

Opportunities for U.S. Universities in Iraqi Higher Education

Iraq is emerging from a post-conflict environment after decades of isolation from the international academic and research community. Along with these challenges come tremendous opportunities for U.S. universities to play a key role in the modernization of Iraqi higher education.

Scholarships:

The Government of Iraq in Baghdad is sending university faculty, staff, and top students abroad for master's and doctorate degrees to improve its higher education system. U.S. universities are their first choice because of our high academic standards and seriousness of purpose. The Government of Iraq funds two national programs that award thousands of scholarships each year, mostly in STEM and English Language, but other fields as well. *Scholarships: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research; Higher Committee for Education Development (HCED)*. Similarly, the Kurdistan Regional Government in Erbil, which administers an autonomous region in northern Iraq, funds a regional scholarship to send university faculty, top students, and ministry staff abroad for master's and doctorate degrees in all fields of study. *Scholarship: Human Capacity Development Program (HCDP)*. Most Iraqi students request "Conditional Admission" because they do not have adequate TOEFL test scores to be directly admitted to the academic program. All scholarships fund intensive English language studies at U.S. universities. Please see the fact sheets attached for more information.

Partnerships:

Iraqi universities are eager to engage with U.S. universities and develop active partnerships. However, most Iraqi university leaders are not experienced in developing mutually beneficial, long-term relationships with U.S. universities, so creating new initiatives requires patience and creativity.

Outreach:

The most effective way to recruit Iraqi scholarship students is through face-to-face contact. Thirty (30) U.S. universities and more than 2000 scholarship students participated in the **Iraq University Fair in Baghdad** held September 28-30, 2013 in Baghdad.

Watch for the next university in Iraq, to be held in Erbil, April 10-12 2014. Contact Lorna for more information and get added to the contact list.

Complete our online survey and help us understand your admission requirements. Our EducationUSA Advisors in Iraq use this information to advise Iraqi scholarship students on suitable programs that can offer Conditional Admission. <http://www.surveymonkey.com/EducationUSAIraq>

U.S. Government Support:

The U.S. Department of State has hired an education specialist with experience in Iraq to increase the number of Iraqi students studying at U.S. universities. She assists U.S. universities interested in recruiting Iraqi scholarship students, facilitates relationships between Iraqi and U.S. institutions, and works to increase the institutional capacity of the scholarship programs. If your institution would like to learn more about these opportunities, please contact:

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Government of Iraq - Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (GOI MoHESR)

Overview:

The Government of Iraq's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (GOI MoHESR) funds both long-term and short-term education and training programs.

Long-term, Degree-granting Programs:

- *Iraqi Scholarships Scheme/Future Capacity Building Program.* Announced in 2011, this program awards scholarships for master's and doctorate degree programs at universities abroad. Scholarships are awarded to students in all fields of study, with a focus on STEM, agriculture, public health/medical sciences, and English. Recipients are eligible for up to 12 months of intensive English language instruction at the U.S. university (total cost of \$14,000), plus 2 years for a master's degree (with the possibility of a 6 month extension) and 4 years for a doctorate degree (with the possibility of a 1 year extension). Funding includes tuition and fees, books, health insurance, a monthly stipend for student and accompanying family members, and travel to the United States. Program administrators prefer that students receive J1 visas. Most students apply for Conditional Admission; students take the GRE test while studying ESL at the U.S. university. Students are responsible for applying to and acceptance at a U.S. university. Students pay the application fee, U.S. visa application fee, and SEVIS fee themselves.
- *Study Leave.* Staff members of the GOI MoHESR and other ministries receive scholarships to earn master's and doctorate degrees. Recipients receive the same benefits as the *Iraqi Scholarships Scheme/Future Capacity Building Program*.
- *International Fellowship Programs.* International universities, governments, and other organizations provide grants to the GOI MoHESR for full or joint scholarships through cultural exchange and bilateral agreements.

