Education system

Iraq

described and compared with the Dutch system
This document contains information on the education system of Iraq. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the most common qualifications from Iraq for the purpose of admission to Dutch higher education.

Disclaimer
We assemble the information for these descriptions of education systems with the greatest care. However, we cannot be held responsible for the consequences of errors or incomplete information in this document.

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Education system Iraq

Primary Certificate/Primary Baccalaureate
(Primary education)

Duration of education

Intermediate Baccalaureate
(Intermediate Secondary School)

Technical Diploma
(Technical Institutes)

Secondary School Certificate/Vocational Baccalaureate
(Preparatory Technical Schools)

Bachelor
(University)

Master
(University)

Higher Diploma
(University)

Bachelor
(Technical Institutes)

Technical Diploma
(Technical Institutes)

Secondary School Certificate
(Senior secondary school)

Intermediate Baccalaureate
(Intermediate Secondary School)

Secondary School Certificate
(Senior secondary school)

Bachelor
(University)

Master
(University)

Higher Diploma
(University)

PhD
(University)
### Evaluation chart

The left-hand column in the table below lists the most common foreign qualifications applicable to admission to higher education. The other columns show the Dutch equivalent along with the comparable levels in the Dutch and European qualifications frameworks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree or qualification</th>
<th>Dutch equivalent and NLQF level</th>
<th>EQF level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Baccalaureate - وﺛﯾﻘﺔ ﻣدرﺳﯾﺔ / اﻟﻣرﺣﻠﺔ اﻟﻣﺗوﺳطﺔ (wathîqa madrasiyya / al-marhalla al-mutawassia)</td>
<td>approximately 2 years of HAVO</td>
<td>2-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School Certificate (Vocational Baccalaureate) - وﺛﯾﻘﺔ ﻣدرﺳﯾﺔ اﻹﻋدادﯾﺔ ﻣﮭﻧﯾﺔ (wathîqa madrasiyya / al-i’dâdiyya al-mihaniyya)</td>
<td>MBO diploma (qualification level 2 or 3)</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School Certificate - وﺛﯾﻘﺔ ﻣدرﺳﯾﺔ / اﻟﻣرﺣﻠﺔ اﻹﻋدادﯾﺔ (wathîqa madrasiyya / al-marhalla al-i’dâdiyya)</td>
<td>HAVO diploma</td>
<td>4-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Diploma - دﺑﻠوم ﻓﻧﻲ (diblûm fannî)</td>
<td>Associate degree or 2 years of HBO</td>
<td>5-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree - البكالوريوس (البﻛﺎﻟورﯾوس) (al-bakâlûriyyûs) (Technical Institute)</td>
<td>HBO bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>6-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree - البكالوريوس (البﻛﺎﻟورﯾوس) (4 years)</td>
<td>HBO bachelor’s degree or 2 years of WO</td>
<td>6-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree - البكالوريوس (البﻛﺎﻟورﯾوس) (5 years) in dentistry, pharmacology and veterinary medicine</td>
<td>WO bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>6-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree - البكالوريوس (البﻛﺎﻟورﯾوس) (6 years) in medicine</td>
<td>4 years of WO</td>
<td>6-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree - البكالوريوس (al-bakâlûriyyûs) (5 years) in dentistry, pharmacology and veterinary medicine</td>
<td>WO bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>6-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree - البكالوريوس (al-bakâlûriyyûs) (6 years) in medicine</td>
<td>4 years of WO</td>
<td>6-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree - البكالوريوس (البﻛﺎﻟورﯾوس) (al-mâjizîr)</td>
<td>1-year WO master’s degree</td>
<td>7-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Diploma - دﺑﻠوم عاﻟﯾ - (diblûm ‘âlí)</td>
<td>1-year WO master’s degree</td>
<td>7-7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NB**
- The information provided in the table is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
- NLQF = Dutch Qualifications Framework. EQF = European Qualifications Framework.
• The EQF/NLQF level is not so much a reflection of study load or content; rather, it is an indication of a person's knowledge and skills after having completed a certain programme of study.

• Information about Dutch equivalent qualifications can be found on our website: the Dutch education system.

