and developments in the policy and practice landscape of higher education in Jordan. It is essential to demonstrate and map the connection and importance of the skills development themes to higher education, and the Jordan National Qualification Framework. Connecting those dots and ensuring the common language reflects the level and type of skills development required to ensure the appropriate governing bodies are working effectively together to achieve that end.

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Acronym	Meaning
AQACHEI	Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency (England)
MoHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
PREPARE	Pathway to Renewed Engagement through a Partnership Approach to Raising Employability
TVSDC	Technical Vocational Skills Development Council
CRC	Cotswold Research Consultancy
HTU	Hussein Technical University
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
STEMM	Science Technology Engineering Mathematics and Medicine
JNQF	Jordan National Qualification Framework
LMI	Labour Market Information
EYC Global	UK Skills development organisation focussed on Rail and Digital Sectors.
HE	Higher Education
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
NGAF	National Graduate Attribute Framework
NOS	National Occupational Standards
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
UAE	United Arab Emirates
LMS	Learner Management System

This document provides a summary report of the activities of the PREPARE programme from 01 January 2021 – 31st March 2021. The PREPARE programme has been designed to design and develop activities, drawing on international expertise to address the challenges that Jordan's youth are facing in higher and post-secondary education and training and employment. The key to the success of this programme is the British Council, Jordan's capacity to work in effective and collaborative partnership with the following organisations:



The report reflects on each area of the three areas of the PREPARE Programme's Theory of Change, that had direct actions:

- Learner Journey Mapping
- Support to STEMM Early Careers Academics' Capacity Building
- Institutionalisation of work integrated learning and recognition of skills development

The report provides a brief context, summary of the activities for each area, consideration of the engagement in those, by number, insights, key findings, next steps and key themes discussed. More detailed reports relating to the individual activities are available in the link. NB Not all reports were published at the time of this report. Summarising in the conclusion the cross-cutting themes and the proposed next steps.



Content

The Mapping the Jordanian Learner Journey Report was commissioned in September 2019, and finalised in early January 2021. Mindful of the impact of COVID-19 on education and the Learner Journey in that time frame, pre-briefing sessions were held with each of the four universities that contributed to the report and their students. The objective of these sessions was to identify first and foremost that the findings were still valid and had relevance. The session also sought to identify and highlight any additional areas of concern from the institutional and student perspectives and consideration of individual priorities. The wider seminar including all of the contributing universities, AQACHEI and the JNQF Committee provided an opportunity to present the findings of the report and the results of the policy briefings. The recommendations were presented and key poll questions were asked to determine agreement on priority actions.

The Higher Education Learner Journey Webinar

Our partners



Speakers

- His Excellency Professor Ma'Moun Al Dibe'a, Secretary General of MoHESR
- His Excellency Professor Thafer Y Assaraira, President of AQACHEI
- Muhannad Al Khateeb, Director of Unified Admissions Unit MoHESR
- Piers Wall, Quality Expert QAA
- Dawn Lees, Student Employability and Development Manager, University of Exeter
- Zaid Tarboush, Graduate Software Engineering, Hashemite University

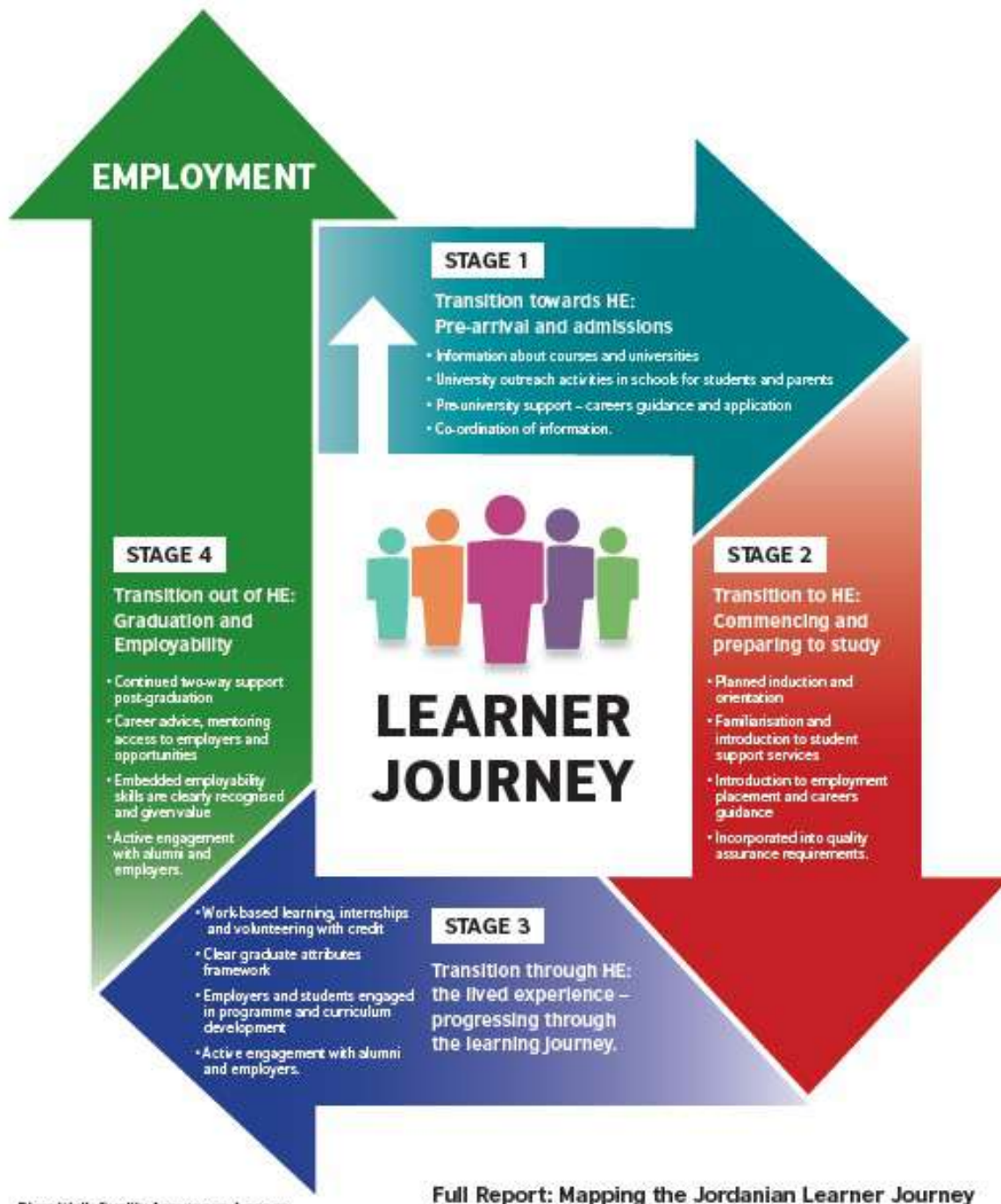
Participants

- 2 x representatives of MoHESR
- 4 x representatives of AQACHEI
- 2 x University Presidents
- 14 x Deans / Heads of University Dept / Faculties
- 5 x students
- 2 x employers

