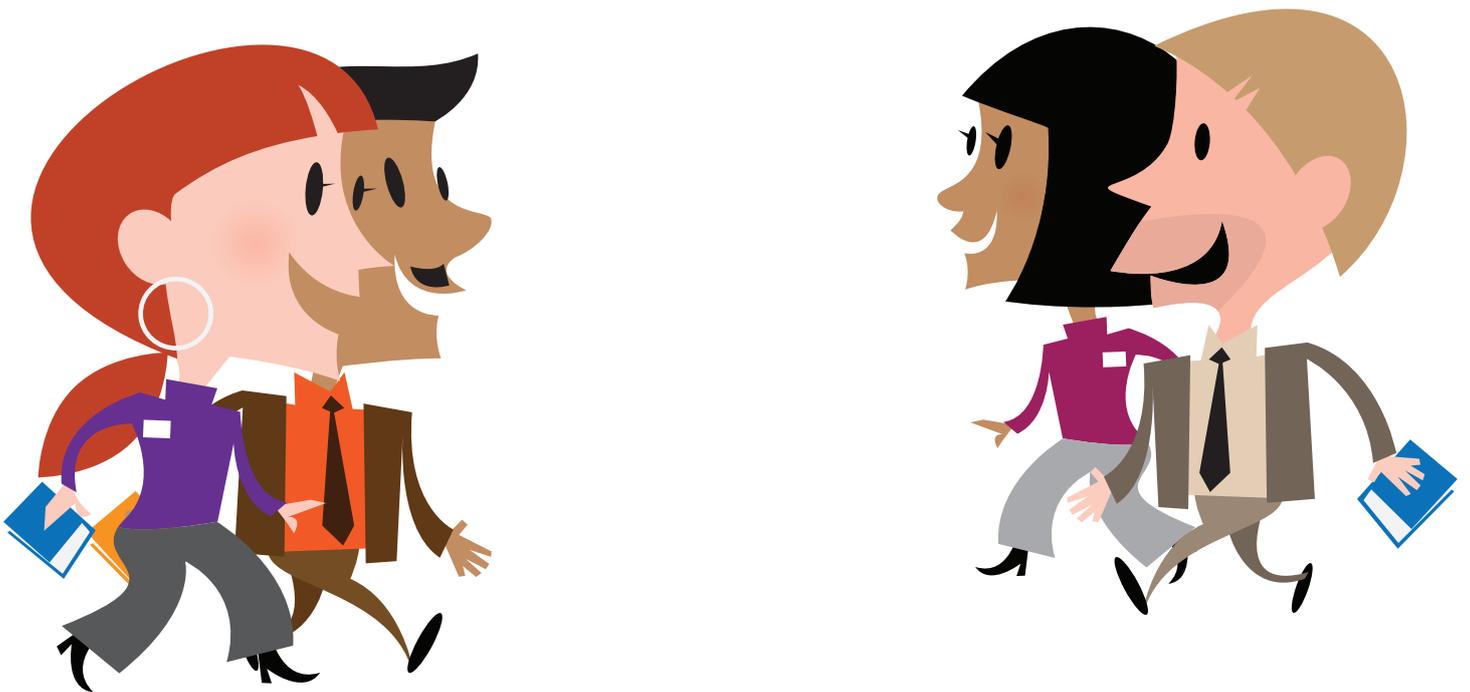


# The European Schools and the European Baccalaureate

## Guidance for Universities and Schools



## European Schools

“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.”

*Jean Monnet 1953*

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# The European Baccalaureate – An Overview

## Aim

The aim of this document is to summarise the key elements of the European Baccalaureate, mainly to assist admissions officers at universities and other institutions of higher education in the United Kingdom. It will however also be of interest to parents and potential employers, and is issued by the Department for Children, Skills and Families, replacing the document produced in 2003.