• The Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB), evaluates statements on foreign qualifications and training at VMBO and MBO level. The evaluation may vary if SBB evaluates the diploma for admission to VET schools or the labour market in the Netherlands.
Introduction

Iraq has 18 provinces and is bordered by Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran and Turkey.

As is the case for all social sectors, the government plays a major role in education. The Ministry of Education is responsible for pre-school, primary and secondary education; higher education falls under the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. A large number of other ministries is also responsible for specialised education institutes.

The language of instruction in higher education is Arabic, except for the faculty of medicine and the engineering faculties where the language of instruction often is English. Final theses and doctoral theses are written in Arabic, with an abstract in English.

Although the academic year runs from September until June, some specialist higher education institutions run from October until September. The school/study week runs from Saturday until Thursday morning. University examinations are conducted in June, with supplementary exams in September.

Primary and secondary education

After having earned their Primary Certificate (شهادة الإبتدائية / shahâdat al-ibtidâ’iyya), sometimes also called the Primary Baccalaureate) at the end of 6 years of primary education (الابتدائية / al-ibtidâ’iyya), 12 to 15-year-old children attend nominal 3-year intermediate education (المتوسطة / al-mutawassîra), which culminates in a national standardised examination for the Intermediate Baccalaureate (وثيقة مدرسيّة / المرحلة المتوسطة / wathîqa madrasiyya / al-marhalla al-mutawassîra).

In terms of level, the Intermediate Baccalaureate (وثيقة مدرسيّة / المرحلة المتوسطة / wathîqa madrasiyya / al-marhalla al-mutawassîra) is comparable to approximately 2 years of HAVO.

After the intermediate phase, pupils can move on to further general secondary education (الإعدادية / al-i’ddiyya) or to vocational education in a range of sectors. The best pupils from the intermediate phase continue on to general secondary education (الإعدادية / al-i’ddiyya), which takes 3 years and culminates in the Secondary School Certificate (وثيقة مدرسيّة / المرحلة الإعدادية / wathîqa madrasiyya / al-marhalla al-i’ddiyya) (before 2006 this certificate was known as Preparatory Baccalaureate).
After the first year, pupils choose either the literary stream (اﻷدبي / al-‘adabî) or the exact sciences stream (العلمي al-‘ilmî), which is the most prestigious. Pupils who choose the literary stream take final examinations in the subjects Arabic, English, mathematics, history, geography and economics. In the exact sciences track, the final examination consists of Arabic, English, mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology. The Kurdish region awards its own certificate, the Baccalaureate Certificate. This certificate is in level equivalent to the Secondary School Certificate.

In terms of level, the Secondary School Certificate (وثيقة مدرسة/ المرحلة الإعدادية / wathîqa madrasîyya / al-marhalla al-i’dâdiyya) is comparable to a HAVO diploma.

Pupils whose results are not high enough for admission to the preparatory phase can continue to 3-year secondary vocational programmes in technology (صناعة / sinâ’a), commerce (تجارة / tijâra) or agriculture (زراعة / i’dâdiyya mihanîyya). After passing a central examination set by the Ministry of Education, graduates of these programmes are awarded the Secondary School Certificate/Vocational Baccalaureate. The main purpose of these programmes is to prepare pupils for entry into the labour market, and the curriculum is made up of 40-45% theory and 55-60% practical subjects.

In terms of level, the Secondary School Certificate/Vocational Baccalaureate (وثيقة مدرسة/ المرحلة الإعدادية المهنية / wathîqa madrasîyya / al-i’dâdiyya al-mihanîyya) is comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 2 or 3, depending on the specialisation.

The top 10% of all examination candidates are eligible to continue on to related higher education studies.

Iraq also has Vocational Secondary (Technical) Institutes, which provide programmes in specialisations such as nursing, obstetrics, social work, the fine arts and for jobs in the police and air forces. The level of these Certificates is the same as that of the Secondary School Certificate (technical/vocational direction), and therefore also may allow admission to higher education.

Admission to higher education

Admission to higher education in Iraq is granted to students with a Secondary School Certificate or the Certificate from one of the Vocational Secondary (Technical) Institutes.
Students with marks clearly exceeding the pass mark of 50% may be admitted to university programmes. The top 10% of all Preparatory Technical School (الإعدادية الصناعة / الزراعة / التجارة / الصناعة /الإعدادية) graduates may also continue on to related higher education studies. No entrance examination is required for admission to higher education, yet admission to the Faculties of Medicine, Architecture, Engineering and Science does require high scores in the Secondary School Certificate examination. These scores are determined annually by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

Higher education

Iraq has two kinds of higher education institutions: technical institutes and universities.