Highlights

The Learner Journey was mapped and illustrated to identify the key support and services that all learners should receive at each stage of their journey:

Figure 1: The Learner Journey



The four key stages of the Learner journey were presented and poll questions asked to determine the appetite and direction for policy review. In brief the below were identified:

Stage 1

Pre-University

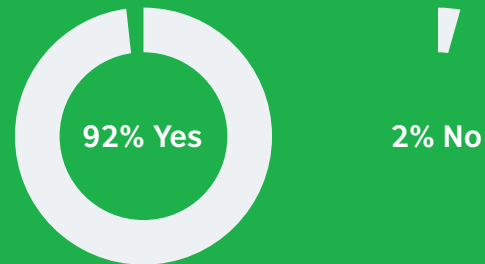
The admissions process is currently based on one indicator, the Tawjihi. There is little information provided to students and families about courses, options, and career pathways. Students first day at university is often their first communication with the university.

Both the pre-event briefing and the event itself demonstrated an appetite to review the admissions process.

Q1
Should there be more comprehensive review of the admissions process?



Q2
If universities played a more active role in the pre-arrival admission process, would it improve student outcomes?



Stage 2

Transition to Higher Education

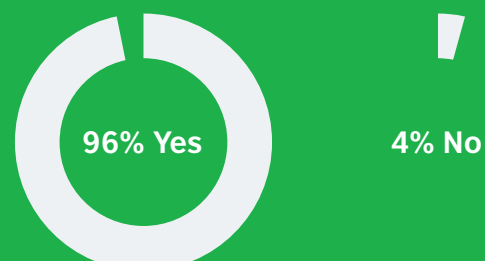
The approach to induction and the registration on course options was discussed in some detail. It was acknowledged that students were not aware of the pathways available to them in terms of their programmes in relation to employment. Many also highlighted that the students did not always know of the support services available that could inform those decisions.

A quality approach incorporating a Graduate Attribute Framework to ensure a structured and consistent approach to the engagement of students and the development of employability skills was considered.

Q1
Would a Graduate Attribute Framework support the development of employability skills across the sector?



Q2
Would a graduate attribute framework support align to the needs of industry and enhance graduate's employability in your university?



Stage 3

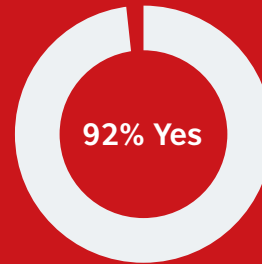
The Lived Experience

Identifying the good practice currently ongoing and being developed in the area of employability skills and the potential for Career development and capacity building of HE lectures to ensure continued improvement in this area.

We wanted to determine the appetite for a Community of Practice in this area, to encourage collaboration and professional engagement and development.

Q1

Would the establishment of a working group to inform staff development and share best practice in embedding employability skills in teaching, learning and assessment improve alignment to industry and student outcomes?



2% No

Q2

Would a professional development programme for higher education lectures enhance engagement in the development of teaching and learning?



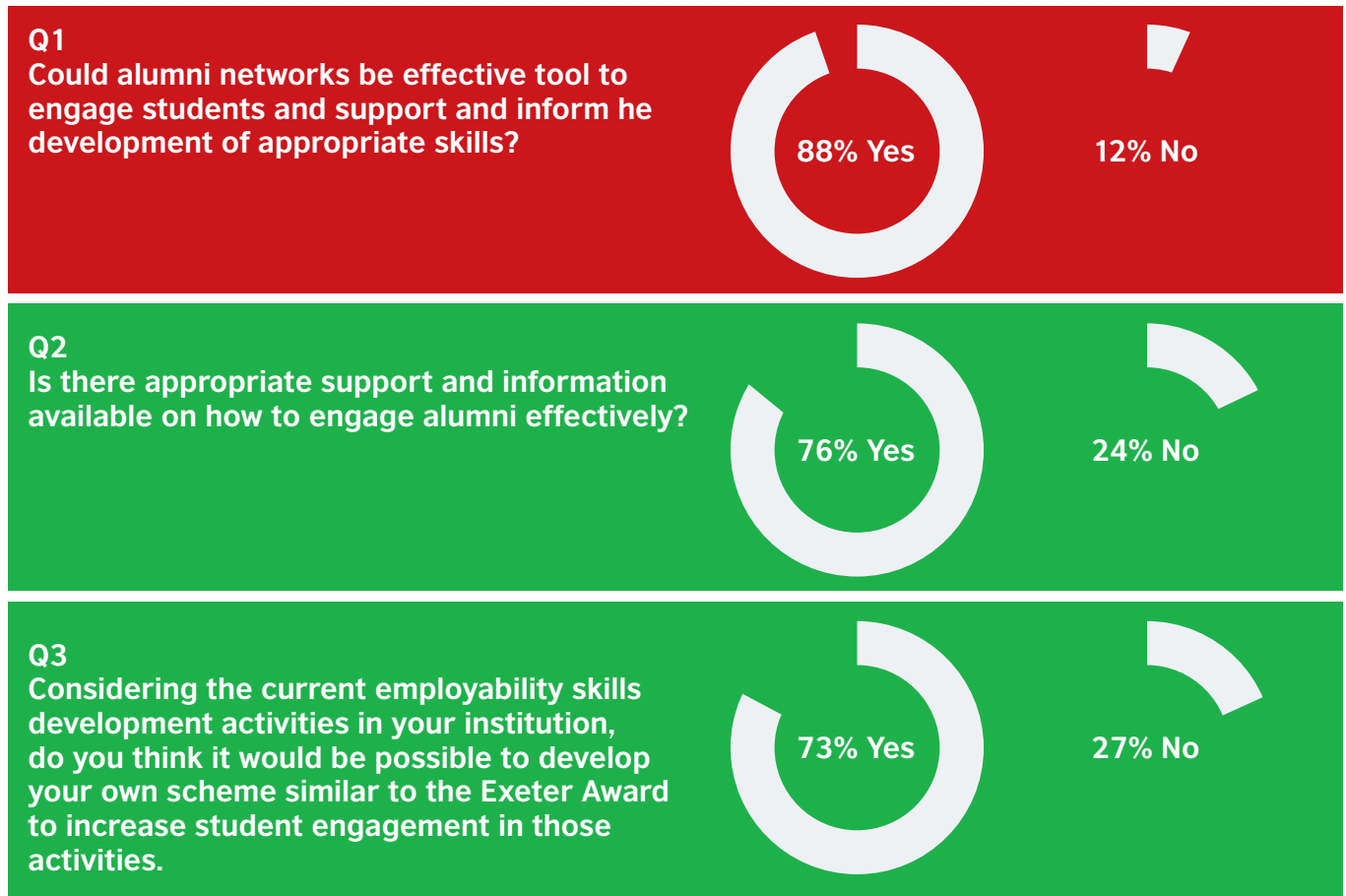
100% Yes

Stage 4

Transition out of Higher Education: Graduation and Employability

Alumni are used as case studies in Jordanian Universities currently, but other schemes where Alumni play a more active role such as mentoring, employer guidance can also play an important part for current students.

