

Education system

European Baccalaureate

described and compared with
the Dutch system

This document contains information on the education system of the European Bacculaureate. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the European Bacculaureate for the purpose of admission to Dutch higher education.

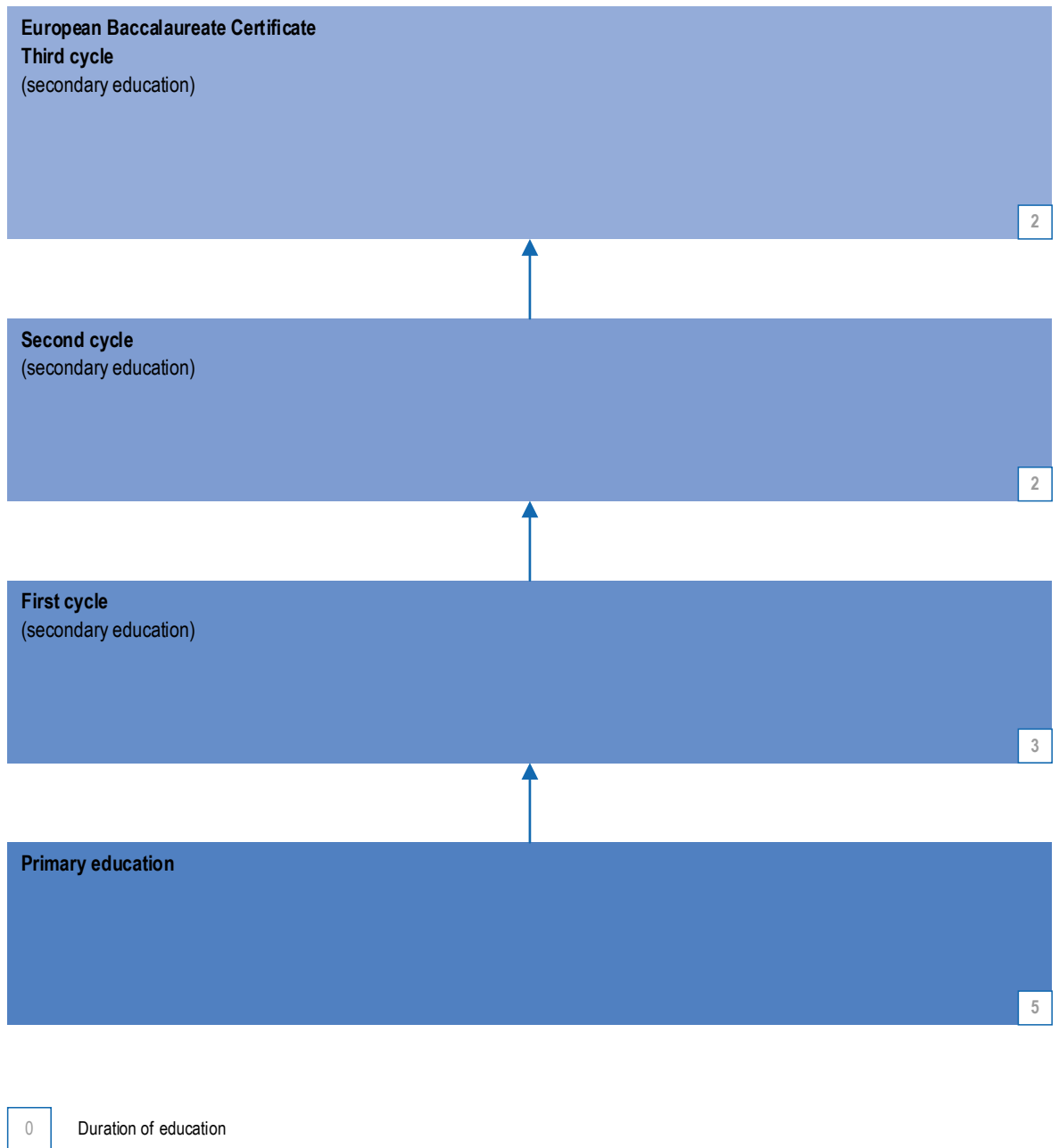
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■ Education system European Bacculaureate



■ Evaluation chart

The left-hand column in the table below lists the foreign qualification. The other columns show the Dutch equivalent along with the comparable levels in the Dutch and European qualifications frameworks.

