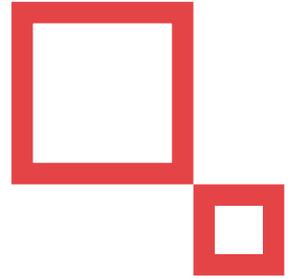


The European Schools and the European Baccalaureate

Guidance for Universities and Colleges



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1. INTRODUCTION

This booklet offers guidance to the admissions officers of universities and other institutions of higher education on factors to be taken into account in assessing applications for degree and other courses in higher education from holders of the European Bacculaureate. It is issued by the Department for Education and Skills, whose officials represent the UK on the Board of Governors of the European Schools. This publication replaces the existing 1998 booklet.

The booklet outlines the characteristics of the schools and the European Bacculaureate and offers advice on the consideration of European Bacculaureate applicants for UK higher education courses. The European Bacculaureate is awarded only by the twelve European Schools which have been established within the European Union to provide for the education of the children of the staff employed by its institutions. Holders of the European Bacculaureate have the same rights as nationals with equivalent qualifications to seek admission to UK universities and institutions of higher education.

There has been a steady increase in the number of holders of the Bacculaureate. Since 1959 when it was first awarded, almost 24,000 students, mainly from member states of the European Union, have gained the qualification. Currently about 400 Bacculaureate candidates apply each year for entry to UK higher education and all institutions can expect to receive applications from pupils or former pupils of the European Schools from time to time. Whilst British pupils make up the majority of such candidates, applications are made by pupils of other nationalities who may have completed their study in another language section.

2. THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS

History

The first European School was established in Luxembourg in 1953 for the children of the officials of the European Coal and Steel Community. In 1957 the future of this and later schools was secured by the Statute of the European School, a treaty signed by the Member States of the Community. The United Kingdom acceded to that Statute in 1972. The present Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools dates from 1994. The schools are thus established by intergovernmental agreement.

There are now twelve schools situated in:

Luxembourg

Belgium (three in Brussels and Mol)

Germany (Frankfurt-am-Main, Karlsruhe and Munich)

Italy (Varese)

the Netherlands (Bergen)

the United Kingdom (Culham in Oxfordshire)

Spain (Alicante)

A fourth school in Brussels and a second in Luxembourg are expected to open in the next few years.

The European Schools are co-educational day schools providing nursery, primary and secondary education. They were established to provide free education for children of personnel of the European Institutions. Other children may be admitted subject to the availability of places. They are

administered by a single Board of Governors consisting of delegations from the member states, together with the representative of the European Commission. The Board of Governors has a permanent Secretary-General and deputy in Brussels (address in Appendix 3).

All full-time teachers are appointed by their national governments.

3. THE CHARACTER AND CURRICULUM OF THE SCHOOLS

Aim

The aims of the schools were expressed in the words of Jean Monnet in 1953:

“Educated side by side, untroubled from infancy by divisive prejudices, acquainted with all that is great and good in the different cultures, it will be borne upon them as they mature that they belong together. Without ceasing to look to their own lands with love and pride, they will become in mind Europeans, schooled and ready to complete and consolidate the work of their fathers before them, to bring into being a united and thriving Europe.”

Curriculum

The curriculum is common to all twelve schools and centrally controlled by the Board of Inspectors and the Board of Governors. There is a strong common core throughout the secondary school.

The following subjects are compulsory for Years 1–7 (equivalent to Years 7–13 in UK):

First language (mother tongue)	First foreign language
Mathematics	History
Geography	Science
Physical education	Ethics/religion

Art and music are compulsory in years 1–2, the study of a second foreign language in years 2–5 and philosophy in years 6–7.

There is a small range of options for years 4-5 including economics, Latin and a third foreign language, and a greater range of choice in years 6-7 (see Section 4).

Science is taught as an integrated course in Years 1-3 and as three separate subjects in Years 4-5.

Language

Pupils are members of a language section, normally that of their mother tongue, and receive most of their education in that language. There are at present eleven language sections within the European Schools system (though the number will increase with the next stage of EU enlargement in 2004):

Danish

Dutch

English

Finnish

French

German

Greek

Italian

Portuguese

Spanish

Swedish

While the European Schools offer teaching in all eleven languages, not all of them provide sections for each language.

