



Dear Directors of the European Schools,  
Dear Directors of the Accredited European Schools,  
Dear President of the Interparents,  
Dear President of the European Baccalaureate 2020 session  
Dear President of the Board of Governors  
Dear President of the Board of Inspectors (Secondary Cycle)  
Dear President of the ISTC

Yesterday the 2020 European Baccalaureate marks were communicated to the pupils, which resulted in some questions concerning the moderation.

Here below you can find some explanations about this process and the chosen approach.

At its meeting of 15-17 April 2020 the Board of Governors decided, among others, with respect to the European Baccalaureate session 2020 the following:

1. **The written and oral examinations will not take place.** As a consequence, no written or oral mark will be taken into consideration for the calculation of the Final European Baccalaureate mark.
2. **The Final European Baccalaureate mark will be awarded based on A and B marks only.** The Final Mark will be calculated using the part of the Baccalaureate mark formula which does not make use of the marks to the oral and written exams.
3. **Moderation** will intervene whenever the difference in the distribution of final marks in comparison to previous years is statistically relevant.

Concerning the moderation process, the Office of the Secretary General has requested an external expert to analyse the data, quantify the difference in the distribution of final marks and eventually propose moderation methods to be applied on the results of the 2020 session, if necessary (*"whenever the difference in the distribution of final marks in comparison to previous years is statistically relevant"*).

This expertise was based on the European Baccalaureate results of the last 5 European Baccalaureate sessions (2015-2019).

An extraordinary meeting of the Board of Inspectors (Secondary) was organized on 29 May 2020, where the expert illustrated the situation with simulated 2020 marks, since the real A2 marks were not yet known. He then showed the difference between the distributions and shared the results of tests conducted to measure their difference. A moderation method was then proposed to be applied to the whole population, not differentiating between schools and/or sections. The two objectives that should be met are that the average final mark remains at a level comparable to previous years and that the difference in the distribution of final marks would remain in the range of those of the former years.

The Statistics Department of the Spanish Ministry of Education was also consulted (Spain having the Chairmanship of the 2020 EB session) on this approach and the Ministry entirely supported the proposed method.

Following a positive opinion expressed by the Board of Inspectors Secondary, the President of the 2020 EB session gave also a favourable opinion on the presented methodology of moderation.

It was underlined that the result should not negatively affect the pupils of this year, compared to those of the former years, as indicated in the document submitted to the decision of the Board of Governors.

Some key principles were agreed:

- the moderation would be applied to the final mark only (subject marks remain the same),
- the highest mark will be kept as such, if it is within the range of the highest marks of the past five years,
- any pupil having scored at least 60 as preliminary mark will be promoted (no pupil would fail due to the moderation),
- moreover, if the percentage of pupils who failed would result higher than usual, the moderation would be applied in such a way that some of these pupils would be promoted.

After all the marks (mainly the A2 marks, but also any outstanding marks from the first semester, for example due to the need to take reserve prebac exams) were entered into the system, the expert analyzed the outcome again and the proposed fine-tuned moderation was discussed during the regular meeting of the Board of Inspectors (Secondary) on 15 June 2020.