Foreign qualification	Dutch equivalent and NLQF level		EQF level
European Baccalaureate Certificate	VWO diploma	4+	4

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, however it does give 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](#).

■ Introduction

The European Baccalaureate is the diploma awarded by European Schools to all successful students. In principle, the certificate gives access to universities in all countries in the European Union (EU).

History

Officials from the European Coal and Steel Community in 6 different member states took the initiative to found a school for their children. The first European School opened its doors in Luxembourg in 1953.

Mission

The mission of the European Schools is to provide multilingual and multicultural education for students across pre-school, primary and secondary education.

European Schools

There are currently 13 European Schools in 6 countries. The governments of the EU member states collectively control the schools. Officially, the European Schools are public and free for children of EU employees and for children of some staff (teachers and administrative staff). For other students, admission criteria and school fees apply.

Rights

The Board of Governors of the European Schools is made up of representatives from all EU member state delegations, as stipulated in a European Statute. The legal basis for the Statute of the European Schools lies in the 'Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools'. This document states that the diploma – the European Baccalaureate – confers the same rights as the national diploma granting access to university education in each country.

Recognised schools

Since 2005, Accredited European Schools can also offer the same curriculum and award a European Baccalaureate. These schools are recognised by the Board of Governors, but are governed and funded by the member state where the school is located.

Education

Students are generally taught in their native language, or in their first foreign language if there is no language section for their native language (Students Without a Language Section, SWALS). All language sections follow the curriculum of the European School.

- Compulsory school age: depends on the host country.
- Language of instruction: native language (or first foreign language).
- Length of the school year: from September to early July.

■ Primary education

Primary education consists of five year levels (P1–P5) for six to ten-year-olds. Students study the following subjects, with an emphasis on the first three:

- Native language or first language (L1)
- Mathematics
- First foreign language (L2)
- Art
- Music
- Physical Education
- Discovery of the World
- Ethics or Religion

In P3–P5 'European Hours' are part of the curriculum, allowing children from all nationalities (and language sections) to get to know each other through a range of activities.

■ Secondary education

After successful completion of primary education at the European School, in the year that students turn 11, they enter secondary education. This consists of seven year levels (S1–S7) and is divided into three cycles.

Students attend periods lasting 45 minutes each. They attend a minimum of 31 and a maximum of 35 periods in each school week.

First cycle: S1–S3

The first three years (Observation Cycle) offer:

- A common general curriculum;
- Teaching in the native language in the majority of subjects;
- A second foreign language (L3) from Year 1 (since 2014/2015);
- Latin as an optional subject in Year 2;
- ICT as an optional subject in Year 3 (or students can continue with Latin);
- Human Sciences and Ethics or Religion in the first foreign language (L2) from the third year.

Second cycle: S4 and S5

The curriculum for the next cycle (Pre-Orientations Cycle) includes:

- Mathematics
- Languages*
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- History

- Geography
- Two optional subjects, such as Language 4 (L4), Economics, Latin, Greek, Art, Music or ICT.

* The language subjects are taught in that language.

At the end of Year 5, the students receive an average grade for that year for each subject. This grade is based on a variety of assignments and two tests.

Third cycle: S6 and S7

The final 2 years (Orientation Cycle) ultimately lead to the European Baccalaureate. The curriculum includes a minimum of 10 subjects, which students complete with written and oral examinations as well as continuous assessment.

The subjects for the final examination include a combination of compulsory subjects, optional subjects and supplementary subjects where applicable.