The European Schools, with their several parallel and equal language sections, differ significantly from most international schools which are dominated by only one or two languages and cultural approaches.

The first foreign language, chosen from English, French and German, is taught from the first Primary class (age 6). In the secondary school it becomes known as the pupil's working language and from secondary year 3 history and geography are studied in the working language. Economics from year 4 is also normally taught in the pupil's working language.

A second foreign language is compulsory in secondary years 2–5, and a third is optional from year 4. Foreign languages, and history and geography from year 3, are taught by native speaking teachers to classes of mixed nationality, and the subjects are examined in that language.

Pupils who have received most of their education in the system are often fluent in two other languages besides their mother tongue.

In the secondary school, classes in art, music and physical education are always composed of mixed nationalities. History, geography and economics classes in the working language are also composed of mixed nationalities.

Syllabuses are harmonised so that the same programme is followed – or in languages a comparable programme – whatever the language of instruction.

Assessment

Promotion criteria established by the Board of Governors are used to determine, at the end of a school year, whether a pupil may progress to the next class. Pupils who do not meet these criteria have to repeat the year.

In common with the practice of most European countries, there is no external examination at 16+. Pupils in Year 5 at 16+

take an internally harmonised evaluation in each of their courses. Information from the Department for Education and Skills explains the certificate in more detail (see Section 7 for address).

The schools are a unique educational development. Children of different mother tongues are educated side by side. Governments and national inspectors from each member state co-operate in:

Establishing a common curriculum;

Harmonising syllabuses;

Appointing teachers;

Carrying out inspections;

**Promoting the recognition of the European
Baccalaureate.**

4. THE EUROPEAN BACCALAUREATE

The European Baccalaureate is taken at the end of the seventh year of secondary education. It is awarded only by the twelve European Schools and should be distinguished from the International Baccalaureate (IB) and the baccalaureates of various national systems. Details of this examination are set out in the Annex to the Statute of the European School and in the Regulations for the European Baccalaureate, available from the schools.

The European Baccalaureate is administered and directly supervised by an external examining board appointed annually by the Board of Governors. The examining board consists of up to three representatives of each member state, who must satisfy the conditions governing the appointment of equivalent examining boards in their respective countries. It is presided over by a senior university educator appointed by each member state in turn, assisted by a member of the Board of Inspectors of the schools.

Article 5 (2) of the Statute provides that holders of the European Baccalaureate shall:

- a. enjoy, in the Member State of which they are nationals, all the benefits attaching to the possession of the diploma or certificate awarded at the end of the secondary school education in that country; and**
- b. be entitled to seek admission to any university in the territory of any Member State on the same terms as nationals of that Member State with equivalent qualifications.**

The Baccalaureate is a two year course and assesses the performance of students in the subjects taught in secondary years 6–7.

The first awards of the European Baccalaureate were made in 1959.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE EUROPEAN BACCALAUREATE CURRICULUM

Classes 6 & 7 of the Secondary Section

Compulsory Subjects		Elective Subjects		Complementary Subjects					
1	2	3	4	5					
Language I or Advanced Language I	4 6	Biology	2	Latin*	4	Advanced Mathematics†	3	Practical Physics	2
Language II or Advanced Language II	3 5	History	2	Ancient Greek*	4			Practical Chemistry	2
Mathematics 3 periods	3	Geography	2	Geography	4			Practical Biology	2
or		Philosophy	2	Philosophy	4			Computing	2
Mathematics 5 periods	5			Language III	4			Elementary Electronics‡	2
Religion/ethics	1			Language IV*	4			Sociology	2
Physical Education	2			History	4			Art‡	2
				Economics*	4			Music‡	2
				Physics	4			Physical Education	2
				Chemistry	4			etc.	2
				Biology	4				
				Art	4				
				Music	4				

* Pupils may only choose these courses if they have taken them as options in classes 4 & 5.

† Advanced mathematics may only be taken in conjunction with mathematics 5 periods in column 1.

‡ Not allowed if taken in column 3.

Pupils must take all subjects in column 1. Biology, history, geography and philosophy must be taken in either column 2 or column 3. Biology (column 2 or column 3) is compulsory unless physics or chemistry is chosen in column 3. Pupils must take at least 2 elective subjects in column 3 and additional courses from columns 4 or 5 to ensure a minimum weekly timetable of 31 periods. They may choose further elective or complementary subjects to a maximum of 35 lessons per week.

