

University plans for Iraqi students

(UKPA) – 11 hours ago

Details have emerged of Iraqi plans to send thousands of students to overseas universities, including 21 in Britain, as part of a new scholarship programme.

Speaking at the Academy for Educational Development in Washington, Prime Minister Nouri Maliki said the country's education system had suffered after years of war and dictatorship.

"Today with the stability and the security back in Iraq, we are moving forward," he said.

The Iraqi government will fund the scholarship programme, covering tuition, fees, room and board. It will see up to 10,000 Iraqi students a year for five years sent to colleges in the US, Britain, Canada and Australia.

Students will be encouraged to go into engineering, education and business, and are expected to return to Iraq after graduating.

Iraq is working with 21 institutions in Britain, including the University of Cambridge, Newcastle University, University of Leeds, and the University of Nottingham.

Iraqi leaders hope to have about 500 students in US and British universities by mid-autumn.

About 54 million US dollars (£32 million) has been set aside to cover the first year of the programme with the cost for each student estimated at 50,000 US dollars (£30,000) annually.

A report published last month - commissioned by the UK higher Education International Unit, the British Universities Iraq Consortium (BUIC) and the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (DBIS) - looked at the possibility for greater academic collaboration between the UK and Iraq.

At the launch of the report Education Minister David Lammy announced £300,000 in funding for a leadership and management training programme for Iraq universities.