



Brief to Host a Future Groningen Declaration Network Annual Meeting

Introduction

The Groningen Declaration Network seeks to promote the academic, professional and global mobility needs of citizens by bringing together key stakeholders in the Digital Learner Data Ecosystem through its activities, especially its Annual Meeting.

GDN Mission: Aiming to deliver on digital learner data portability. The GDN brings together key stakeholders through a declaration of intent. Signatories cooperate on a voluntary basis, seeking not standardization but rather convergence. The main goal includes developing best practices and globally accepted standards for secure, citizen-centred consultation and portability of digital learner data.

GDN Vision: Towards a trusted digital learner data ecosystem. In 2020, the Network constitutes a global, broad and interconnected ecosystem including large digital learner data depositories, educational institutions, government bodies, and other stakeholders. Participants in this ecosystem work together to guarantee trust by encouraging safe administration, processing, consultation, exchange, acceptance and recognition of digital learner data, in addition to appropriately verified paper-based records, using the best standards and technology available.

GDN Ethical Principles: learner centred at its core. Committed to learner privacy and data protection; transparency; responsible practices; interoperability; openness; learner and institutional freedom to choose delivery options; integrity; diversity; respect for the law; auditability; good fellowship; and access.

Strategic GDN Objectives: Focused on best practice. To share best practices in digitally secure systems and to coordinate policies on the purpose, feasibility and cost-efficiency of worldwide exchange of digital learner data; system compatibility; comparability and interoperability; digitized assessment practices; and adherence to national or federal privacy rights.

Objectives

The GDN has held an annual meeting since its inception in 2012. In person meetings have been held in Groningen (The Netherlands), Beijing (China), Washington (United States), Málaga (Spain), Cape Town (South Africa), Melbourne (Australia), Paris (France) and Puebla (Mexico). Due to COVID-19, the 2020 in person annual meeting (which was to be held in Delhi, India) had to be canceled and was provided later on in the year as a virtual conference. In 2021, the annual meeting was held as a hybrid event, blending a virtual conference with an in-person event in beautiful Ottawa, Canada.

The objectives of the Groningen Declaration Network (GDN) Annual Meeting are:



- To further the mission and vision of the GDN.
- To raise revenue to sustain the operations of the GDN.
- To provide a forum to share best practice, new ideas and networking opportunities.

Delegates/Attendees

The delegate or attendee base is composed of signatories to the Groningen Declaration including founder and patron entities, sponsors, and other stakeholders. It is a goal to grow delegate registrations year on year and specifically to increase registrations by a minimum of 10% each year. This may be achieved by spreading word about the network beyond educational institutions to the information technology sector, employer associations, evaluation and recognition agencies, quality assurance bodies, immigration authorities - in short to all who have a stake in the Digital Learner Data Ecosystem.

Theme

The GDN Board explores and decides on the theme of each annual meeting. Theme should be decided, and appropriate artwork and branding created by the end of August in the year prior to the host year. This allows for promotion at the current year Annual Meeting.

The location, dates and selected venue should be finalized in consultation with the Annual Meeting Organizing Committee.

Examples of logos and artwork from recent past years.



Location

The location should have

- Easy access in terms of delegates traveling from around the world

- Tourism appeal to assist in attracting delegates

Dates

Starting in 2021, the GDN Annual Meeting will be held around Mid October - early November each year. When setting dates, consider:

- Similar time
- Competing events happening worldwide
- Venue availability

Venue Requirements

A university or educational institution with good meeting/event facilities are preferred, however if this is not practical or possible, then a good quality residential hotel.

The venue should be secured, and contracts signed in time for announcement of the next year's annual meeting, at the close of the previous year annual meeting. If this is not possible, the meeting venue should be secured at least 8 months prior.

Venue space

- Plenary room for capacity up to 200-250 with staging, lighting and audio visual
- Smaller rooms for concurrent sessions – up to 4 sessions running concurrently
- Break out space for refreshment breaks
- Break out space for sponsor displays/exhibition – up to 15 sponsors or exhibitors
- Additional meeting rooms for Board meetings, sponsor breakfasts, and ancillary meetings with capacity up to 20.

Accommodation

Two accommodation options should be offered to delegates to suit budgets, one primary residential hotel 4 or 5 star and an alternate more cost-effective option. Delegates are responsible for their own reservations, preferably via an online portal.