- Compulsory subjects: Two languages (L1 & L2), Mathematics, one science subject (Biology, Chemistry, Physics), Philosophy, History, Geography, Physical Education, Ethics or Religion.
 - Students can choose to study each subject for 2 periods, 4 periods or at an advanced level.
 - Students are taught History and Geography in a language other than L1, usually French, English or German.
- Optional subjects: Students can choose between 2 and 4 subjects for a maximum of 4 periods each per week. Optional subjects include Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography, History, Economics, Latin, Music, Art, Philosophy or a language (L3 or L4).
- Supplementary subjects: Two periods per week. These subjects include Photography, Political Science, Sociology, a fourth foreign language (L5), Technical Drawing and Drama.

To pass, students must successfully complete a minimum of 31 and a maximum of 35 periods each week. If they have chosen to take fewer periods of a certain subject, they must take supplementary subjects to reach the minimum of 31 periods.

In terms of level, the European Baccalaureate Certificate is comparable to a VWO diploma.

Language teaching

As much as possible, students are taught in the section of their native language. However, not all European Schools offer all languages.

Language sections

Usually, a European School will have between 3 and 16 language sections. There are 20 sections in total:

- Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovakian, Spanish and Swedish.

Students without a language section in their native language (SWALS) follow a specific curriculum. They are normally enrolled in the English, French or German (L2) language section. These students are entitled to a certain number of hours per week of instruction in their native language, provided the school has a qualified teacher.

Six possible language subjects are offered within the curriculum of the European Baccalaureate:

- Languages 1 to 5 (L1-L5);
- Other National Language (ONL).

Language 1

Language 1 is the student's native language. Generally speaking, this is also the language of the section in which the student is enrolled, unless he or she is a SWALS student.

Language 1 (L1):

- Starts as a subject in primary school and is compulsory for all students (S1–7);
- Follows the national curriculum set by the country to which the language belongs (for example, students whose L1 is Dutch follow the curriculum set by the Dutch government).

Language 2

For the subject 'Language 2', students choose one of the three EU working languages (English, French and German). The chosen language must always be different from Language 1.

Language 2 (L2):

- Starts as a subject in primary school (P1) and ends in S7: 12 years of instruction in total;
- In S3, students study Human Sciences in their L2;
- From S4, they also study History and Geography in L2;
- In S6, students can change the selected language (for the L2 subject) to another EU language if they pass the language test (but they continue to study History and Geography in the language they chose originally);
- From S6, L2 can also be taken as an Advanced Course, which has more of an emphasis on literature than in the ordinary L2 subject.

It is sometimes difficult for students who are new to the European School to keep up with everything in their second language, because they have not always mastered the language at the required level. These students are given extra support.

Languages 3 and 4

Language 3 (L3) starts in S1 at a beginner's level and is a compulsory subject up until the end of S5. Students can choose any EU language (except for Irish and Maltese) if a minimum number of students at the school have the same preference.

The most common L3 languages are:

- English
- French
- German
- Italian
- Dutch
- Portuguese
- Spanish
- Swedish

Depending on the group size in S6 and S7, and the demand for the language (minimum of 5 applications), students can take their L3 right through to the European Baccalaureate. Language 4 (L4) is an optional subject in S4 for beginners and students can take it right through to the European Baccalaureate.

This table shows the number of teaching hours per week, per language subject and per year level:

	L1	L2	L3	L4
S1	5	5	2	-
S2	5	4	3	-
S3	4	4	3	-
S4	4	3	3	4
S5	4	3	3	4
S6	4	3	4	4
S7	4	3	4	4

Other National Language

No school has language sections in Irish and Maltese, but these can be taught as an 'Other National Language (ONL)'. Few schools have language sections in

Finnish or Swedish either. An ONL will be created if a student has fewer than 7 students who speak that language.

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

L1 students are native speakers. The following table shows the CEFR level for foreign languages (L2 to L4) at each year level:

	Primary	S3	S5	S7
L2	A2	B1	B2	C1
L3	-	A1+	A2+	B1+
L4	-	-	A1	A2+

■ Examinations

Students are assessed regularly through submitted work and examinations. The school issues reports four times each year.

For the European Baccalaureate there are written and oral examinations. The written examinations are the same for all students. The examinations cover material from Year 7 as well as knowledge acquired in earlier years, particularly Year 6.