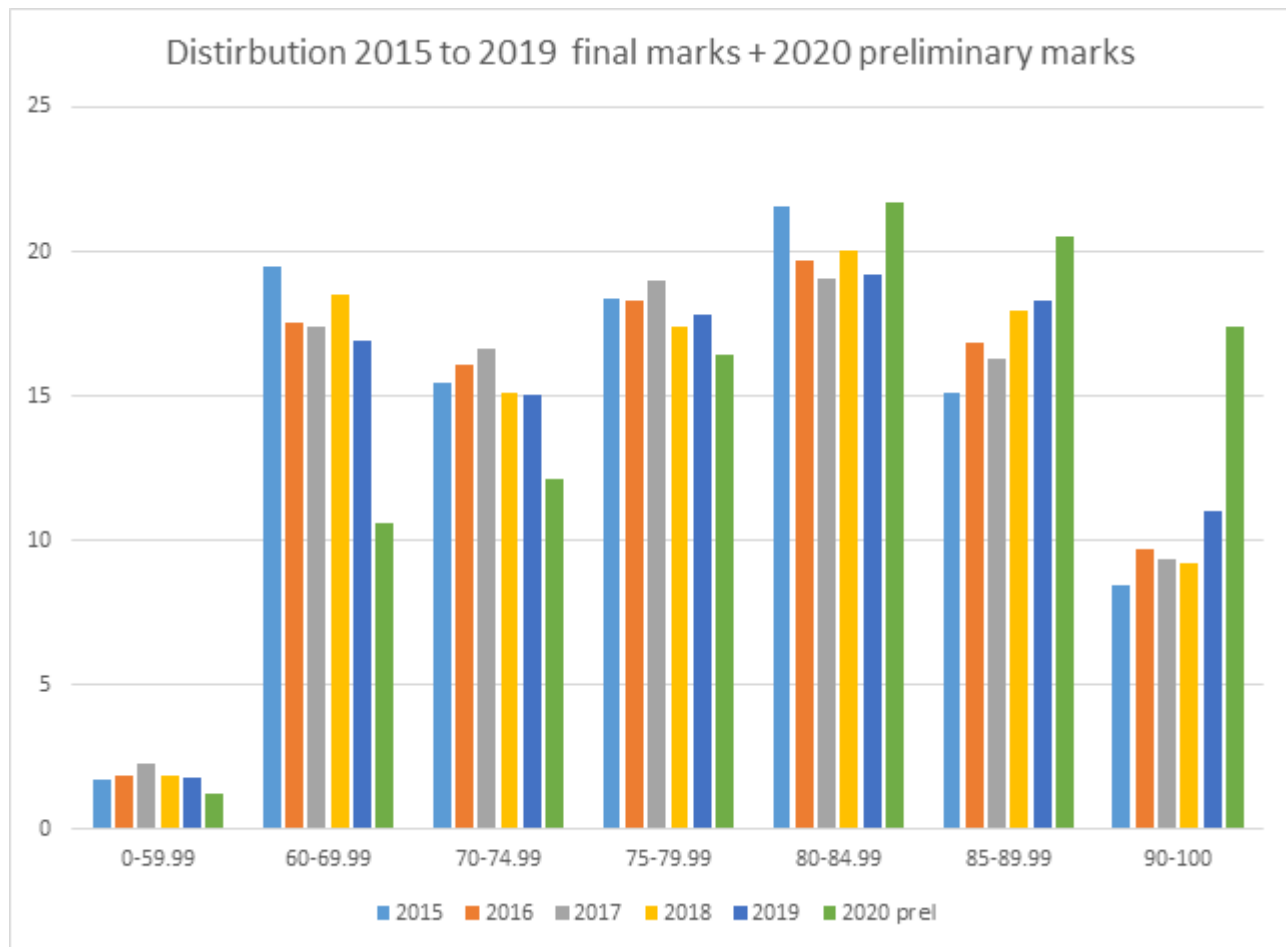
The 2020 preliminary results were the following (without applying any moderation):

**Average final mark: 81.26** (while the average final marks from 2015 to 2019 were between 78.01 and 78.84)

**Number of failing pupils: 27** (while in years 2015-2019 the number varied from 38 to 51)

Number of **with a result over 95: 76** (while the number varied between 18 and 23 in the past 5 years)

**Highest result: 98.2** (the highest result from 2015 to 2019 varied between 93.17 and 98.96, and only twice in the last 10 years the highest result was over 98).



The members of the Board of Inspectors Secondary Cycle considered this result **as a statistical relevant deviation from previous years** which would require – in line with the **decision of the Board of Governors of April 2020 – moderation.**

The expert presented a new comparison of the preliminary marks of this year, with the ones of the last two years, calculated using the same marks (A1, A2 and B1 replicated). This comparison suggested that a more lenient approach than the one agreed would have to be preferred.

It was confirmed that the result of the very top student (who had achieved 98.2) would not be moderated, as formerly agreed.

The final marks distribution curve ought to be more similar to the past five years' curves and the average mark should remain in line with the ones registered in the previous years.

The results of all the other successful Baccalaureate candidates would be moderated, using a formula that should not negatively affect the pupils of this year, compared to those of the former years.

Once the result of the formerly agreed moderation method was presented, the expert proposed adjustments to the moderation method, in order to further limit the risk to negatively affect the pupils of this year, compared to those of the former years.

In this perspective, it was proposed that the moderation applied would have a limit. After discussion it has been agreed that this limit would be set to **1.5** (below the pupil's preliminary mark). This value is in line with what happens during a typical EB session where a difference of 1.5 between the preliminary mark and the final mark in the Baccalaureate (average of final marks 1.50 lower than the average of preliminary marks) is regularly registered.