The technical institutes provide higher professional education in two variants; 2-year programmes that lead to a Technical Diploma and 4-year programmes leading to a bachelor’s degree. Universities provide bachelor’s, master’s and Ph.D. programmes, leading respectively to bachelor’s, master’s and Ph.D. degrees.

Iraq has state universities and private universities. Private universities exist since the 1980s; most of these have been accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The curricula of these programmes are highly centralised.

University education

Students who obtain their Secondary School Certificate with marks clearly exceeding the pass mark of 50% may be admitted to an initial university programme. For language and literature studies, graduates are awarded a Bachelor of Arts (بكالوريوس آداب / bakâlôriyûs âdâb). For exact sciences, agricultural and technical specialisations, graduates receive a Bachelor of Science (بكالوريوس علوم / bakâlôriyûs ‘ulûm). Most programmes have a nominal duration of 4 years. Programmes in dentistry, pharmacology and veterinary medicine have a nominal duration of 5 years; medicine takes 6 years. Architecture programmes have a nominal duration of 5 years (before 174 these programmes used to have nominal duration of 6 years with the first year consisting almost exclusively of general education subjects). A bachelor’s degree is representative of a completed qualification that allows graduates to enter the labour market or to continue on to further study.

Lectures and practical classes take up 32 hours per week on average. Students complete a maximum of 8 subjects per year, which are worth 35 credits per year on average.
In terms of level, the bachelor's degree (البكالوريوس / al-bakâlûriyyûs) following a nominal 4-year programme is comparable to 2 years of university education (WO) in a similar specialisation or to an HBO bachelor's degree, depending on the type of study (practical or research-based).

In terms of level, the bachelor's degree (البكالوريوس / al-bakâlûriyyûs) following a nominal 5-year programme in dentistry, pharmacology and veterinary medicine is the Netherlands comparable to a WO bachelor's degree in a similar specialisation.

In terms of level, the bachelor's degree (البكالوريوس / al-bakâlûriyyûs) following a nominal 6-year programme in medicine is comparable to 4 years of university education (WO) in a similar specialisation.

After completing their bachelor's programme, the best students can continue onto one of the master's programmes (ماجستير / mâjistîr), which have a nominal duration of 2 years. The admission requirement for a master's programme is an average final mark of 65% for the bachelor's programme (75-80% for medicine and technical subjects).

To complete a master's programme, 30-36 credits are required, 18-24 of which come from coursework and research, and 6-12 credits from the final paper. Final papers must be defended publicly before a defense committee. The names of master's degrees follow the same pattern as for the bachelor's degrees: arts (آداب / ādâb) and science (علوم / ‘ulûm). For master's programmes, 60% or higher for each subject is considered satisfactory, and a minimum average of 70% is required across all subjects.

In terms of level, the master's degree (ماجستير / al-mâjistîr) is comparable to a 1-year WO master’s degree in a similar specialisation.

Another postgraduate university programme is the 2-year Higher Diploma (دبلوم عالي / diblûm ‘âlî). course. The entrance requirement for this programme is a pass mark (50-59%) for the bachelor's degree in the same discipline. The first year is made up of coursework, and students write a thesis in the second year.
The Higher Diploma usually does not give access to Ph.D. studies, graduates may continue onto a master’s programme.

In terms of level, the Higher Diploma (دبلوم عالي / diblûm ‘âlî) is comparable to a 1-year WO master’s degree in a similar specialisation.

After completing a master’s degree, students can continue at PhD level. Admission to PhD studies is very selective and the study requires a further 3 years (at least 60 credits). The programme consists of 1 year of coursework (at least 20 credits) and 2 years (at least 40 credits) of research and the writing of a doctoral thesis. The doctoral thesis must be based on original research that is ready for publication. For a PhD, 60% or higher for each subject is considered satisfactory, and a minimum average of 70% is required across all subjects.