Not all schools are able to offer all the option courses in all the language sections.

If an option course cannot be created in a pupil's L1 it may be offered either in the working language of the pupils concerned or in the language of the school's host country.

Obligatory subjects account for at least 21 lessons a week. Elective (options) and complementary subjects are then chosen to complete a weekly timetable of not less than 31 and not more than 35 lessons. Lessons are of 45 minutes duration.

Assessment of European Baccalaureate

The European Baccalaureate is a group diploma and candidates are awarded a final overall mark expressed as a percentage. Candidates who achieve an overall mark of 60% or more are awarded the Baccalaureate. The final mark is the result of:

Internal assessment of all subjects (usually 10–12, excluding ethics/religion) studied during year 7 by means of:

exams 25%

continuous assessment 15%

Five final written exams set by the Examining Board, in mother tongue, first foreign language, mathematics and two elective subjects. 36%

Four final oral exams set by the teacher and examined by the teacher and an external examiner appointed by the Examining Board, in mother tongue, first foreign language, history or geography and a fourth compulsory or elective subject 24%

Complementary subjects cannot be offered in the final written or oral exams. They contribute only to internal assessment.

Oral examinations: pupils have a twenty minute preparation period followed by a twenty minute examination. At least two of the four orals are in one of the candidate's foreign languages.

There are no individual subject pass certificates but individual subject marks are calculated at all stages – internal assessment, written and oral exams – and are indicated on the final Baccalaureate certificate.

The average pass rate 1999-2001 was 96.5%.

5. EQUIVALENCE WITH A LEVEL AND FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN THE ASSESSMENT OF EUROPEAN BACCALAUREATE APPLICANTS

The European Baccalaureate has a very different curriculum and assessment structure from A Level. It is therefore helpful to identify particular aspects of the European Schools and the European Baccalaureate which are of importance in evaluating an EB applicant.

Pupils' Progression

Throughout the secondary school promotion to the next class depends on satisfactory coursework and examination results. Candidates for the European Baccalaureate will have survived annual screenings and a few will have repeated a school year. Consequently the EB pass rate is very high (96.5% 1999–2001) and almost all successful candidates proceed to higher education.

The system of annual promotion, dependent on both continuous assessment and exam results, encourages regular and consistent work habits. The schools are strong in academic values and expectations.

No GCSE or other national examinations are taken at the European Schools. There has been since 1994 an internally harmonised and moderated secondary year 5 (16+) certificate (see secondary year 5 curriculum in Appendix 1).

Breadth of Study

The whole secondary school curriculum is characterised by breadth with a substantial compulsory core at all levels.

All pupils will be fluent in at least one foreign language and competent in a second.

All candidates must continue the study of mother tongue, first foreign language, philosophy, history, geography, maths and some science in secondary years 6/7. In considering an applicant, account should be taken therefore of this substantial compulsory component. EB candidates may well have to carry some subjects which, in selecting a GCE A level programme, they would have discarded. It would not therefore be reasonable for universities to set an offer demanding that a candidate achieve 6/10 in all ten subjects of the Baccalaureate.

All holders of the European Baccalaureate have experience of an assessment system which includes continuous assessment, and final oral and written exams.

The breadth of curriculum results in all students following taught courses for about 88% of their school week and receiving homework in some ten subjects in secondary years 6/7. This places considerable demands on their personal organisation. EB students do not have the same amount of time available as A Level students for private study in school.

UCAS Application Form

Institutions should be aware of the following:

in Section 7A (in the 2003 version) European Baccalaureate applicants will not have GCSE results to record but will provide the marks obtained following continuous assessment and internal exams in secondary year 6;

all subjects studied in secondary years 6/7 count in some way towards the final EB score, though only certain subjects are taken in the final written and oral exams (see EB assessment structure in Section 4 of this booklet);

about half of European School applicants are likely to be non-British nationals not studying English as their mother tongue.

Offers to Candidates

In the past universities have made three types of offer to EB candidates:

- 1. specifying a final EB score above 60% (the pass mark);**
- 2. specifying a final EB score and marks in certain individual subjects;**
- 3. specifying a pass in the EB and marks in certain individual subjects.**

Offer 1 is usually appropriate for any degree course subject not offered at GCE A Level, e.g. medicine.