As primary and peer level points of reference from the “community” they are a valuable potential resource. Information and support on how that can be harnessed would be very welcomed.



Insights



Pre-University Admission

- “Entry exams as well as psychometric tests for job matching and other attributes related to right education”
- “Fair access to higher Education”



Transition to University

- “Advice on how to pick your major based on solid data from the job market. Freshers induction programs. Visits to and from the market while in university. Career fairs and resources to prepare for the market.”



The Lived Experience

- “The crux of the issue in my opinion is the lack of focus and follow up in matters pertaining to the provision of Career Enabling Soft Skills to students. In most cases there is a clear misunderstanding and mis-appreciation of the value of these skills by highest levels of academic administration. And even when there is understanding or appreciation, there is little breath for the ability to implement mechanisms to describe, assess, track and report on student attainment in these areas.”



Transition out of university: Graduation / employment

- “As an early professional and a recent graduate, I can share the hot topics in the market and what students should focus on to increase their chances of employment.”



Key Findings

- The engagement of students throughout the journey is key to their success and enhancing their employability outcomes.
- The review of the four stages identified a lack of consistency across the sector in the different parts of the learner journey. A clear, coherent and consistent qualitative approach to Quality Assurance would address this.
- The link between university and jobs is a constant concern. In a Covid-19 context and a challenging employment landscape there are creative and innovative ways to create real world experiences for university students.
- Development of University staff to provide effective, outreach and engagement activities with students and employers to support, inform and recognise the development of employability skills initiatives and programmes available and their importance.
- Change of narrative, focus on empowering the student, developing their unique selling point and competitive edge through the development of employability / digital / key skills.
- Establishing the essential skills that all graduates should develop as part of their learner journey – the Graduate Attribute Framework.
- AQACHEI and the MoHESR are working together on a number of initiatives to support the development of employability in the higher education sector in Jordan.

Next steps

- Identification of institutions willing to take priority actions forward and establishment of Community of Practice in that area.
- Focus on developing a Festival of Practice with wider stakeholders to present the key policy actions and areas, establishing individual communities of practice, drafting terms of reference and developing clear objectives and KPIs for each area
 1. Review of admissions processes internationally and consideration of criteria in addition to secondary school performance.
 2. Review of induction practices nationally and internationally to inform the development of induction programmes and draft a nationwide standard for induction programmes.

3. Review and development of approaches to teaching and learning to support the development, assessment and recognition of employability skills within existing programmes. Effective engagement of employers in the curriculum design, development and delivery process.
 4. Development of a National graduate attribute framework. Identification of key skills, attributes and competences that all graduates in Jordan should have as a minimum on completion of university.
- Promotion of the MoHESR “Open Access Repository” and AQACHEI’s “Employability hub” to provide central platforms to share outputs from the communities of practice.

Key themes

- Governance and partnerships (at policy and operational levels)
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- LMI (gathering, coordination, analysis, impact on policy/operations)
- Quality Assurance
- Common Language
- Meta Skills
- Employer Engagement
- Foresight (research)
- JNQF as a strategic and operational tool
- Graduate Attribute Framework (GRAF)
- Employability
- Assessment
- Communications strategy
- What does good look like for Jordan?

“ His Excellency Professor Thafer Y Assaraira, The President of AQACHEI underlined the “inseparable” role and relationship with MoHE to drive forward transformation which this study will take a central role in informing.

His Excellency Professor Ma’moun Al Dibeaa, Secretary General of the MoHESR, stated that “I fully agree with the recommendations and it’s a very opportune moment that this report is published”

Support to STEMM Early Careers Academics

Context

The global higher education sector has been directly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic requiring a quick and effective shift to online and distance learning. Whilst initially anticipated to be a short-term, gap-fill measure, as the pandemic continues it has become increasingly clear that a complete digital transformation of higher education is unavoidable. To ensure that higher education remains of a high quality and competitive, investment is required not only in the digital platforms to support the delivery of the programmes, but also in academic staff development to ensure optimal teaching, research and engagement of the learner.

Pre-COVID Jordan's higher education sector was facing challenges regionally with increasing competition from provision in the UAE, Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This was further compounded by an increasing lack of trust in the quality and credibility of provision, with the withdrawal of recognition of degrees from a number of Jordanian Universities for scholarship programmes in Kuwait and Qatar. Concurrently the perceived quality and relevance of higher education in Jordan is being increasingly questioned by national students, with 24% of them preferring to study outside Jordan, and 73% claiming that their higher education experience does not prepare them for the future marketplace.

To directly address these issues British Council, Jordan as part of the PREPARE programme (2019), in partnership with the MoHESR developed a Professional development programme for Early Careers Academics in Science, technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) to achieve the following objectives:

- Contributing to enhancing the competitive performance of the Jordanian higher education sector.
- Modernising the design and delivery of cutting-edge research-led learning in Jordan's universities.
- Improving higher education provision in Jordan through a peer to peer mentoring framework and delivering a practice-based signature learning experience for early career academics specialized in STEMM disciplines.

A practice-based experiential programme was developed in the following four areas:

- a. Higher Education Learning Strategies in the 21st Century
- b. Navigating Research Excellence
- c. Navigating Engagement and Impact
- d. Leadership and Management for STEMM Early Career Academics

Partners

- British Council Jordan
- MoHESR
- 2 x International Higher Education Teacher Trainers

Participants

- 6 workshops



- 14 x 1:1 mentor programme



- 160 connections across the 6 workshops

The programme was originally designed to provide further professional development and training.



203 STEMM early career academics participated (134 men and 69 women) representing 24 of Jordan's 29 universities.

The British Council conducted a survey of Early Career Academics to identify any particular issues or areas of concern that they were facing with the online delivery enforced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the academics surveyed indicated that student engagement is a key factor for successful online teaching. During the period of online teaching the engagement of the students varied from acceptable to weak. It was considered that there was no singular reason for this but a combination of many factors illustrated in figure 2 below.



Figure 2: Challenges students face with online learning.













