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Lecturers can now pursue joint PhDs

KUALA LUMPUR: Lecturers from 11 Malaysian public universities can now pursue joint PhDs with French universities.

The implementation of the Malaysian-French Doctoral Network will allow academicians to conduct their doctorate studies under supervisors from Malaysian and French universities, and split their study period between the two countries.

To seal the collaboration, the first of its kind, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between representatives of Malaysian public universities and a consortium of seven French universities yesterday.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, in a speech read by his deputy Datuk Ong Tee Keat, said this was in line with the National Higher Education Strategic Plan to develop qualified human capital.

He said such research cooperation was needed to boost the

number of researchers, scientists and engineers (RSEs) in Malaysia.

"To build this critical mass of RSEs, we need to intensify our existing training programmes and encourage 'split PhD' programmes," he said.

The ministry will award scholarships to selected students for the duration of the doctorate, and they will have to work at one of the 11 universities upon return.

The local universities are Universiti Malaya, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) and Universiti Malaysia Terengganu.

Three candidates from UiTM and one from UKM were sent to France this month under the programme.