- Contract negotiations should seek the best 'conference room rates' available, preferably with breakfast and free WiFi included.
- GDN would guarantee approximately 20 rooms per room night for Board Directors, Keynote speakers and staff.
- Accommodation blocks for delegate rooms should be reserved with attention to release conditions such as 90, 60 and 30 days to minimize GDN liability for unused rooms.

Catering requirements

Catering requirements include:

- Arrival tea and coffee
- Refreshment breaks (morning and afternoon tea) on all conference days
- Lunches on all conference days

Other events in the annual meeting agenda that require catering include:

- Opening Reception
- Special breakfasts
- Annual Dinner (preferably off site)
- Board Dinners

Marketing

- Marketing the GDN Annual Meeting is the responsibility of all stakeholders, however a coordinated approach is required. The Annual Meeting Organizing Committee will have ultimate responsibility for marketing the event.

Program Design

The GDN Annual Meeting program design will be the responsibility of the Annual Meeting Organizing Committee and the Board, however, innovative meeting design ideas are encouraged. In 2021, the annual meeting was a hybrid or blended event and Cvent cloud based conference management software was used to deliver virtual presentations and to live stream live presentations.

The typical GDN Annual Meeting is

Day 1 - Plenary sessions, panels, concurrent sessions and opening reception

Day 2 - Plenary sessions, panels, concurrent sessions and Annual Dinner

Day 3 - Plenary sessions, panels, concurrent sessions and closing session

Pre and /or post cultural tours are expected and are the responsibility of the host.

Concurrent sessions derive from submissions to a call for papers

Keynote speaker selection

Six (6) keynote speakers will be selected by the board according to research by the Executive Director and in collaboration with the host. In 2021 a number of panel discussions proved a popular way to bring together topic experts from around the globe with panelists being present at the venue and 'zooming' in.

Travel and accommodation costs are paid by GDN in lieu of fees or honoraria.

Call for Proposals

GDN will issue a 'Call for Proposals' according to the theme and current topics of interest. A program committee will review the submissions with the final approval to present by the Board.



The 'Call for Proposals' should be promoted at least 8 months in advance to allow time for the submission process, the review process, notification of success or otherwise and the final scheduling of the presentations into the meeting agenda.

Social Functions

Several social functions are held during the GDN Annual Meeting to facilitate networking and foster collaborative, personal and professional relationships.

Social functions ideally incorporate cultural experiences so that delegates enjoy the culture of the host city or country. Typically, venues seek to involve local organizations that may have an interest in contributing to the programming of the social event.

Sponsorship

The GDN has developed sponsorship packages which are regularly reviewed to attract sponsorship for the annual meeting. The GDN Annual Meeting Organizing Committee has a dedicated sponsorship coordinator who will work with the Board, the Executive Director and the local host organizer to secure sponsorship and ensure their expectations are exceeded.

Ancillary Services

Transportation services

Transportation for delegates to and from off-site venues, for example a dinner venue or any cultural experience should be contracted and managed by the local host.

Airport transfers for Board Directors and Keynote Speakers are appreciated and should be managed by the local host.

Audio Visual and Technical Services

Audio visual and technical services are an important part of the success of the annual meeting. A reputable specialist or specialist staff should be contracted and managed by the local host. Given the complexities of delivering hybrid or blended events, a highly experienced audio visual team will need to be contracted to ensure a seamless live and virtual delegate experience.

The local host and the organizing committee will work with the venue and AV suppliers to ensure staging and lighting are of a high standard.

Gifts and Giveaways (Optional)

The host may give gifts or giveaways to enhance delegate experience of the host city, venue or location. Costs are the responsibility of the host.

Insurances



GDN has public liability insurance however the host should also ensure they have an appropriate level of public liability insurance. Event insurance is increasingly difficult to secure and the Board will advise on appetites for risk according to the current and projected circumstances.

Medical Services

Hosts of the GDN should ensure that quality medical services are available should delegates require medical attention during the annual meeting. Covid safe practices should be adhered to at all times.

Signage

Signage and appropriate acknowledgement of sponsors are the responsibility of the local host. The organizing committee and sponsorship coordinator will work with the local host to provide logos as sponsors are confirmed.