Recommendations

The survey of the Early Careers Academics identified specific areas of training that could enhance online/virtual teaching and address the challenges of online delivery both from the student and the academic's perspective. The specific areas identified were as follows:

- Using the online tools and digital technology for teaching and training to design and deliver the online classes.
- Transfer of knowledge and students' engagement.
- Blended learning approach.
- Assessment of online learning.

These were directly addressed by the final programme of six workshops as follows:

Table 2: STEMM Early Careers Academics Workshops

Date	Workshop title	#of Participants	Female	Male
01/02/2021	Introduction to experiential online learning	28		
15/02/2021	Online engagement and curriculum design	30		
01/03/2021	Online engagement and assessments	28		
08/03/2021	Experiential online learning and assessments: Revisiting curriculum design	24		
22/03/2021	The importance of reflection in experiential online learning	25		
29/03/2021	Forward thinking and forward planning	26		

Insights

It was incredibly encouraging to note that the majority of participants of the workshops and the 1:1 mentoring, had attended the British Council professional development training for Early Careers Academics in 2019-2020. It was evident that an informal Community of Practice has been established, with the participants reaching out to their colleagues within and across institutions, as a result of the initial training.

To address the transition to online teaching and maximise the "user experience" the training programme took an experiential reflective learning model format. Essentially providing the participants the opportunity to use and apply the tools and techniques that their students would be using in their online learning. This not only encourages empathy and understanding of the challenges that the students may face, but also increase the lecturers' familiarity, technical knowledge and application of the tools to directly address any concerns or issues during the delivery of the programme.

To ensure the participants were taking the time to apply, reflect, review and adapt the different methods being presented to their own curricula, assignments were given at the end of each workshop, then uploaded for all participants to review and learn:

1. Introductory Loom video (Workshop 1)
2. Writing a Reflective Report (Workshop 3)
3. Designing and delivering a lesson plan (Workshops 2 and 4) for the experiential online class
4. Recording a 10-minute asynchronous session on experiential online teaching and learning (Workshop 5)

“We are delighted that the camaraderie has been enhanced and a notable ‘community’ is developing. This was clearly evident through the ease in working collaboratively... and the frank and open discussions.”
Trainer: Professor Haya Al-Dajani
report is published”

Dr Yahia Magableh:
“This programme has been a great chance for us to learn, engage and reflect on our online teaching. Thank you all very much for this opportunity”.

Dr Mohammad Amayreh:
“Through what I learned in this programme, I improved the way I interact with my students. It a great workshop. thank you so much for the great efforts”.

Dr Mohammed Alkasasbeh:
“This programme was a teaching-changing experience”.

Key Findings

As a direct result of the perceived value of sharing each other's work and the excellent quality and standard of the participant's assignments "The Booklet" was developed and published, incorporating a selection of online lesson plans for online experiential teaching and learning sessions. "The Booklet" is uploaded to the MoHESR Open Access Repository which all academics will have access to by July 2021.

In terms of impact this was measured through pre-and post-evaluation questionnaires completed by the participants. Confidence had improved to 4 out of 5 in the following areas:

- Engaging students during the online class
- Using multimedia resources
- Communicating the purpose of activities, assessments and technology used in lessons.
- Utilising online class data to improve performance (e.g. student feedback).
- Preparing online assessments
- Providing online feedback for assignments
- Using the LMS system of the university.

Next steps

It is essential to recognise and acknowledge the ongoing hard work and commitment by the Early Careers Academics in continuing to develop their expertise in teaching and learning. The challenge of extending their remit to incorporate the development of engaging, effective and experiential online learning has been directly addressed and resulted in a useful and effective output, with a direct impact on their own students.

The establishment of a network and community of Early Career Academics who value and consider the approaches to teaching and learning in higher education is a valuable resource that Jordan and the members of the community should continue to encourage, develop and grow.

The next steps should really take the opportunity to listen to the concerns of the Early Careers Academics in terms of the time available considering current commitments to cascade and share their learning and experiences. Consider how the higher education sector can maximise the developing expertise in this area

and support the growth of the community of practice and continue the dialogue around developing teaching and learning models to effectively engage students and effectively meet the desired Learning outcomes.

Potentially work collaboratively with those who participated in the programme to highlight the challenges in developing teaching and learning expertise, and how to address this directly. Presenting the findings to key stakeholders and in particular the MoHESR to determine how best to address this concern.

Key Themes

- Quality Assurance
- Assessment
- Communications strategy
- What does good look like for Jordan?



"Online learning has been an objective for us for many years, as it is part of our future choices.

Toward this end, we at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research have come up with, and approved, a national plan for embedding online education in the higher education system, and the plan is being currently scrutinized by our higher educational institutions, in preparation for its implementation as of the coming academic year 2021/2022."

**His Excellency Professor
Ma'moun Al Dibe, Secretary
General of the MoHESR.**



Higher Education Skills Development in Jordan: Improving Graduate Employability Academics

Context

Graduate unemployment has long been an acknowledged problem in Jordan. It has been attributed to a number of issues, including but not limited to:

- The gap between labour market requirements and current course provision.
- The relevance, currency and credibility of courses provided.
- The mode of teaching and learning in higher education.
- The lack of employer engagement.
- The reliance on the assessment of knowledge as opposed to application of skills.
- The lack of development and recognition of key / core / employability skills.

The COVID-19 context has further exacerbated these issues, bringing a sense of urgency, a call to action to reflect and review the current higher education policy and practice landscape and the requirements of the economy locally, regionally and globally. Developing practical grass root solutions and innovations that can be supported by the development of a policy environment and framework to ensure the continued enhancement of the quality of higher education provision.

Building on the findings and recommendation of the Mapping the Learner Journey Report, the challenges presented in the shift to online and distance learning and the impact of COVID-19 on the education and employment landscape in Jordan, the PREPARE programme theme of Institutionalisation of Work Integrated Learning and recognition of skills development drew on the network of expertise developed by its UK partner Enginuity to design and create a series of three webinars to explore skills development internationally and consider how the lessons learnt could support and enhance the employability of graduates in Jordan in the current context.