## Introduction

The European Baccalaureate (EB) is the school-leaving examination for students who attend one of the 14 European Schools. There are currently around 21,000 pupils in the system as a whole, and approximately 1400 pupils take the final examination each year. The European Schools were established to educate the children of parents working in European Union institutions. A broad curriculum is followed throughout the secondary phase, with a particular feature being the fact that students learn history and geography in their second language from Year 3 (Year 9 in the English system). Although the schools are open to the whole ability range, children must pass each year, meeting clear academic criteria. If not they must repeat the year, and ultimately leave the school if they fail the same year twice.

The European Schools have high academic standards, with motivated students and supportive parents.

## Validation

The EB is officially recognised as an entry qualification for Higher Education in all the countries of the European Union, as well as many others. As a result, European School pupils go on to University all over Europe and beyond. The Examining Board, which oversees the examinations in all language sections, is chaired by a University professor, and is composed of examiners from each country of the Union. They are appointed annually by the Board of Governors and must meet the requirements laid down in their home countries for appointment to examining boards of the same level. The close scrutiny of the Examining Board, which demands double assessment of the final written and oral examinations, guarantees the high level and quality of the Baccalaureate.

## The Examination

The EB is a demanding examination where pupils must study 10 or 11 subjects. Pupils are required to study their own language, at least one foreign language to a high level, history and geography in that language, mathematics, at least one science subject, philosophy, physical education and

religion/moral education. They must add elective courses to this, for example more sciences and languages, or the same subjects at a higher level. This means that despite the large compulsory element in the EB, students are able to build up a programme which reflects their particular interests and strengths. The EB Diploma is based on performance in the final year.

### **The Marks**

To obtain the EB a pupil must obtain a minimum of 60% overall, and in theory scores can range up to 100%. A mark out of 10 is also awarded for each individual subject. Pupils therefore have to be able to perform well across a wide range of academic subjects to obtain a good overall score in the EB. The average score across the European Schools has been around 75% for a number of years. It is extremely difficult to score 90% or more, and only a small percentage of pupils achieve this level. It should also be borne in mind that any pupil sitting the final EB examination has already been through a rigorous annual monitoring procedure since joining the school.

# Section 1: The Schools

The European Schools were established in 1957 to educate the children of employees of European institutions such as the European Commission, and nowadays include the European Patent Office and various European Research Organisations. The children of these employees are entitled to a place in a European School. In addition, a number of organisations have contracts with the European Schools which guarantee entry and private pupils are also admitted in some of the schools. The children of European School teachers are also entitled to a place. Thus, although the intake is comprehensive, most pupils come from well educated backgrounds.

There are currently 14 European Schools, in six EU countries, which are administered by the European Schools' Board of Governors and these are known as Type I schools.

In addition, a number of Type II and Type III schools have been established or are in the process of being established.

Type II schools are administered and financed by the national education systems of the individual Member States of the EU and accredited by the Board of Governors. They have been established to support some of the smaller European Agencies by offering the European style of education to their employees' children. They will typically have a large number of pupils drawn from other backgrounds whose parents want this type of education for their children. Type III schools are also schools administered by their national education system and are also accredited by the Board of Governors to offer the European style of education to their pupils. The European Baccalaureate is available to pupils in Type II and Type III schools as well as those in Type I schools.

## Section 2: The Pupils

Pupils are educated from age 4-19 in the European Schools at Nursery (2 years), Primary (5 years) and Secondary level (7 years). Each school has a number of language sections. All pupils are enrolled in a language section which may be that of their mother tongue or of another language (if they have a mother tongue for which there is no language section in the particular school).

They start lessons in a second language from Primary 1 and must continue with their second language until they complete the Baccalaureate. In the years 4 to 7 of the Secondary cycle, pupils must also study history and geography in their second language.

The pupils of a European School are obliged to actually use the foreign language(s) they learn in their everyday life and in communication with fellow pupils and this contributes in a significant way to an excellent working knowledge of the language.

As a result of this, the European Schools foster a unique multicultural outlook in pupils which is a great advantage in both Higher Education and in subsequent employment.