Higher professional education

There is a total of over 20 Technical Institutes, all called ‘Technical Institute’, followed by the name of the place where the institute is located. These institutes fall under the Foundation of Technical Institutes, an umbrella organisation that is governed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

These non-university technical institutes (معلهد فني / ma’had fannî) provide 2-year programmes in higher professional education, of which upon completion the Technical Diploma (دبلوم فني / diblûm fannî) is awarded. Nationwide, the top 10% of students are eligible to continue on to related university bachelor’s programmes, where they are granted a number of exemptions from the curriculum.

In terms of level, the Technical Diploma (دبلوم فني / diblûm fannî) is comparable to an Associate Degree or 2 years of higher professional education (HBO) in a similar specialisation.

Technical institutes also offer 4-years bachelor’s programmes. The entrance requirement is a Secondary School Certificate or Vocational Baccalaureate. The study programme involves 34-40 hours of study per week, divided roughly into 30% theory and 70% practical work.

In terms of level, the bachelor’s degree (البكلوريوس / al-bakâlûriyyûs) obtained at a technical institute is comparable to an HBO bachelor’s degree in a similar specialisation.
Assessment systems

The following grading scales are used:

- Primary education, first 4 years: 0 – 10 (5% or higher is satisfactory)
- Primary education, 5th and 6th years: 0 – 100 (50% or higher is satisfactory)
- Secondary education: 0 – 100 (see above)
- Higher education: 0 – 100 (see above), however, the exact sciences are graded much more harshly (never higher than 84%, and only 5% of students score an average above 79%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>ﻓﺎﺋﻖ / ﻣﻣﺗﺎز (fa’iq / mumtâz)</td>
<td>excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>ﺟﯾﺪ حداً (jayyid jiddan)</td>
<td>very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>ﺟﯾﺪ (jayyid)</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>ﻣﺗوﺳﻂ (mutawasitta)</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>ﻣﻘﺑﻮل (maqbûl)</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>ﺗﺎﺳﺐ (râsib)</td>
<td>fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quality assurance and accreditation

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the accreditation of primary and secondary education institutions; higher education falls under the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, as does the Foundation of Technical Institutes.

A list of recognised Iraqi universities is available in the paragraph [List of higher education institutions](#) and on the website of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. A list of recognised technical institutes is available on the website of the Foundation of Technical Institutes.

There is no recognition on programme level in Iraq.
Composition and authenticity of file

A student’s file will ideally consist of proof of graduation in Arabic and/or a transcript (list of subjects/marks). In some cases, however, only the English versions are available. Certificates for general secondary education are usually issued in English.

Checking the authenticity of Iraqi certificates still is a matter requiring much attention. The possibilities of enquiring about documents or education institutions are increasing. For example, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research is setting up an online list of academic graduates since 1990. Moreover, it is sometimes possible for graduates to request supplementary or replacement documents in Iraq. If in doubt, please contact Nuffic.

List of higher education institutions

Recognised university institutions (up-to-date 2014):

State institutions
- University of Al Anbar / جامعة الانبار (Jâmi‘at al-Anbar)
- University of Mustansiriya / الجامعة المستنصرية (al-jâmi‘a al-Mustansiriyya)
- Al Qadisiya University / جامعة القادسية (Jâmi‘at al-Qâdisiyya)
- University of Babylon / جامعة بابل (Jâmi‘at Bâbil)
- University of Baghdad / جامعة بغداد (until 1969 Al-Hikma University; subsequently changed to University of Baghdad) (Jâmi‘at Bagdâd).
- University of Basra / جامعة البصرة (Jâmi‘at al-Basra)
- Diyala University / جامعة ديالى (Jâmi‘at Diyâlây)
- Thi Qar University / جامعة ذي قار (Jâmi‘at Thi Qâr)
- University of Duhok / جامعة دهوك (Jâmi‘at Duhûk)
- Iraqi University / الجامعة العراقية (formally Islamic University / الجامعة الإسلامية and before that the Saddam)
- University for Islamic Sciences) (al-jâmi‘a al-‘Irâqiyya)
- University of Karbala / جامعة كربلاء (Jâmi‘at Karbalâ‘)
- University of Kirkuk / جامعة كركوك (Jâmi‘at al-Kûkûk)
- University of Kufa / جامعة الكوفة (Jâmi‘at Kûfa)
- University of Kuya / جامعة كوية (Jâmi‘at Kûya)
- University of Mosul / جامعة الموصل (Jâmi‘at al-mawsûl)
- Nahrain University / جامعة النهرين (formerly Saddam University for Engineering and Sciences of Baghdad) (Jâmi‘at al-Nahrayn)
- University of Salihaddin / جامعة صلاح الدين (Jâmi‘at Salâh al-Dîn)
- University of Sulaimani / جامعة السليمانية (closed between 1981 and 1992) (Jâmi‘at al-Slimânîyya)
University of Technology / (UOT) (since 1960 an auxiliary branch of the University of Baghdad; since 1968 a College of Engineering) (Jâmi‘at al-Teknûlûjiyya)