Partners






Speakers

- His Excellency Professor Thafer Y Assaraira, President of AQACHEI
- Professor Mohamd Othman, Vice President of AQACHEI
- Dr Qais Safasfeh, Director of TVSDC
- Alan Inglis, Dr John Lanham, Dr Ben Alexander Dann, Alan MacDonald, International Skills / LMI / Forecasting Experts
- Professor Ismael Hinti, President of Hussein Technical University
- Dr Moussa Habib, Assistant to the President for Academic Affairs, Hussein Technical University
- Zein Habjoka, Director of Industrial Links and International Relations Unit, Hussein Technical University
- Anita Davenport, People, Culture and Compliance Manager, Lander Automotives
- Colin Yoshioka-Smith, Director of Innovation, Trainer, Careers and Apprenticeships, EYC Global
- Dr Zaid Ahmed Al-Anber, Assistant to the President of AQACHEI
- Dr Wael Massarweh, National Skills Consultant
- Professor Jacqueline Hall, Head of Policy and Strategy, Enginuity

Participants

- 105 interactions/ engagements across 3 webinars
- 17 Jordanian Universities
- 19 NGOs
- 4 Government Bodies
- 5 Employers

Table 3: Enginuity Webinar Series – International Practice in Skills Development

Date	Title	#of Participants
09/03/2021	Exploring skills policy and infrastructure landscape in Jordan to support employability	
17/03/2021	How to develop work ready graduates in Jordan	
31/03/2021	The future of skills development in Jordan	

Highlights

The webinar series drew on the contributions of 15 national and international experts. It provided a platform to raise awareness of current activities in the skills development arena, consider the lessons learnt in other countries and discuss the suitability and readiness of the different activities to the Jordan context.

Building on the success of the structured poll questions of the Mapping the Learner Journey event, poll questions were again used in each of the webinars to determine the appetite for specific policy actions and/ or the readiness of Jordan to consider adopting particular actions.

Webinar 1

Exploring skills policy and infrastructure landscape in Jordan to support employability.
Objective: To explore current and best practice skills policy and infrastructure in Jordan and the UK, with a view to enhance employability in Jordan through Higher Education and work-based learning opportunities and an understanding of the roles played by key stakeholders in Jordan.

Q1.1

Do you agree that a Work Base Learning approach which is structured, co-created, time-bound, based on occupation Best Practice, competence-based and formally assessed could help to solve the 2 main challenges identified in the National Employment Strategy?

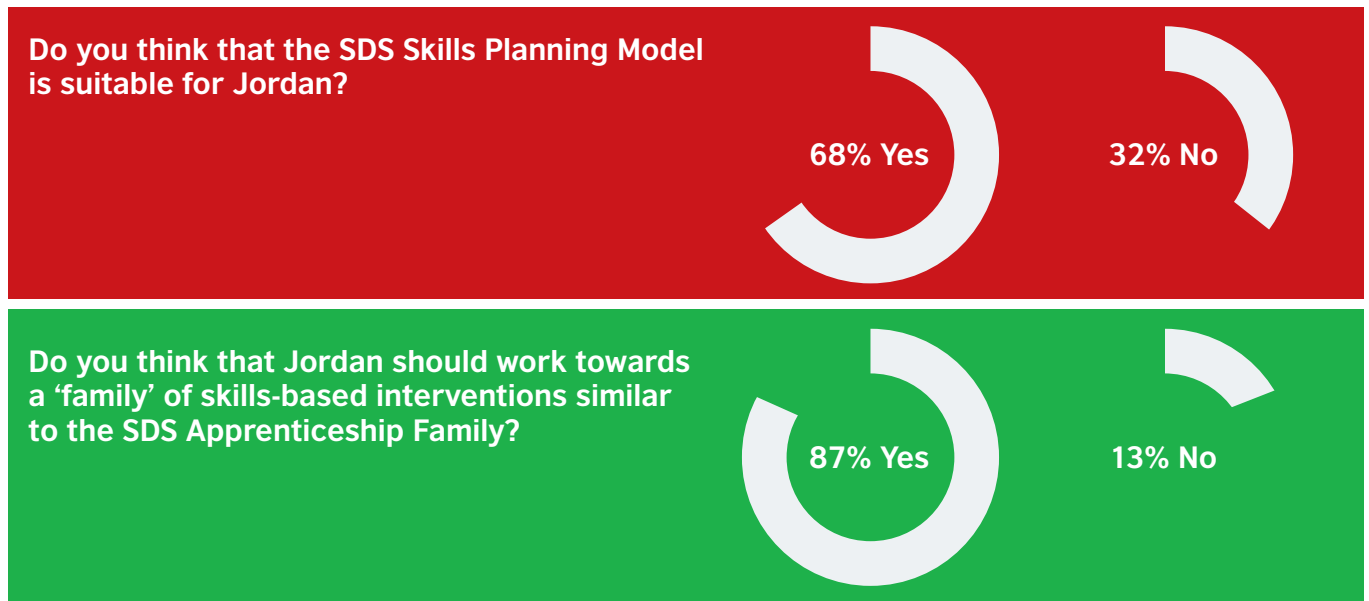
100% Yes

Do you believe that an employer Engagement Strategy (base on international Best Practice) would help the work of Sector Skills Councils and other stakeholders in the development of work-ready graduates?

100% Yes

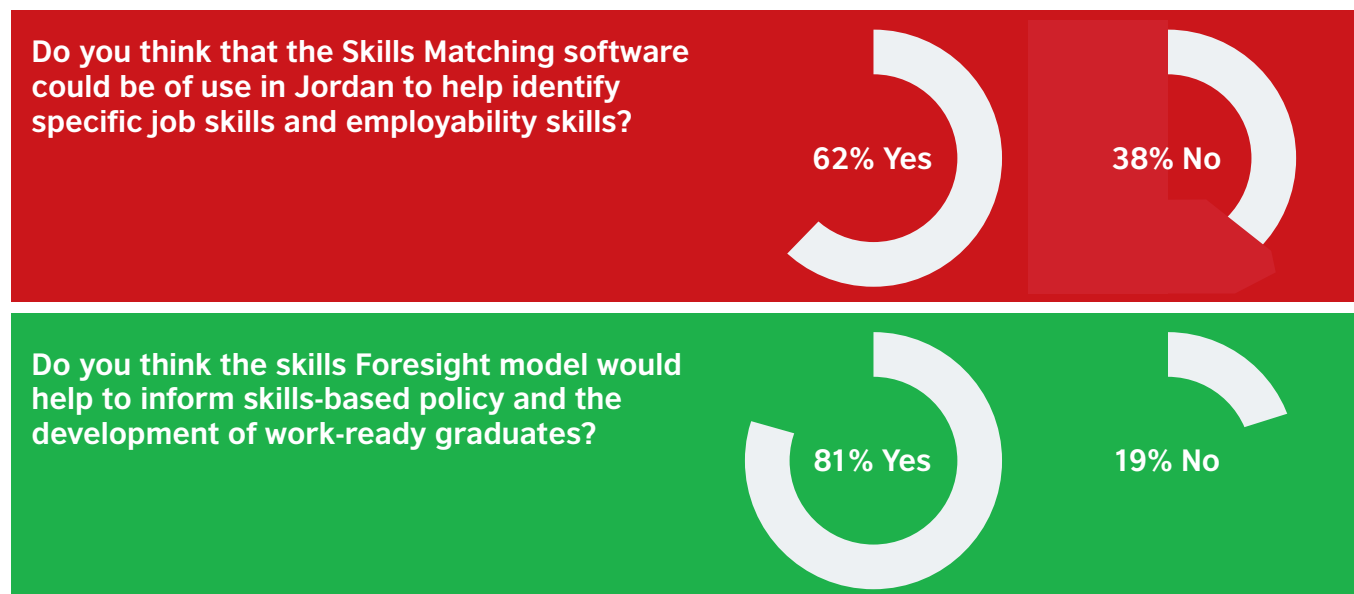
There is a clear appetite for a framework and structured approach for work-based learning in higher education in Jordan. There is also clear recognition that effective employer engagement is key to the success of any work-based learning initiatives. Establishing a framework and structure to support and inform the development and practice of work-based learning in higher education is essential to provide consistency and a minimum standard for all learners in Jordan.