Another feature of the schools is that pupils are required to attain a certain level of academic achievement each year before they can be promoted to the next year. This is a feature of the education systems of a number of European countries. It means that when pupils are entered for the Baccalaureate in their final year at school, they have already reached a standard deemed necessary by teachers for the pupil to be successful. This is a strong contributory factor to the high pass rate in the Baccalaureate.

# Section 3: The Curriculum

In the secondary school, pupils are taught in 45 minute periods with between 31 and 35 periods per school week.

The secondary school curriculum can be divided into three stages.

## Year 1 to 3

Pupils take a broad academic curriculum including languages 1 and 2, language 3 from year 2 onwards, mathematics, integrated science, religion and sport. Human science is taught in language 1 in years 1 and 2 and in language 2 in year 3.

## Year 4 and 5

Pupils take an exceptionally broad curriculum during these two years with a large compulsory component which makes it different from many national systems.

They must take mathematics for 4 or 6 periods per week and languages 1, 2 and 3. Biology, chemistry and physics are studied for 2 periods per week each. History and geography are studied for 2 periods each in the pupil's second language. At least two elective subjects must be chosen from language 4, economics, Latin, Greek, art, music and ICT.

There is no GCSE examination equivalent at the end of year 5 but pupils are awarded an overall year grade in each subject based on coursework assessment and two sets of examinations, the second of which is harmonised across language sections.

## Year 6 and 7

These two years lead to the European Baccalaureate. Pupils must study at least ten subjects and are examined rigorously by means of written and oral examinations and by continuous assessment.

There is a core of compulsory subjects which include language 1 (mother tongue), language 2 (first foreign language), mathematics, history, geography, philosophy, religion/ethics and sport. In addition, if no science subject is taken as an elective subject, pupils must also take a course of two lessons per week in biology.

Pupils must take a minimum of two elective subjects of four lessons per week and may take as many as four. These subjects include each of the separate sciences, humanities subjects, art, music, philosophy and languages 3 and 4. Mathematics can be taken as a 3-lesson or 5-lesson per week course. Three-lesson per week advanced level elective subjects can be taken in mathematics, language 1 and language 2 which are additional to the compulsory courses in these subjects. Pupils may also choose two lessons per week complementary subjects such as practical science courses, introductory economics, art, music, theatre. The table below summarises the choices available for pupils.

It should be noted that languages 1, 2, 3 and 4 are taught to a high academic level by native speakers.

## Course Structure in Years 6 and 7

### Subject Choice – General Rules

Total Study Programme: **minimum 31 periods**

Columns 1–4: **minimum 29 periods**

Column 3: **minimum 2 options, maximum 4 options**

COMPULSORY SUBJECTS		OPTIONAL COURSES (Elective subjects)		COMPL. COURSES
Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
Language 1 4p	History 2p	Art 4p	Advanced L1 3p	Art 2p
Language 2 3p	Geography 2p	Music 4p	Advanced L2 3p	Economics. 2p
Maths 3 3p	Philosophy 2p	Biology 4p	Advanced Mat 3p	ICT 2p
or	Biology 2p	Chemistry 4p		Lab Bio 2p
Maths 5 5p	Total: 2–8 p	Physics 4p		Lab Chemistry 2p
Ethics/Rel. 1p		Geography 4p		Lab Physics 2p
Sport 2p		History 4p		Music 2p
Total: 13–15 p		Philosophy 4p		Sociology 2p
		Economics 4p		Politics 2p
		Latin 4p		Theatre studies 2p
		Ancient Greek 4p		Advanced sport 2p
		Language 3 4p		Language 5 2p
		Language 4 4p		
		These courses are compulsory unless they are chosen in column 3. Biology 2p is compulsory unless Biology, Chemistry or Physics is chosen in column 3.		Advanced maths only if maths 5 is chosen in column 1

# Section 4: Assessment

The grading system for individual subjects uses a 0 to 10 scale with 6.0 as a pass mark. When a candidate is awarded the European Baccalaureate, the overall mark is expressed as a percentage and 60% is a pass. The calculation of this final mark is complex.