Offers 2 & 3 are appropriate for courses for which specific A Level subjects are prescribed, e.g. chemistry.

Institutions might consider that candidates should not be required to obtain 60% (or more) in all subjects; and that the number of individual subjects specified in an offer should not exceed three.

For many degree courses not requiring a specific subject knowledge on entry, the breadth of the EB curriculum may well be an advantage.

Candidates whose overall EB score falls in the 60–70% range may well have some individual subject strengths with marks of more than 7 out of 10.

Some universities may require evidence of the applicant's fluency in English especially for those who take English as a second or third language. In these cases, it is recommended that a conditional offer include an appropriate mark in English (say, 75 either as an average mark in English, or specifically in the written and oral English examination). A conditional offer of this kind ought to provide sufficient evidence of the English language skills (written and oral) required for a degree course.

The following table records the distribution of EB scores 1999–2001 and may be of assistance in forming offers.

Distribution of EB Scores 1999-2001

Score %	% of Candidates
over 90	2.33
85–89.99	7.93
80–84.99	15.87
75–79.99	17.70
70–74.99	20.55
65–69.99	19.42
60–64.99	12.70
less than 60	3.50
Total candidates: 3347	

6. PERFORMANCE OF EB GRADUATES IN UK HIGHER EDUCATION

Though the sample size is small, follow-up studies show that the degree results of EB students follow the national distribution of degree results by degree class. Drop-out rates are similar too.

There is no discernible difference in the results of those going on to read arts, social science or science courses. Although the EB science courses have less content/time than GCE A Level courses, EB science students have obtained degree results according to the national distribution.

Appendix 2 contains information on the results available for the 1998 cohort of EB students entering UK universities. It shows the EB score, HE institution, degree course and degree result, thus indicating the range of courses studied, institutions attended and results obtained as a sample of the performance of EB students in UK higher education.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Each European School has a teacher – normally in the English language secondary section – who co-ordinates applications for admission to UK higher education. Further information about the European Baccalaureate and individual applicants can be obtained by writing to the Director of the school and asking him/her to pass the letter on to the teacher concerned (see Appendix 3 for school addresses).

In the UK enquiries can also be addressed to:

Department for Education and Skills
European Schools Team
Level 4, Caxton House
6-12 Tothill Street
London SW1H 9NA

Tel. 020 7340 4383/4
Fax. 020 7340 4121

VT Careers Management Ltd *
223 Southampton Road
Paulsgrove
Portsmouth
Hampshire
PO6 4QA

Tel. (02392) 354555
Fax. (02392) 354565

* responsible for provision of careers advice in the eleven schools outside the UK

8. PUBLICATIONS

“Schola Europaea 1953–2003” commemorating the 50th anniversary of the schools. Available from the Central Office.

“The European Baccalaureate as a Preparation for UK First Degree Courses”, Alan Pearce, MA Dissertation, University of London Institute of Education July 1991.

A Singular Pluralism: The European Schools 1984–1994, Desmond Swan (1996), Institute of Public Administration.

APPENDIX 1

Secondary Curriculum

Classes 4 & 5 of the Secondary Section

Core Subjects (compulsory)	Periods per week
Mother tongue	4
Mathematics	4 or 6*
L II	3
L III	3
Biology	2
Chemistry	2
Physics	2
Geography	2
History	2
Physical education	2
Religion or ethics	1

* Depending on the pupils choice

Elective Subjects	Periods per week
L IV	4
Latin	4
Ancient Greek	4
Economics and social science	4
Art	2
Music	2
IT (Information Technology)	2

Pupils must take enough elective subjects to ensure that their total weekly timetable consists of between 31 (minimum) and 35 (maximum) periods.

APPENDIX 2

Available Degree Results for 1998 EB cohort entering UK Higher Education

The table below shows roughly only one-third of the available degree results and can therefore only be regarded as illustrative.