Q1.2



Listening to international experience in addressing the challenges of skills development and employability is key to Jordan developing its own tailor-made approach that will be sensitive to the political structures and economic demands specific to Jordan. Determining “What good looks like for Jordan” is essential in the development of practice and policy to support employability in young people in Jordan.

Q1.3



Developing a common language when discussing the development of skills across all sectors of education is important to ensure alignment and consistency of governance and policy. Skills matching and indeed mapping is an important component to determine what the core skills or rather “Meta Skills” should be that each Jordanian citizen should have on completion of education and training. In addition, identifying key transferable skills that will support career transitioning and flexibility across professional pathways throughout an individual’s working lifetime.

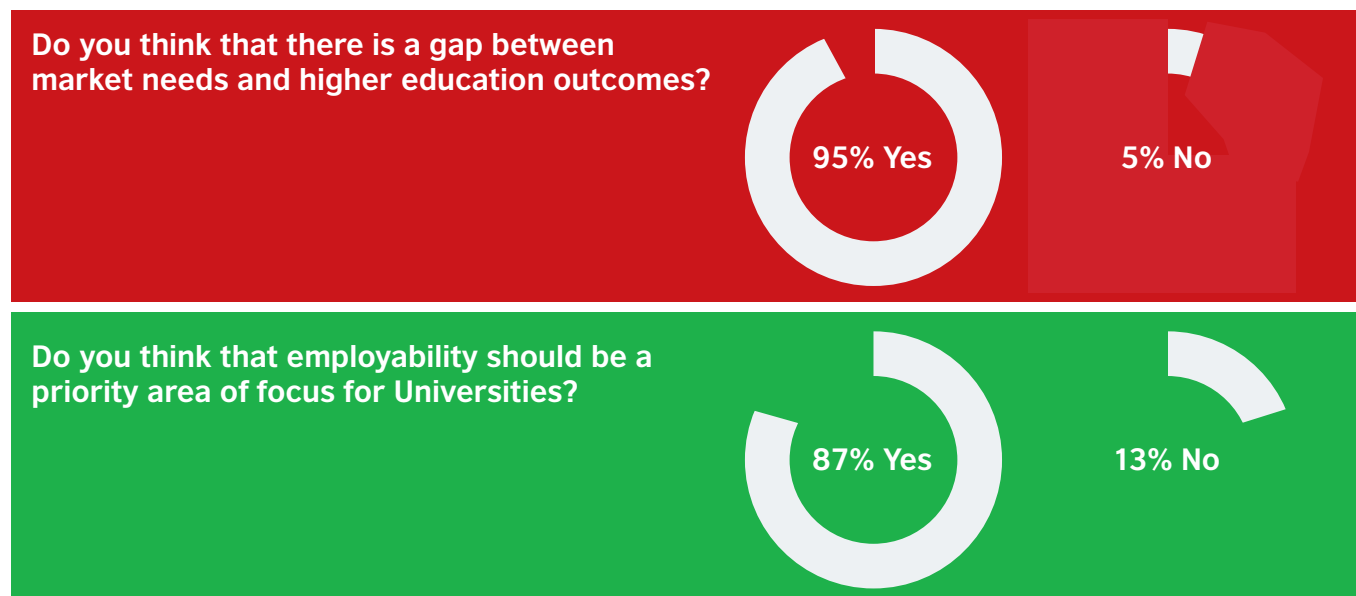
A skills forecasting/foresight model will futureproof the employment of young people and the Jordanian economy. Whilst this can be done at a national level, it should be noted that there are exercises being conducted at an international level e.g. Skills forecast: trends and challenges to 2030 | Cedefop (europa.eu) / Infographics - The Future of Jobs Report 2020 | World Economic Forum (weforum.org). Considering information and data already developed internationally and reflecting on the Jordanian context provides a sound and initial basis to inform employment, education and training policy.

Webinar 2

How to develop work-ready graduates in Jordan.

Objective: Explore current and best practices nationally and internationally to develop work-ready graduates through a system of structured, co-created (academia and employers) skills interventions including the development, implementation, assessment and recognition of work-based learning activities.

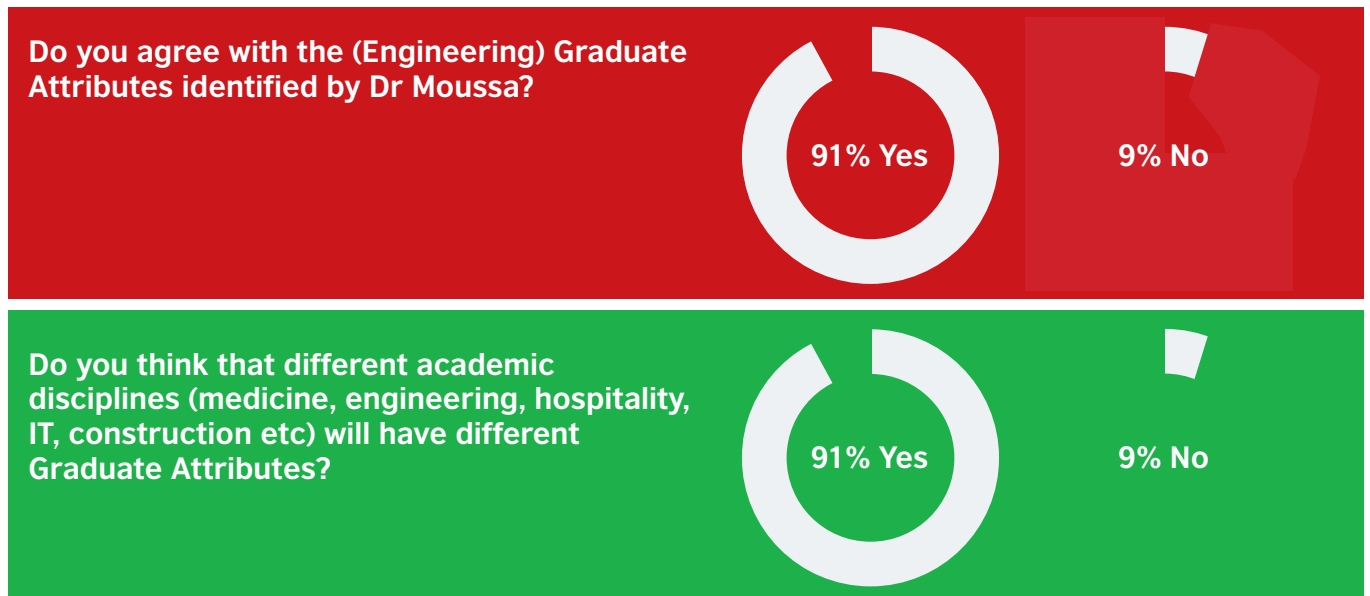
Q2.1



There is clear and consistent recognition that there is a lack of engagement with the labour market, or the use of labour market information, to shape, influence and develop relevant and appropriate outcomes in higher education.

