



Schola Europaea / Bureau du Secrétaire Général des
Écoles européennes

For the attention of

DIRECTORS and DEPUTY DIRECTORS of the European Schools (ES) and Accredited European Schools (AES)

Representations of TEACHERS of the European Schools (ISTC) and Accredited European Schools

Representations of PUPILS of the European Schools (CoSUP) and Accredited European Schools (CoSEEA)

Representations of PARENTS of the European Schools (INTERPARENTS) and Accredited European Schools (CAPEEA)

Brussels, 15 February 2021
2021-02-LD-22-en MDC/AB/ER/cd
Per email

Subject: Decision on the 2021 session of the European Baccalaureate (EB):
Oral examinations and 2021 European Baccalaureate final marks

Dear Madam
Dear Sir

We hereby inform you that the 2021 session of the European Baccalaureate will consist of solely five written examinations, **the three oral examinations being cancelled**.

As a result of this decision, the final mark for the 2021 European Baccalaureate will be calculated as follows: marks 50%C (20%A + 30%B) + 35%W + 15%O, where **O is a replication of the A mark**.

C : preliminary mark
A : class mark
B : Pre-Baccalaureate mark
W : written examinations mark
O : oral examinations mark

At this point in time, the written examinations are planned to take place as foreseen, i.e. from 31 May to 11 June 2021.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

At its meeting of 1-3 December 2020, the Board of Governors (BoG) approved document 2020-10-D-74-en TASK FORCE "Preparation of the European Baccalaureate session 2021"– 'GUIDELINES for the Baccalaureate session 2021'.

As a reminder, the TASK FORCE is composed of the following representatives: Presidency of the 2021 session of the EB, OSGES, Bol, TROIKA, WG Assessment Secondary Cycle, ES Directors and Deputy Directors, AES Directors, ES and AES Teachers, ES and AES Pupils and ES and AES Parents, European Commission.

Document 2020-10-D-74 provided guidelines applicable according to well-defined conditions and timeline.

Concerning the partial preservation or cancellation of the three oral examinations detailed in Article 6 of the Arrangements for Implementing the Regulations for the European Baccalaureate (2015-05-D-12, AIREB), the guidelines laid down that a decision, if any, should be taken by the President of the Jury of the 2021 European Baccalaureate by 15 February 2021.

This possible decision also provided for it to be taken only after two major stages of consultation had been completed. The first was with the members of the Board of Inspectors (Secondary Cycle, Bol), the second, with the members of the Board of Governors (BoG).

These stages of consultation were guaranteed and respected according to the following procedure.

1. DEFINITION, within the context of the works of the TASK FORCE "Preparation for the 2021 session of the European Baccalaureate", of two possible scenarios, applicable to the 2021 session of the EB, where the written examinations are maintained at the June 2021 session.

Reminder of the REGULAR calculation formula of the final mark of EB:

$C\ 50\% (A\ 20\% + B\ 30\%) + W\ 35\% + O\ 15\% = \text{Final EB Mark}$

The five written examinations are 7% each, i.e 35% in total.

The three oral examinations are 5% each, i.e 15% in total.

Scenarios put forward by the TASK FORCE (who expresses its preference for scenario 2 in its report):

▪ Scenario 1 :

**KEEP ONLY THE 2ND ORAL EXAMINATION (L2/L2A or GEO2 / GEO4 or HIS2 / HIS4)
CANCEL THE OTHER 2 ORAL EXAMINATIONS**

Proposed alternative formula for the EB final marks:

$C (A + B) + W + O1 + O2 + O3$

O1 + O3 are the replication of final A mark

Weighting for the elements remains unchanged

▪ Scenario 2 :

CANCEL ALL 3 ORAL EXAMINATIONS

Formula for the calculation of the final EB mark:

$C (A + B) + W + O$

O is a replication of final A* mark

Weighting for the elements remains unchanged

The five written examinations are 7% each, i.e 35% in total.

The three oral examinations are 5% each, i.e 15% in total.

Rationale supporting the scenario 2 :

It appears that the options and scenarios put forward so far in the documents that have been proposed and/or modified by the TASK FORCE are more dynamic than expected and, as such, their application is more limited than expected. The concrete evolution of the situation related to the pandemic makes it necessary to adapt them. It appeared that, in addition to the sanitary condition, the psychological state of the candidates and teams had to be taken into account, which required a revision of certain elements of the Guidelines approved by the Board of Governors in December 2020. For example, the representatives of the Directors of the European Schools and the Teachers pointed out that social acceptance of a cascade of measures involving the cancellation of two out of three oral examinations, and then possibly the third, was impossible.

Scenario 1 is not favored as it would not allow taking into account the remarks made about psychological aspects, distress, work overload and the actual and concrete participation of teachers and examiners in the examinations (ethical risk).

Finally, the travelling restrictions of external examiners in the context of the COVID 19 pandemic should be taken into account.

2. SUBMISSION of the REPORT of the TASK FORCE “Preparation of the European Baccalaureate 2021 session” Core Group and Consultative Body, document 2021-01-D-44, presenting, among others, the two scenarios previously mentioned, to the Bol of 8 and 9 February 2021 and to the JTC (Joint Teaching Committee) of 11 and 12 February 2021, for their opinion.

3. At the same time, SUBMISSION of the two scenarios previously mentioned to the Heads of Delegation for their opinion, by letter sent electronically on 4 February 2021, with a request to express preference for one or the other scenario by 15 February 2021 (10 am) at the latest.