There are three main components that contribute to the overall mark but for each subject, there are varying assessments.

The relative contributions to the European Baccalaureate are:

Preliminary mark 40%

Written Examinations 36%

Oral Examinations 24%

## Preliminary Mark

This is composed of coursework assessment by teachers in each subject and in internal examinations set and marked by teachers in each subject. The examinations make up slightly more than half of the preliminary mark. Most of these preliminary examinations are taken in late January of the final year.

## Written Examinations

Candidates take five written examinations which must include language 1, language 2, mathematics and in addition two of the 4-lesson elective subjects. These examinations are set in each subject by a panel of experts using questions submitted by teachers from the schools. Marking is carried out by the subject teacher and scripts are then marked completely independently by an external examiner. The two marks are averaged, with overall supervision by the subject inspector.

## Oral Examinations

Candidates take four subjects as oral examinations and these must include language 1, language 2, history or geography and a fourth subject which may include a 4-lesson elective subject not already examined as a written examination.

# Section 5: Examination Results

Each year the central office of the European Schools produces a report about the European Baccalaureate. A summary of the information is provided below.

## Report on the European Baccalaureate 2006 – Overall Results

### Pass Rate

The pass rate was 97.5 % and 37 candidates failed.

### Average

For the entire population the average has stabilised at 7.6

### Good Results

This year 52.2 % of the candidates scored 75 or more. This is the highest proportion ever.

### Very Good Results

This year 33.6 % of the candidates scored 80 or more.

See Appendix 1 for more detailed statistics.

## Section 6: Performance in Higher Education

On the UCAS form, pupils will provide all of the final year 6 marks for each subject taken. Note that marks are in decimals and 6.0 is a pass mark. These marks will be the same as those on the official school report at the end of year 6 and a check will be made that these marks are correct by the UCAS coordinator.

In addition, an overall predicted mark for the European Baccalaureate will be given as a % and there will be predicted marks for individual subjects given as decimals at the bottom of the reference.

To help admissions staff evaluate the European Baccalaureate a survey was made of the university performance of pupils who took the EB in 2003 or 2004. The results are given in Appendix 2.

# Section 7: English Language in the European Baccalaureate

## Language 1

This examination is taken by mother-tongue pupils.

Assessment: Written and Oral examinations are 100% literature based. The level of language is deemed to be sufficiently high for assessment to be based solely on literature where language proficiency is essential for essay writing and oral work. Use of language is assessed in the context of literature essays.

Teaching is to A level standard or International Baccalaureate Higher level.

A grade 6.0 (pass) in the European Baccalaureate would be sufficient to follow a non-literary UK university course.

## Language 2

This examination is taken by pupils whose mother tongue is not English, although they may in some cases have followed almost all their subjects in English (i.e. those without a language section for their own mother tongue who have therefore been in the English section of the school). If pupils have spent their entire school career at the European Schools they will have been studying English since the beginning of primary school.

Assessment: The Written paper consists of 30% reading comprehension, 30% writing in a given register (note: this will change to 20% and 40% from 2011), and 40% writing about literature (language 20%, organisation and content 20%). Oral examination: 100% language and communication.

The basic pass level (grade 6.0) of the L2 exam equates approximately to level B2 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, but most candidates are at C1 level and above.

A grade 7.0 in the EB would be sufficient to follow a non-literary UK university course. A candidate with this level or higher **should not be required** to take a supplementary English test.

## Language 3

This examination is taken by pupils who have been studying English for 6 years. Pupils opt to take either the Written or the Oral exam.

Assessment: The Written paper (if taken) consists of 30% reading comprehension, 30% writing in a given register (marked equally for language and content), and 40% writing about literature (language 20%, organisation and content 20%). Oral examination (if taken): 100% language and communication.

The basic pass level (grade 6.0) of the L3 exam broadly equates to between level B1 and B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, but most candidates are above B2 level.