The role of universities is, of necessity changing, the accountability of universities for employment, innovation and creativity has increased. To support universities to develop a greater understanding and clarity of what “employability” looks like, and agree what it is composed of in the Jordanian context is necessary. A framework for engagement with not only employers, but labour market information, and how that can be used to inform the development and review of programmes is essential.

Q 2.2

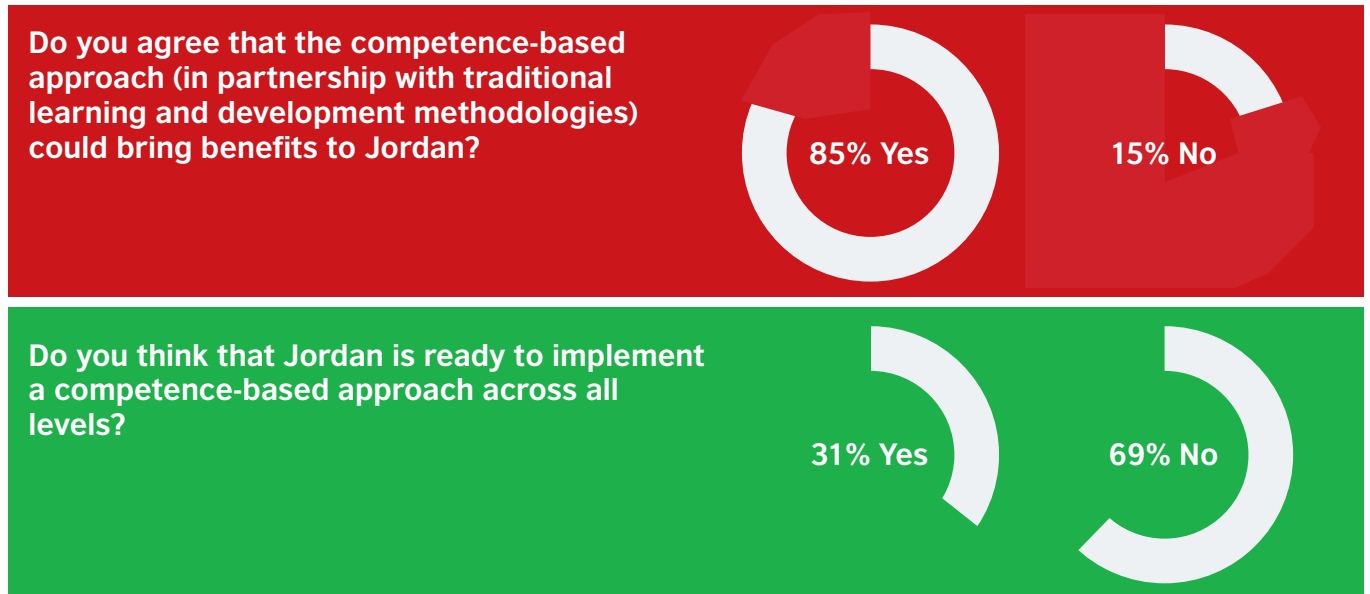


Consideration of the concept of graduate attributes by discipline, defining graduate attributes and what they mean and look like in a Jordanian context is essential before moving forward with this concept. In the UK universities adopt attributes that are core to their institution and are reflected in all programmes and students. These behaviours and attitudes are best described as competences in terms of the development and attainment of a certain mindset e.g.:

- creative
- innovative
- initiative
- problem solvers
- team players

These behaviours can be developed as a direct result of the approach to learning and research within that institution. Jordan needs to consider if there are universal attitudes and behaviours that should apply to all graduates regardless of discipline or if there is a case for more specific attributes for each field of study and practice.

Q2.3



This was an important question, whilst Jordan recognises the value of a competence-based approach, it is not yet in a position to implement such an approach. There are a number of areas to address, including; access to the appropriate resources and equipment, programme design and development, and perhaps most importantly the approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. Jordan needs to consider if the competence-based approach is the way forward for Jordan, and then determine what needs to be put in place in terms of policy, operation and practice to develop and implement it effectively.

Q2.4

Do you agree that it would be useful for a learner to have their achievement recognised by linking performance standard, assessment, qualifications and the JNQF?

A circular gauge with a white outer ring and a red inner circle. The text "100% Yes" is centered within the red circle.

100% Yes

Would you like to know more about recognising achievement by linking performance standards, assessment, qualifications and the JNQF?

A circular gauge with a white outer ring and a green inner circle. The text "100% Yes" is centered within the green circle.

100% Yes

The role of the JNQF in terms of recognition of all qualifications and achievement is widely acknowledged as key to maintaining a minimum standard for each sector of education. Clearer understanding of the process and regulations that govern and shape programme development for alignment to the JNQF is required.

Webinar 3

Webinar 3 provided an opportunity to reflect on the practices presented in webinars 1 and 2. For the participants to consider and discuss “what good looks like for Jordan”. This was facilitated through the introduction and exploration of the current “Skills Value Chain” in Jordan. Mapping out the skills development landscape the inputs / processes / outputs. Considering the different agencies, frameworks and activities at each stage, their roles and responsibilities, potential alignment and synergies and areas that need to be further enhanced or developed to support effective implementation / development of the skills development system from basic skills to highly technical skills, across all sectors of education. The current “Skills Value Chain” for Jordan was presented as follows and each stage was presented, with an opportunity to discuss accordingly:

The role of the JNQF in terms of recognition of all qualifications and achievement is widely acknowledged as key to maintaining a minimum standard for each sector of education. Clearer understanding of the process and regulations that govern and shape programme development for alignment to the JNQF is required.