Visas

Visa issuance is typically the responsibility of the consular (diplomatic) services of the country where an annual meeting is held. The local host will therefore be the primary point of contact for delegates who need assistance in their visa application, first and foremost by providing invitation letters and general information to support visa applications. Sample support letters are available from the Annual Meeting Organizing Committee.

Visitor Information

The local host should provide visitor information for inclusion on the Annual Meeting website and make any arrangements for support from tourist organizations in providing a valuable experience for delegates and their partners.

Professional Conference Management Services

The GDN has contracted [Higher Ed Services](#) (HES) to provide professional conference management services. HES has provided this service since 2019 and is contracted until 2024.

HES undertakes to

- Establish and maintain dedicated website or micro web pages for GDN Annual Meetings
- Ensure the various databases (GDN Participants and GDN Annual Meeting attendees) are consolidated and managed appropriately.
- Work with designers and incorporate conference logo designs into all digital communications.
- Create presentation templates as required using conference logo designs

Registration

- establish an online registration system to manage registrations and receipt of payments
- respond to registration enquiries and manage delegate information

- maintain accurate lists (databases) for efficient use in all aspects of conference management – attendee lists, social functions, dietary requirements etc.
- prepare and disseminate regular reports to the organizing committee as requested

Onsite

- prepare name badges or arrange for the preparation of name badges
- provide onsite annual meeting support and event coordination
- Work with the local host organisers and or venues to facilitate smooth operations
- Assist on the registration desk and answer queries as required

Payments

- Issue invoices where requested for registrations and sponsorships as required
- Reconcile all accounts and provide financial reports as requested

Speaker arrangements

- Create speaker lists in database with biographies, photos, contact details, presentation abstracts
- Work with identified speakers to collect their bios and photos, collate and make available for use in digital promotion and or program production.
- Collect and prepare speaker presentation files (PowerPoint) including the production of conference home slides for a smooth and consistent delivery of the program.

Conference Session submission proposals

- Set up a cloud-based proposal submission portal to receive presentation submissions by way of web form within HES website platform (or Google Docs as directed).
- Maintain the submission database ready for review by the program committee
- Distribute or arrange online access to speaker proposals for Conference Organizing Committee
- Liaise with the Conference Organizing Committee regarding submission open and closed dates etc.

Conference Sponsorship

- Issue sponsorship invoices and agreements as required

Financial arrangements

GDN will make deposit payments and payments to suppliers for services associated with the GDN Annual Meeting. These can be paid by GDN Corporate credit card or by electronic funds transfer.

Quotes should be requested as soon as possible for local suppliers for items such as:



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- Catering for delegate meals
- Transportation services
- Audio Visual services and staging requirements
- Entertainment
- Social functions
- Delegate merchandise (bags, name badges etc)
- Photographic services

Hosts should be prepared to cover the costs of their areas of responsibility which will be acknowledged as sponsorship.

Key Responsibilities at a Glance

Component	Responsibility	Timeline
Theme	GDN Board	31 August - for Oct-Nov next year
Location and venue	Host	31 August - for Oct-Nov next year
Dates	Host	31 August - for Oct-Nov next year
Artwork and Branding	Host	31 August - for Oct-Nov next year
Ancillary Services	Host	As appropriate
Visitor information & activities	Host	30 June of the year held
Call for Presentations	GDN Board and Host	31 May of the year held or before
Website	Higher Ed Services (HES)	31 May of the year held or before
Registration	Higher Ed Services (HES)	30 April of the year held or before



Typical Task List

The following presents typical tasks and preferred time frames.

		Months prior to Annual Meeting														
Key Tasks	Responsibility	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Administrative																
Formation of AM organizing committee	Exec Board															
Set dates for annual meeting	Local Organizing Committee & Host															
Location and Venue																
Start liaison with local organizing contact	Exec and HES															
Confirm venue information	Local Organizing Committee															
Confirm travel and accommodation options for delegates	Local Organizing Committee															
Program																
Decide theme of Annual Meeting	GDN Executive															
Develop Call for Papers text	GDN Executive															
Keynote speaker invitations	GDN Executive															
Open Paper Submissions	HES															
Close paper submissions	HES															
Review submissions	GDN Executive															



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