4. COMMUNICATION to the Heads of Delegation, on 9 February 2021, of the opinion given by the Bol:

*The Bol, in its majority, expressed a favorable opinion as to the **scenario 2** put forward by the TASK FORCE: **cancellation of the 3 oral examinations of the 2021 session of the European Baccalaureate and replacement of the Oral marks by the final A marks equivalent to the subjects concerned.** It was agreed that, although the oral examinations constitute a very important element of the System, the scenario 2 (to cancel all 3 orals) would be the best appropriate solution, given the current circumstances, as it provides pupils and the whole school community with the greatest possible legal certainty.*

The possibility to hold the oral examinations online was also discussed, and, at this point in time, rejected. For it appears that oral examinations organised at a distance (through an online tool) cannot currently offer sufficient legal certainty to all stakeholders concerned (pupils, teachers, external examiners and inspectors).

At the end of the consultation period proposed to the Heads of Delegation, set to Monday 15 February 2021 (10 am), it became clear that the Heads of Delegation, like the members of the TASK FORCE and the Bol, expressed preference by a majority for **scenario 2: cancellation of the three oral examinations** of the 2021 session of the European Baccalaureate and **replacement** of the marks of the cancelled oral examinations by the **final A marks** equivalent to the subjects concerned.

This consultation process has enabled the positions and opinions of all the stakeholders of the European School System, including the Accredited European Schools, to be collected: Pupils, Parents, Teachers, Deputy Directors, Directors, Inspectors, Heads of Delegation.

For the sake of transparency and in order not to neglect any issue in the organization process of the European Baccalaureate, the Office of the Secretary General of the European Schools has also checked the availability of external examiners for a potential full session of oral examinations in June 2021. The availability of the examiners was limited and conditioned by factors beyond the control of the OSGES, in particular health conditions (delays in vaccination, evolution of the pandemic, quarantine delays) and travel restrictions (flights not available or very limited conditions of entry, permanence and exit from the territories hosting the Schools).

Having considered that :

- the majority of the members of TASK FORCE, BoI, JTC and BoG were in favour of scenario 2 described above,
- the safe practical organisation, having to be in accordance with the procedures in force, of an oral examinations' session cannot be guaranteed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic,
- the availability of external oral examiners cannot be guaranteed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic,
- scenario 2 offers pupils and the whole school community the greatest possible legal certainty,
- the equivalent final A mark per subject, envisaged as an alternative to the marks for the cancelled orals, is on average higher than the marks of the oral examinations; the formula would thus not be detrimental to the pupils,
- to guarantee objectivity and quality, the WG Assessment Secondary will support the Schools in moving towards a harmonised approach to continuous evaluation, in the definition of the A-mark,
- specific measures will be taken to ensure the continuous presence of the Inspectors of the Secondary Cycle of the European Schools acting as Vice-Presidents of the European Baccalaureate Jury at the examination centres.

the President of the 2021 session of the European Baccalaureate, co-signatory of the present letter, has decided, in accordance with the opinions expressed by the various Boards and Committees consulted to authorize the implementation of scenario 2 put forward by the TASK FORCE "Preparation for the European Baccalaureate 2021":

All current conditions remaining unchanged (including the written examinations*), the 2021 session of the European Baccalaureate will consist of solely five written examinations (six for the pupils who have been authorized to sit an additional examination under Article 13 of the AIREB),

the three oral examinations of the European Baccalaureate, session 2021, are cancelled.

The final mark for the EB will be calculated according to the following formula:

$C (A + B) + W + O$ where **O is a replication of the A mark**

C : preliminary mark

A : class mark

B : Pre-Baccalaureate mark

W : written examinations mark

O : oral examinations mark

Weighting for the elements remains unchanged:

Preliminary mark is 50% (composed of 20% Class mark-A and 30% Pre-Baccalaureate mark-B).

The five written examinations are 7% each, i.e 35% in total.

The three oral examinations are 5% each, i.e 15% in total.

*At this point in time, the written examinations are planned to take place as foreseen, i.e. from 31 May to 11 June 2021. However, should circumstances change unfavorably, a final decision will be taken by the President of the Baccalaureate 2021 depending on the COVID-19 development, at the latest by mid-May 2021.

In case the written examinations would have to be cancelled, a new decision concerning the calculation of the final marks, will be needed and further communicated once made.

A written communication from the OSGES concerning this decision will be sent to the Heads of Delegation and Inspectors of the secondary cycle, as part of the necessary information on the conditions surrounding the 2021 session of the EB, to the Universities and other Institutions of Higher Education of the Member States.

This communication will also include elements of clarification concerning the introduction of the new marking system in s7 during the school year 2020-2021 of the European Schools.

This approach is meant to support and guarantee the validity of the European Baccalaureate Diploma, in the interests of transparency and equivalence towards the institutions concerned in the Member States.

For further guidance, you may contact the European Baccalaureate Unit of the Office of the Secretary-General (email: ES-baccalaureate@eursc.eu).

We thank you advance for your attends and remain

Yours faithfully,



Giancarlo MARCHEGGIANO

Secretary-General
of the European Schools



Prof. Marie-Danièle CAMPION

President of the Jury of the European
Baccalaureate 2021 session

cc.

Heads of Delegation of the European Schools

Mr Jean-Pierre GROSSET-BOURBANGE, President of the Board of Inspectors Secondary cycle

Mr Emmanuel de TOURNEMIRE, Co-President of the Board of Inspectors Secondary cycle

Inspectors of the Secondary cycle of the European Schools

TASK FORCE 'Preparation of the European Baccalaureate Session 2021' Members

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