Short-term, Research-focused Programs:

- *Faculty Sabbaticals/Post-Doc Research.* Iraqi university faculty with doctorate degrees (usually earned in Iraq) is eligible for funding to do short-term research at universities abroad for up to one year. Participants are expected to publish research and share their knowledge with their colleagues upon their return to Iraq. Iraqi faculty must find a U.S. university willing to host their research and an American supervisor. Funding is provided for travel, living expenses in the United States, health insurance, and bench fees/research fees required by the U.S. university.
- *Short-term Student Research Scholarships.* Students currently enrolled in a graduate program at an Iraqi university are eligible to go abroad to do short-term research if the resources and facilities are not available in Iraq. Master's students are allowed 1-4 months abroad for research; doctorate students are allowed 6-12 months. The Iraqi faculty member supervising the research is also eligible to spend one month at the U.S. university to confer with the U.S. faculty supervisor. Iraqi students must find a U.S. university willing to host them and an American supervisor. Funding is provided for travel, living expenses, health insurance, and bench fees/research fees required by the U.S. university for both the student and the Iraqi supervisor.
- *Faculty Training Program.* Iraqi university faculty is eligible for funding to participate in 1-2 months of training at a U.S. university to observe American colleagues in the same field of study. Funding covers travel, living expenses, health insurance, and bench fees/research fees required by the U.S. university.

Student Eligibility and Selection:

- GOI MoHESR uses a competitive selection process for all scholarship awards that includes the formal application, transcript review, research and academic experience, etc.
- *Iraqi Scholarships Scheme* – applicants must have a minimum score of 70%; the maximum age for master's applicants is 40 years; 45 years for doctorate applicants.
- *Study Leave* – applicants must have a minimum score of 65%; same age limits as above.

Other Program Details:

- All students sign a contract that obligates them to pay back the money spent on the scholarship package if the student does not complete the program or does not return to Iraq. All participants are required to return to their previous university or ministry for double the amount of the study period abroad.
- Students receive funding through the Iraqi Cultural Office in Washington, DC; the Cultural Office pays tuition and fees to the U.S. university directly. Students receive a scholarship letter from the GOI MoHESR or their local Iraqi university to submit to U.S. universities as part of the application.

Other Government of Iraq Programs:

In addition to these programs through the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Government of Iraq also provides funding for thousands of government employees in all fields of study to earn advanced degrees abroad. Employees must first secure admission to an overseas university (including Conditional Admission) and then provide the documentation to their government offices/ministries for approval and funding.

For more information about the GOI MoHESR programs and how your university can recruit Iraqi scholarship students, please contact:

Government of Iraq in Baghdad, Iraq:

Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research
Department of Scholarships and Cultural Relations
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Embassy of the Republic of Iraq

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EducationUSA in Iraq

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U.S. universities that are interested in recruiting Iraqi scholarship students are invited to complete the EducationUSA online survey. We use this information to understand your admission requirements. Our EducationUSA Advisors in Iraq share this information with Iraqi scholarship students and advise them on programs that would be suitable for them. <http://www.surveymonkey.com/EducationUSAIraq>

The Iraqi Cultural Office operates a database to match Iraqi scholarship holders with U.S. universities. If you are interested in these programs, please contact the Iraqi Cultural Office and the Education Specialist for Iraq at the U.S. Department of State.



Higher Committee for Education Development in Iraq (HCED)

Scholarship Overview:

- The HCED Scholarship program started in 2009/2010 with funding from the Government of Iraq through the Prime Minister's Office.
- HCED has secured more than 2,072 admissions for master's and doctorate students. There are currently 926 students in the United States, 517 in the UK, 118 in Australia, and small numbers in Netherlands and France. The first group of 155 students graduated between 2011 and 2013. Another 199 students are expected to graduate in 2014. HCED awarded more than 1000 scholarships in 2012/2013 and is in the process of securing admissions for them. Another 2000 new scholarships are scheduled to be awarded in 2014.
- All students sign a contract obligating them to serve in the Government of Iraq or pay back the money spent on the scholarship package if the student does not return to Iraq. Also, HCED must find a suitable job for the student in Iraq within one year of completing the degree. Otherwise, the student will be free of his obligation to the Government of Iraq.