Table 3: Skills Value Chain in Jordan

Input & Enabling	Process & Delivery	Output & Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LMI • Employer engagement and requirements • Policy drivers • Common language • Sector Skills Councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of skills and knowledge • Development of the Human Capital • Employability • Graduate attributes • Assessment • Recognition of achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-ready graduates • JNQF • Boost to economy • Social Capital, Mobility and Cohesion

Insights

- “If you want employers to get engaged then you have to show them how this will affect their business positively and where are the benefits for them”
- “I think we must increase the number of participants in educational academic process, who are experts and specialists in the labour market. This can help to provide us (universities) with correct and important data to be our inputs.”
- “There is a lot of data out there so we can just put it to use.”
- “I would be interested to see how employers feel it is best for them to give that information to universities. That information is not only important for universities but also to AQACHEI.”
- “We also need to activate the current polices and guidelines that we have!”
- “Sharing best practices for learning and development with others”

Key findings

Input & Enabling

- It is necessary to join the dots and avoid duplication. This requires clear governance, roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder.
- Good reliable LMI is a crucial starting point for the 'foresighting' work. There is a lot of LMI in Jordan but it needs to be coordinated, verified as accurate and analysed in a coherent way. A single LMI 'umbrella' body would be useful. The AQACHEI platform maybe an option.
- Employer engagement is critical to the alignment of University course content and the needs of industry. How do we do this?
- Coordination and communication could be through a single Community of Practice portal. This would help avoid duplication and ensure a singular message/definition of each component.
- We need a common skills language for employers/students/universities. Also need to distinguish between skills, knowledge and behaviours especially in context of employability.

Process & Developing

- Incorporate Work-Based Learning opportunities in our higher education system. Ensure appropriate framework and structure (systems and processes) are in place to assess and assure the quality of provision and WBL.
- Communicate and operationalise the JNQF to underpin the standards and ensure recognition of all of relevant elements. This could include clarification of how the JNQF can be used.
- Need systems and process which combine the development of skills and knowledge (mainly at University) with the development of the Human Resource (mainly in industry).

Output & Learning

- Recent experiences suggest that Jordan is strong in diagnostics but not so strong in implementation. This should be factored in to any evaluative work and may necessitate the upskilling of key people in the evaluation phase.
- Governance and collaboration are key themes.
- Need for communication and coordination between phases of the Skills Value Chain when developing Key performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure consistency of purpose throughout the work. This links to the initial question of

'what problem are we trying to solve'. This phase asks 'to what extent have we solved the problem and what have we learned?'

What's next?

As a direct result and output of the webinar series, Enginuity are drafting a white paper for review by AQACHEI and MoHESR. This will include key recommendations for them to consider the higher education skills development strategy for Jordan. Building on the momentum and interest gathered as a result of the webinar series, it is recommended that various communities of practice be developed at the institution level, to support and inform the development of practice-based solutions that can pilot and share good practice in key areas of technical skills development. Likewise for the wider policy initiatives such as the Graduate Attribute Framework, Employer Engagement Framework, working groups incorporating representation from interested institutions and employers should be established to inform the drafting of those policies.

Key Themes

- Governance and partnerships (at policy and operational levels)
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- LMI (gathering, coordination, analysis, impact on policy/operations)
- Quality Assurance
- Common Language
- Meta Skills
- Employer Engagement
- Foresight (research)
- Holistic approach
- Skills Value Chain
- Skills eco-systems
- What does good look like for Jordan?
- JNQF as a strategic and operational tool
- Graduate Attribute Framework (GRAF)
- National Occupational Standards (NOS)
- Employability
- Assessment
- Communications strategy
- What does good look like for Jordan?

The activities undertaken in the three areas of the PREPARE programme discussed in this report have highlighted key themes to be reflected on and taken forward. As demonstrated in table 4 below, there are cross cutting themes that are encountered in not just the three areas of the PREPARE programme, directly impacted by the reported activities, but also aligned to the remaining two areas.

Three areas of PREPARE Programme where activities took place:

1. Learner Journey Mapping
2. Support to STEMM Early Careers Academics

3. Institutionalisation of Work Integrated Learning and Recognition of Skills Development

Remaining areas of PREPARE Programme that benefited from indirect impacts – including heightened awareness:

- National Graduate Attribute Framework
- Support to AQACHEI for the implementation of the National Qualification Framework

Key Theme	Learner Journey	Early Careers	Work Integrated Learning	National Graduate Attribute Framework Learning	Jordan National Qualification Framework
Governance and partnerships (at policy and operational levels)					
Clear roles and responsibilities					
LMI (gathering, coordination, analysis, impact on policy/operations)					
Quality Assurance					
Common Language					
Meta Skills					
Foresight (research)					
Holistic approach					
Employer Engagement					
Skills Value Chain					
Skills eco-systems					
JNQF as a strategic and operational tool					
Graduate Attribute Framework (NGAF)					
National Occupational Standards (NOS)					
Employability					
Assessment					
Communications strategy					
What does good look like for Jordan?					

Table 4: Cross cutting themes

It should be noted that where the key themes that are not noted under the specific area, this means there is no direct interaction. However, it should be acknowledged that all the programme areas will benefit from consideration of all the key themes.

Reviewing Table 4 demonstrates the cross over and alignment of the themes in all programme areas. Whilst the areas of Early Careers Academics and the National Graduate Attribute Framework have a specific focus they are both integral elements to enhancing employability outcomes of graduates.

What is notable is the awareness of key stakeholders of the different agencies in place, what is less clear are the specific roles and responsibilities of each and how they connect and interact with each other. This is also applicable to the processes and frameworks that have been put in place, such as the Quality Assurance process, the LMI, the NOS and the JNQF. A key question is how and if each of these elements communicate with each other and ensure alignment with labour market needs throughout the education development process and delivery?

The Early Careers Academics provides a great model of good practice that can inform the development of future activities in the PREPARE programme. The programme initially started as a training and capacity building activity, and it has evolved into an informal Community of Practice, where participants of the programme across institutions are sharing and cascading teaching and learning practices and ideas to enhance the delivery of teaching in STEMM related programmes.

The main take away from a review of the activities is the need to reflect and align the key themes of skills value chain, national graduate attribute framework, meta-skills, NOS etc, to current activities and developments in the policy and practice landscape of higher education in Jordan. It is essential to demonstrate and map the connection and importance of the skills development themes to higher education, and the Jordan National Qualification Framework. Connecting those dots and ensuring the common language reflects the level and type of skills development required to ensure the appropriate governing bodies are working effectively together to achieve that end. Once the mapping and alignment exercise has been completed, the national partners will then be able to identify their priority actions. The British Council, Jordan must then consider where best to lend their support, to maximise impact and ensure the achievement of the impacts of the PREPARE programme.

Whilst the COVID context initially presented limitations to the ways of working, it has now opened up opportunities to innovate, create and share ideas and expertise more widely and more effectively through online engagement. Considering the successful engagement and activities of the last three months, the future of the PREPARE programme in that context and its potential impact is an incredibly exciting prospect for all concerned.