University of Tikrit / (Jâmi‘at Tikrît)

University of Waasit / (Jâmi‘at al-Wâsit)

University of Misan / (Jâmi‘at Misân)

Al-Muthanna University / (Jâmi‘at al-Muthannâ)

Hawler Medical University / (Jâmi‘at Hawlîr al-tibbiya)

University of Kurdistan / Hawler / (Jâmi‘at Hawlîr Kurdistân)

Private institutions

Ahl al-Bayt University / (Jâmi‘at ‘Ahl al-Bayt)

Al-Hadba’a University College / (Kulliyat al-Hadbâ’a al-Jâmi’a)

Al-Mamoun University College / (Kulliyat al-Ma’mûn al-Jâmi’a)

Al-Mansour University College / (Kulliyat al-Mansûr al-Jâmi’a)

Al-Turath University College / (Kulliyat al-Thurât al-Jâmi’a)

Baghdad College of Pharmacy / (Kulliyat Bagdâd lil-Saydalla)

Baghdad University College for Economic Sciences / (Kulliyat Bagdâd il-‘ulûm al-iqtisâdiyya al-Jâmi’a)

Al-Maaref University College / (Kulliyat al-Ma’ârif al-Jâmi’a)

Islamic University College / (al-Kulliya al-‘Islâmiyya al-Jâmi’a)

Knowledge City University College / (Kulliyat madînat al-‘ilm al-Jâmi’a)

Rafidain University College / (Kulliyat ar-Râfidayn al-Jâmi’a)

Shatt al-Arab College / (Kulliyat sat al-‘Arab al-Jâmi’a)

Sheikh Muhammad Kasnazan University College / (Kulliyat al-Saykh Muhammad Kasnazan al-Jâmi’a)

Tigris University College / (Kulliyat Dijla al-Jâmi’a)

University College of Humanities / (Kulliyat al-Dirasât al-Insâniyya al-Jâmi’a)

Yarmouk University College / (Kulliyat al-Yamûk al-Jâmi’a)

Al-Rashid University College / (Kulliyat al-Ra’sîd al-Jâmi’a)

Al-Sheikh Al-Tusi University College / (Kulliyat al-Saykh al-Tûsi al-Jâmi’a)

Al-Imam Ja‘far Al-sâdiq University / (Jâmi‘at al-‘îmâm Ja‘far al-Sâdiq)

Al-Iraq University College / (Kulliyat al-‘Irâq al-Jâmi’a)

Sadr Al-Iraq University College / (Kulliyat Sadr al-‘Irâq al-Jâmi’a)

Al-Qalam University College / (Kulliyat al-Qalam al-Jâmi’a)

Al-Hussain Engineering College / (Kulliyat al-Hussein al-Handasiyya)
• Dijila University College / كلية دجلة الجامعة الأهلية (Kulliyat Dijila al-Jâmi’a al-Ahliyya)
• Al-Mustaqbal University College / كلية المستقبل الجامعة (Kulliyat al-Mustaqbal al-Jâmi’a)
• Al-Hikma University College / كلية الحكمة الجامعة (Kulliyat al-Hikma al-Jâmi’a)
• Al-Imam University College / كلية الإمام الجامعة (Kulliyat al’Imâm al-Jâmi’a)
• Al-Hilla University College / كلية الحلّة الجامعة (Kulliyat al-Hilla al-Jâmi’a)

Useful links

• Website of the Ministry of Education, responsible for pre-school, primary and secondary education (in Arabic).
• Website of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.
• Website of the Foundation of Technical Education (in Arabic).
• Website of governments on the WWW: Iraq.
• Website of the Association of Arab Universities (in Arabic).