EB Score %	Institution	Course of Study – Arts/Languages	Degree Result
64	North London	European Studies	GRAD03
65	North London	European Studies & Business	2.1
66	Kent	Drama & Comparative Lit.	2.1
67	Royal Holloway	European Studies	2.2
72.9	Stirling	Journalism	GRAD03
73.1	SOAS, London	South-East Asian Studies	GRAD03
74	Bristol	Hispanic Studies	2.1
74	Salford	Media, Language & Business	2.1
78	Royal Holloway	European Studies	2.1
78	Swansea	History & German	GRAD03
78.4	Oxford Brookes	French & Italian	2.1
78.7	Southampton	Geography	2.1
79	QMW, London	History & Politics	2.1
79	Oxford	Arabic	2.1
80.2	King's London	European Studies	2.1
80.2	Nottingham	German & Hispanic Studies	LEFT
80.9	UCL	Italian & Business Studies	GRAD03
84	Durham	Combined Arts	2.1
85	Cambridge	Oriental Studies	1
86	Edinburgh	Chinese	3
86.3	Oxford	Geography	2.1

87.5	Cambridge	English	2.1
88	Edinburgh	Fine Art	2.2
EB Score %	Institution	Course of Study – Business/ Management/Economics	Degree Result
60.1	Surrey	Economics	LEFT
61	Portsmouth	European Business	3
66.7	Leeds	Environmental Management	2.2
68	Kent	Int. Relations Management	2.2
77	Royal Holloway	Management	1
78	Aberdeen	Economics & Int. Relations	1
79	Essex	Economics	2.1
82.8	Bristol	Economics	2.2
85	Warwick	Economics	2.1
86	Warwick	Management Sciences	2.2
87.6	Cambridge	Economics	1
EB Score %	Institution	Course of Study – Engineering	Degree Result
71	Portsmouth	Computer Engineering	2.2
72.6	Warwick	Mech. Engineering	2.2
78.9	Imperial, London	Mech. Engineering	2.2
88.7	Cambridge	Engineering	2.1
EB Score %	Institution	Course of Study – Law	Degree Result
79	East Anglia	Law with European Law	2.2
80.2	Warwick	Law	2.2
EB Score %	Institution	Course of Study – Medicine	Degree Result
84	Edinburgh	Medicine	M.B.
85.6	Bristol	Medicine	M.B.
86	Cambridge	Medicine	2.1
87.2	Cambridge	Medicine	1
87.3	Oxford	Medicine	2.1

EB Score %	Institution	Course of Study – Maths/Sciences	Degree Result
66	Portsmouth	Marine Biology	2.2
69	Sussex	Chemistry with French	2.2
70	Aberdeen	Biology	3
71	East Anglia	Biological Sciences	1
72	Bristol	Biology	2.1
73	Birmingham	Biological Sciences	GRAD03
73.8	Birmingham	Mathematics	2.2
74	Loughborough	Sports Science	2.1
74	Manchester	Biomedical Sciences	1
75	Heriot Watt	Applied Marine Biology	2.1
75.1	Imperial, London	Physics	2.2
76.4	Sussex	Biological Sciences	GRAD03
78.5	Oxford	Earth Sciences	GRAD03
80	Bristol	Microbiology	2.1
80.1	King's, London	Nutrition & Dietetics	2.1
81.9	Oxford	Biological Sciences	2.1
81.9	Oxford	Biological Sciences	2.1
85	Edinburgh	Chemical Physics	1
86	Bristol	Biochemistry	2.1
89.2	Manchester	Mathematics	GRAD03
91	Cambridge	Mathematics	2.2
92	Cambridge	Natural Sciences	1
92.7	Manchester	Mathematics	1
EB Score %	Institution	Course of Study – Social/Political Sciences	Degree Result
60	Southampton	Sociology	2.2
64.8	Surrey	Psychology & Sociology	LEFT
70	East Anglia	Development Studies	2.2
71	Durham	Politics	2.2

74	Exeter	Psychology	2.1
74	Exeter	Psychology	LEFT
78	Edinburgh	Sociology & Social Anthropology	2.1
85.6	Edinburgh	Social Anthropology	2.1
86.4	Cambridge	Social and Political Science	2.2
87	Oxford	PPE	2.1
88.5	Exeter	Psychology	2.1
90	Edinburgh	Social Anthropology	GRAD03
94	Oxford	PPP	1
TOTAL	81		

APPENDIX 3

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European School of Varese

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I-21100 Varese

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