

**Parent Position Paper –
Postpone Introduction of New Marking Scale at the Bac Levels**

The parents of the European Schools have **grave reservations about the implementation of the New Marking Scale in the Bac Cycle** planned for the next school year.

We fully support the philosophy of competence-based assessment that is the basis of the new marking scale. However, **it takes time for the culture of assessment to adjust to the new approach** in order to arrive at a fair and equitable whole-school practice. This is especially true considering the range of different cultural and pedagogical backgrounds of our teaching staff.

Since November 2018, when the marking system was first officially employed in mid-term marking, we have received a preponderance of anecdotal evidence from schools across the system that **there is indeed wide variation in the practical application of the new marking scale**, from teacher to teacher and section to section. Since we, as parents have no access to concrete data, this is all we can present to support our concerns—it is for those who have access to the data to show that such worries might be unwarranted.

Unfortunately, there has been as yet **no official data/statistics on the results of the implementation** from the Office of the Secretary General which would evidence a consistent application of the scale across the system or demonstrate a proper understanding of the effects of the new marking scale that could be communicated in a formal and objective manner to Member States and Universities. Equally worrying, the ***Guidelines for Use (ref. 2017-05-D-29) developed for the new marking scale and passed by the Joint Teaching Committee in February 2018 has not been updated over the 2018-2019 school year***, as mandated by the Joint Teaching Committee in its February 2018 meeting, to include information on the 3rd cycle. Thus there is currently no formal guidance on how the new marking system will work in the Bac Cycle. And the important Document 2014-03-D-25 on equivalences between the European Baccalaureate and national tertiary system has yet to be updated as requested by the same body. (See Annex I)

In sum, under the current conditions we believe the introduction of the new marking scale in the Bac Cycle to be **premature and extremely risky**, jeopardizing the future of an entire cohort of students. We are **profoundly concerned by the consequences both to these students and to the reputation of the European Baccalaureate**.

The students in question will have to apply to universities with the marks they will start collecting as from September 2019 when they enter S6. How can we trust that the issue will be fully solved by then?

Therefore, we **strongly urge you to the following actions** during the meeting of the Board of Governors:

1. The agenda “point for communication” relating to the New Marking Scale shall be **moved to a “point for discussion”**.
2. The Office of the Secretary General shall be formally **requested to provide data** on the implementation of the new marking scale and on its practical consequences to the grade distribution across the system and by section.

3. **A postponement of the implementation of the new marking scale in the Bac cycle¹** shall be proposed until such time as:
- a proper analysis of the results demonstrates stability in the application of the scale
 - the effects on the grade distribution are well communicated to Member States and Universities by the Office of the Secretary General, and Document 2014-03-D-25 is updated to reflect any adjustments to equivalence tables/formulas.
 - Document 2017-05-D-29 is revised as mandated by the Joint Teaching Committee to include guidance on the third cycle.

It is unacceptable to parents that we proceed to implement the new marking scale in the Bac Cycle starting September 2019 without clear and concrete evidence that the scale is mature, stable, harmonised and well understood by everyone implicated in the European School system.

We thank you for your consideration.

¹ If such a decision cannot be taken in the Board of Governors' Meeting, then it may be taken via a written procedure at a later point. It is suggested that such a procedure be run by 15 May at the latest.

ANNEX I
Guidelines for use of the new marking scale (ref. 2017-05-D-29)

I. excerpt from the Decisions of the meeting of the Joint Teaching Committee of 8 and 9 February in Brussels – 2018-02-D-12-en-1; emphasis has been added

(p. 3) III.D. PEDAGOGICAL RULES/STANDARDS

1. Guidelines for use of the new marking scale (2017-05-D-29-en-4) M. WOLFF

The Joint Teaching Committee approved the ‘Guidelines for use of the new marking scale’. As it was a dynamic document, it would be amended with extra examples, revised and further developed over time. The information on the third cycle would be added during the 2018-2019 school year. In addition, the Steering Group was requested to draft a short and simple document, containing basic information on the new marking scale, in order to inform parents and students. Document 2014-03-D-25, version 5 Equivalences between the European Baccalaureate and the Upper Secondary Leaving Certificate of National Schools and admission of European Baccalaureate-holders to Universities in the Member Countries would need to be updated in line with the new marking scale. Amending the Assessment Policy had not been part of the mandate of the Steering Committee; it had, however, become clear that revision would be required (A, B and final marks, number and type of assessment, competence-based reporting, self-assessment, assessment plans). The document would be sent forward to the Board of Governors for its information.

II. excerpts from the Marking system of the European schools: Guidelines for use Approved by the Joint Teaching Committee on 8 and 9 February 2018 – in Brussels – 2017-05-D-29-en-6; emphasis has been added

(p. 3) This document is a dynamic document, which will be completed, amended, revised and further developed over time. The chapter on the use of the new marking system in the European Baccalaureate will be added during the school year 2018-2019.

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Baccalaureate

This chapter will be added in 2018-2019. Specific examples will be provided.