Written examinations

There are five written examinations:

- Language 1 or Advanced Language 1
- Language 2 or Advanced Language 2
- Mathematics (5 periods) or Mathematics (3 periods)
- Two optional subjects

Oral examinations

Candidates must sit 3 oral examinations, in a combination of these subjects:

- Language 1 or Advanced Language 1;
- Language 2, Advanced Language 2, or History and Geography;
- Advanced Mathematics, Philosophy (2-4 periods), Language 3, Language 4, Other National Language (ONL), Biology (2-4 periods), Chemistry (4 periods) or Physics (4 periods).

■ Admission to higher education

With the European Baccalaureate Certificate students are eligible for admission to higher education in the Netherlands.

Knowledge of Dutch

Below is a summary of the levels of Dutch that may have been attained by students who hold the European Baccalaureate Certificate.

Students in the Dutch L1 language section are native speakers. As well as Language 1, they take all science subjects and certain other subjects in Dutch.

SWALS students with Dutch as L1:

- SWALS students with Dutch as L1 in another language section are also at the level of a native speaker; Dutch is their native language.
- SWALS students follow the same L1 curriculum (equivalent to the VWO curriculum in the Netherlands) as students in the Dutch language section. They take the rest of their subjects in L2 (or the language of the host country).

Dutch as L2

Students with Dutch as their L2 acquire a final level corresponding to at least C1 in the CEFR.

Dutch as L3

Students with Dutch as their L3 acquire a final level corresponding to at least B1 in the CEFR.

Knowledge of English

Students in the English L1 language section are native speakers. As well as Language 1, they take all science subjects and certain other subjects in English.

SWALS students with English as L1 in another language section are also at the level of a native speaker; English is their native language. This is a condition of admission as a SWALS student. They follow the same L1 curriculum as students in the English language section. They take the rest of their subjects in their L2 language (or the language of the host country).

English as L2

Students with English as their L2 acquire a final level corresponding to at least C1 in the CEFR.

English as L3

Students with English as their L3 acquire a final level corresponding to at least B1 in the CEFR.

■ Assessment systems

The European Schools use an assessment system with a scale from 0-10, in which 6 is the minimum pass mark. Students may also receive their final marks for the European Baccalaureate on a scale from 0-100, where 60 is the minimum pass mark.

Three factors determine the final mark:

- Written examinations, 35%
- Oral examinations, 15%
- Continuous assessment, 50%

■ Quality assurance and accreditation

All European Schools are subject to the supervision of the Board of Inspectors. This board is made up of two inspectors from each member state (one for primary education and one for secondary). For the Netherlands, these inspectors are from the Education Inspectorate.

The Board of Inspectors and the school management ensure the quality of the European Baccalaureate. For more information about quality assurance, see: [Quality Assurance and Development in the European Schools](#).

■ Composition of the file

When students obtain the European Baccalaureate, they receive two documents:

- European Baccalaureate Certificate*
- List of Marks

* Available in a range of languages; in German, the European Baccalaureate is called the *Europäisches Abitur*.

■ Overview of institutions

- [European Schools](#)
- [Accredited European Schools](#)

■ Useful links

- [Office of the Secretary-General of the European Schools](#)
- [The European Statute of the European Schools](#)
- [NOB](#) (The Foundation for Dutch Education Worldwide)