Student Eligibility and Selection:

- Students should rank within the top 25% among the class to be eligible for the scholarship. Applicants should not exceed 30 years of age for Master's degree programs and 35 years for PhD degree programs. Full eligibility rules can be found at:
http://hcediraq.org/HCED_english_website/eligibility.html
- HCED uses a transparent selection process. Students are chosen based on the application, transcript grades, and interview. Students compete for the scholarship with other students of the same province, ensuring equitable representation from all areas of Iraq.
http://www.hcediraq.org/HCED_english_website/selectmach.html

Scholarship Benefits:

- Students receive full scholarship funding for up to one year of intensive English language study, plus two years for a master's program and five years for a doctorate program including tuition, books, travel, and any other related fees. A single student will receive a monthly stipend of \$2,200; married students receive monthly stipends as follows: No children - \$3,100; 1 child - \$3,400; 2 children - \$3,700. Health insurance is provided for the student and spouse. The student and accompanying family members must receive J1 or J2 visas.
- HCED will try to find an appropriate program for students in a partner university using a full-time placement team in Baghdad. HCED does all the admission work to help the students get accepted.
- Most students apply for Conditional Admission due to a need to improve their English language skills; students take the GRE or GMAT test while studying ESL at the U.S. university.
- U.S. universities submit monthly invoices to the HCED Billing Department for tuition and any other related fees. HCED makes payments directly through their bank.
- HCED keeps track of scholarship students while they are studying abroad through professional staff dedicated to monitoring students' progress.

HCED currently works with a network of U.S. universities that provide Conditional Admission to students. As the number of scholarship students increases each year, HCED would like to expand the number of U.S. universities that can provide Conditional Admission to their students.

For more information about the HCED scholarship program and how your university can recruit Iraqi scholarship students, please contact:

**The Higher Committee for Education
Development**

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We also recommend that you contact or schedule a visit with the Education Specialist for Iraq at the U.S. Department of State. This is a good opportunity to discuss the scholarship program and identify new opportunities for partnership in Iraq.



Human Capacity Development Program (HCDP)

Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Erbil, Iraq

Scholarship Overview:

- The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Human Capacity Development (scholarship) Program (HCDP) started in 2010 with annual funding. The program is administered by the KRG Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (KRG MHE) in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR). Annual funding of \$100 million has been budgeted since 2010.
- The KRG has awarded about 4,500 scholarships since 2010 for master's and doctorate degrees in all fields of study. The MHE awards scholarships primarily to university faculty and students, with a small number for private sector applicants and ministry staff. The Ministry of Planning (MOP) awards scholarships to government employees from other ministries. Students can study at approved universities in 28 countries.
- All students sign a contract that obligates them to pay back the money spent on the scholarship package if the student does not complete the program, return to Iraq, or secure the degree agreed upon.

Student Eligibility and Selection:

- To be eligible for the scholarship, students must obtain a minimum grade in their previous degree studies of 65% for a master's degree and 70% for a PhD degree; this score represents strong academic skills in the Iraqi system. Master's applicants must not be more than 35 years old; doctorate applicants must not be more than 40. Full eligibility rules can be found at: <http://www.mhe-krq.org>
- KRG MHE uses a competitive selection process. Students are chosen based on the application and transcript grades. Students compete for the scholarship with other students from the IKR.
- Students must have an IELTS score of 5.0 (roughly 59-60 on the TOEFL iBT or 500 on the TOEFL PBT) or higher to be eligible to continue their English language or academic instruction abroad.

Scholarship Benefits:

- Students receive a full scholarship for up six months of intensive English language study in Iraq, in addition to six months at a U.S. university. They also receive two years of funding for a master's degree and three to five years for a doctorate program including tuition fees, health insurance, and travel expenses to the United States. Students receive a monthly stipend of \$1,800 plus additional funding for their dependents. The program administrators prefer that their students receive J1 visas, but the program does allow students to study on F1 visas.
- Most students apply for Conditional Admission; students take the GRE test while studying ESL at the U.S. university.
- Students are responsible for applying to and acceptance at a U.S. university. Students pay the application, U.S. visa application, and SEVIS fees themselves. Students receive a scholarship letter from the KRG Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research or the Ministry of Planning to submit to U.S. universities as part of their applications.

- Students receive funding directly from the KRG MHE; students will continue to pay all tuition and fees directly to the U.S. university, until the electronic bank transfer system is finalized.

KRG Universities and MHE are also interested in partnerships with U.S. universities in:

- PhD Research Fellowships
- Split-site PhD studies
- Joint Research programs
- Professional English language training
- English language courses

For more information about the HCDP scholarship program and how your university can recruit Iraqi scholarship students, please contact:

HCDP in Erbil, Iraq:

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 Research

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If you are interested in the HCDP program, we recommend that you schedule a visit with the KRG Representation Office and the Education Specialist for Iraq at the U.S. Department of State when you come to Washington, DC. This is a good opportunity to discuss the scholarship program and identify new opportunities for partnership.