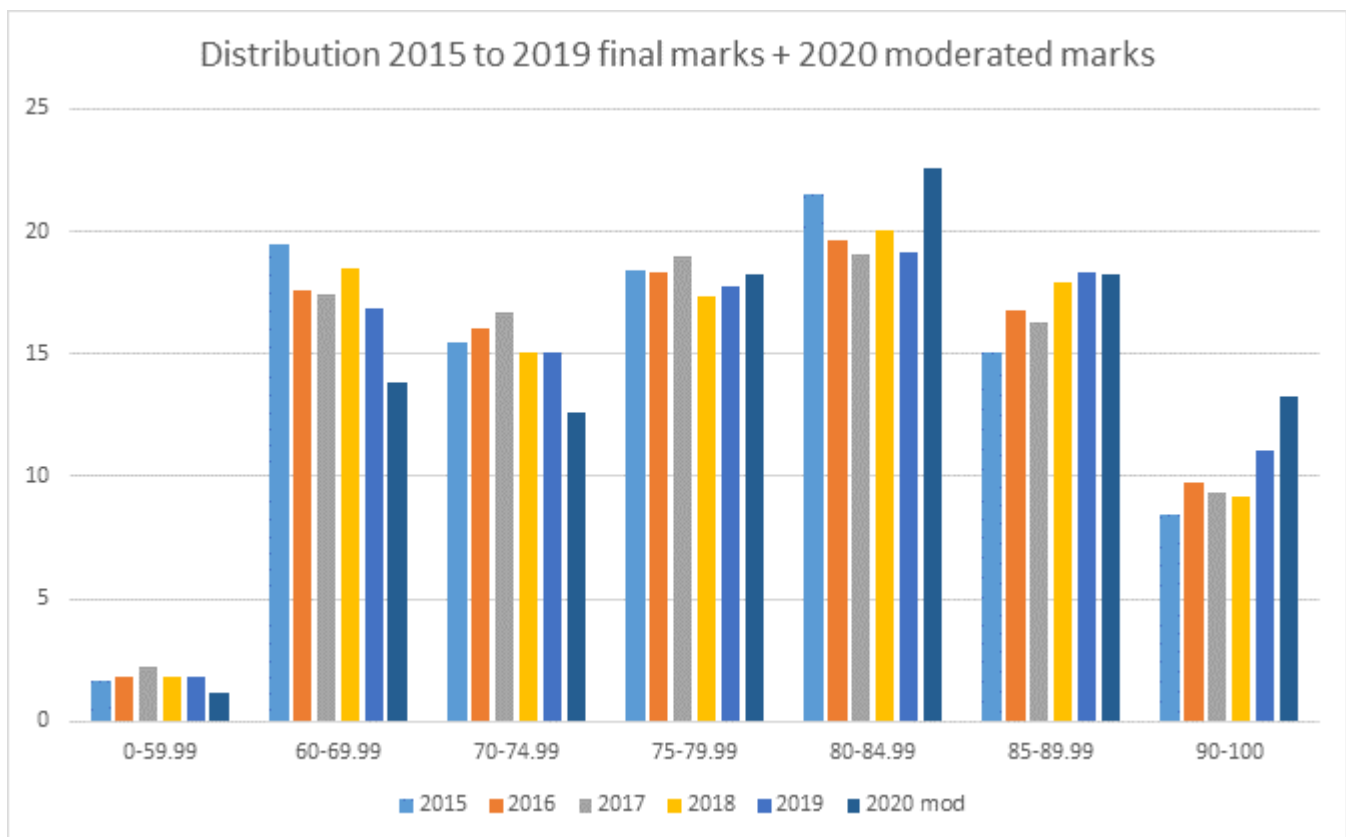
The members of the Board of Inspectors agreed with the expert that it was not advisable to apply a uniform reduction of mark for all the pupils for the following reasons:

1. Statistical reasons: the distribution of final marks would result distorted, so that one of the main objectives of the moderation would not be achieved.
2. Students at the bottom of the scale: 44 pupils would fail instead of 27, or 17 pupils would be artificially given the minimum passing mark, so that the moderation would not any longer be uniform anyway.
3. Best students: only 28 would remain in the 95-100 range.

Consequently, the members of the Board agreed that gradual moderation at the extremes of the distribution should be preferred, as formerly agreed.

This approach, staying within the frame set by the Board of Governors at its meeting on 15 – 17 April 2020, was supported by all members of the Board of Inspectors Secondary Cycle and approved by the Chairman of the 2020 European Baccalaureate session and can be summarised as follows:

Gradual moderation applied, through a formula, to all students (except the top scoring one and those having less than 60), with a maximum drop of 1,5.



It is worth underlining that even with the applied moderation, the average mark remains higher than in previous years, and so is the number of pupils with the highest marks.

As a consequence, pupils received their marks which were calculated according the Bac mark formula and the Decision of the Board of Governors from 15-17 April 2020 (20% A1, 20% A2, 30% B1, 30% B2 which is a replication of B1). In accordance with document 2020-04-D-20 Derogations to the General Rules and to the Arrangements (...), no report for the second semester (communicating the overall preliminary mark) was issued. Per subject, the preliminary mark resulting from the previously mentioned formula is equal to the final mark. Only the overall final mark is subject to moderation. Information concerning the A2 marks can be nevertheless communicated by the school on request.

This results in a situation that the overall final mark is not simply an average of the final subject marks, but also taking into consideration the necessary moderation which was agreed at the possibly lowest level, at the same time not threatening the reputation of the European Schools and the European Baccalaureate and thus, most important, not affecting the credibility of the diploma delivered to the EB candidates.

The decision of the Board of Governors allows all EB candidates to request to sit the full EB session in autumn (or alternatively to repeat the year), shall they be unsatisfied with the obtained result (due to moderation or any other reason).

I hope that this addresses all questions received from various stakeholders.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a long horizontal line.

Andreas BECKMANN  
Deputy Secretary-General  
of the European Schools

cc: Secondary Cycle Inspectors

Brussels, 23 June 2020