European Bacculaureate Certificate

<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 10px;"/> <h3 style="margin: 0;">European Bacculaureate Certificate</h3> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 10px;"/> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 5px 0;">The Board of Governors of the European Schools,</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 5px 0;"><i>Having regard to the Regulations for the European Bacculaureate signed at Luxembourg on 11 April 1984,</i></p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 5px 0;"><i>Having regard to the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools signed at Luxembourg on 21 June 1994,</i></p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 5px 0;"><i>to which Regulations and Convention have acceded the Governments of</i></p> <table style="width: 100%; margin: 5px 0;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kingdom of Belgium, The Federal Republic of Germany, The French Republic, The Italian Republic, The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, The Kingdom of the Netherlands, The Kingdom of Denmark, The Republic of Ireland, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, The Hellenic Republic, The Kingdom of Spain, The Portuguese Republic, The Republic of Austria, The Republic of Finland, </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kingdom of Sweden, The Republic of Cyprus, The Republic of Estonia, Hungary, The Republic of Latvia, The Republic of Lithuania, The Republic of Malta, The Republic of Poland, The Slovak Republic, The Republic of Slovenia, The Czech Republic, The Republic of Bulgaria, The Republic of Romania, The Republic of Croatia </td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 5px 0;"><i>Having regard to its decision of 01/04/2015, appointing the Examining Board and fixing the dates of the examinations,</i></p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 5px 0;"><i>Having regard to the results achieved in those examinations, on a proposal from the Examination Board, has awarded to the pupil</i></p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 20px 0;">Born on _____ in _____</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 5px 0;"><i>the European Bacculaureate, with an overall mark of _____ out of 100.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 5px 0;"><i>Brussels,</i> _____ <i>The Secretary-General of the European Schools</i></p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 5px 0;"><i>_____</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kingdom of Belgium, The Federal Republic of Germany, The French Republic, The Italian Republic, The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, The Kingdom of the Netherlands, The Kingdom of Denmark, The Republic of Ireland, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, The Hellenic Republic, The Kingdom of Spain, The Portuguese Republic, The Republic of Austria, The Republic of Finland, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kingdom of Sweden, The Republic of Cyprus, The Republic of Estonia, Hungary, The Republic of Latvia, The Republic of Lithuania, The Republic of Malta, The Republic of Poland, The Slovak Republic, The Republic of Slovenia, The Czech Republic, The Republic of Bulgaria, The Republic of Romania, The Republic of Croatia
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List of Marks

An example of a List of Marks (front) of the European Baccalaureate Certificate.

School Year

EUROPEAN BACCALAUREATE

Name, first name: .

Born on in


Class: B1 S7 ENA

SUBJECTS	(Language) (Hours each week)	Preliminary mark	Written papers	Oral examinations	Final mark
Biology 4 periods	(EN 4.00)	6.46		7.00	6.58
Physical Education	(-- 2.00)	9.00			9.00
Geography 2 periods	(FR 2.00)	6.80			6.80
History 2 periods	(FR 2.00)	7.10		7.75	7.25
Introduction to film studies	(-- 2.00)	9.15			9.15
Language 1	(EN 4.00)	7.86	7.50	7.75	7.72
Language 2	(FR 3.00)	6.98	6.60		6.82
Language 3	(ES 4.00)	7.68	7.35		7.54
Mathematics 3 periods	(EN 3.00)	8.62	6.45		7.73
Philosophy 4 periods	(EN 4.00)	8.80	7.75		8.37

After due weighting of the various elements which make up the final mark, the candidate has been awarded the Baccalaureate with an overall average mark of %.

Brussels, .

The Secretary-General of the European Schools



■ List of Marks

An example of a List of Marks (back) of the European Baccalaureate Certificate.

Marking	
<u>Definitions</u>	<u>Marks</u>
The performance meets the requirements of the subject and the question particularly adequately. The mark 10 does not mean that the performance is flawless but it does denote a performance which is outstanding in all respects.	9 - 10
The performance fully meets the requirements of the subject and the question.	8 - 8.9
The performance generally meets the requirements of the subject and the question.	7 - 7.9
The performance does show weaknesses but still broadly meets the requirements of the subject and the question on the whole.	6 - 6.9
The performance does not meet the requirements of the subject and the question but shows that the necessary basic knowledge exists and that the weaknesses can be remedied in the foreseeable future.	4 - 5.9
The performance does not meet the requirements of the subject and the question, the basic knowledge being so sketchy that the weaknesses can be remedied only in the comparatively distant future.	2 - 3.9
The performance does not meet the requirements of the subject and the question, the basic knowledge being so sketchy that the weaknesses cannot be remedied in the foreseeable future.	0.1 - 1.9
This assessment will be given in the event of a blank or unacceptable script or absence of an answer or of a practical project.	0