7.0-7.5 in L3 would be sufficient to follow a non-literary UK university course.

## Language 4

This examination is taken by pupils who have been studying English for 4 years. Pupils opt to take either the written or oral exam.

Assessment: The Written paper (if taken) consists of 60% comprehension and language, and 40% writing. Oral examination (if taken): 100% language and communication

The basic pass level broadly equates to level B1 of the Common European Framework.

**Note:** in a study made by the European Parliament of European School alumni, the vast majority of respondents to the survey said that their level of English was high enough for their academic career. See Appendix 1 for the link to this report.

# Section 8: UCAS Application Form and Offers

## The UCAS Application Form

Institutions need to be aware that:

1. In the **Qualifications Section** of the UCAS form EB students will **not** have GCSE results to record. They will instead provide their overall mark for Year 6 (Year 12 in the UK system) in each subject. This reflects both internal examinations and continuous assessment and is expressed as a mark out of 10.
2. Students may **occasionally** give their overall mark for Year 5 in selected subjects if they are felt to be particularly relevant to the proposed course of study, but have not been taken in Year 6.
3. All subjects (with the exception of religion/moral education) count towards the final EB score, though only certain subjects are taken in the final written and oral examinations (see Section 7 of this document for further details).
4. Around half of European School applicants to UK universities are likely to be non-British or Irish nationals and will not therefore have studied English as their mother tongue.

## Typical offers to candidates

In the past, universities have made the following types of offers:

- Specifying an overall EB score (as a percentage).
- Specifying an overall EB score (%) combined with marks out of 10 in specific subjects.

Institutions should consider the following points:

1. Offers asking only for a final EB score are most suitable for subjects requiring a broad education, with evidence of attainment across a wide curriculum.
2. For degree courses not requiring any specific subject knowledge on entry, the breadth of the EB should be seen as an advantage.
3. It would be very unusual to require students to obtain the pass mark (6) in **every** subject.
4. For courses which prescribe certain A level subjects, institutions may wish to specify the marks to be attained in particular subjects.
5. It would be very unusual to specify marks in more than three subjects, even for the most competitive courses.

6. Institutions may require evidence of the applicant's fluency in English, but it should not be necessary to include a specific requirement that the applicant undertakes a separate examination such as the IELTS.

Guidelines about the marks in English that institutions may feel they need to request are given in Section 7 of this booklet.

# Appendix 1: Further Information Sources and Useful Addresses

The European Schools website, which includes links to each individual school:

<http://www.eursc.eu/>

Parliament report: a full report produced by van Dijk Management Consultants (Brussels) from the University of Liège in 2008:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/studies/download.do?file=22931>

PISA Report on European School of Luxembourg:

[http://www.euroschool.lu/luxschool/pisa/EE\\_PISA\\_2006.pdf](http://www.euroschool.lu/luxschool/pisa/EE_PISA_2006.pdf)

## Appendix 2: European Baccalaureate Scores and Degree Performance

Examples of final degree results of 2003/04 EB graduates entering UK Higher Education.

**Please note:** this table contains only a part of the results for this cohort of students.

EB score (%)	Institution	Course of Study – Arts/Languages	Degree result	EB English Level
75	Falmouth, Kingston	Art Foundation Fashion Design	2.1	L1
75	Kings College London	Classics & English	2.2	L1
78	Nottingham	English & Philosophy	2.1	L1
80	Edinburgh	Classics & Ancient History	2.1	L1
83	Trinity Dublin	Film Studies with French	2.1	L3
89	Edinburgh	English Literature	1	L1

EB score (%)	Institution	Course of Study – Human, Social & Political Sciences	Degree result	EB English Level
73	Kings College London then LSE	Politics & International Relations	2.1	L2
76	Nottingham	Geography	2.1	L2
79	St Andrews	International Relations	2.1	L1
80	York	Environment, Ecology & Economics	1	L1
82	Edinburgh	Geography & Economics	2.2	L3
84	Manchester	PPE	2.1	L1
85	University College London	Anthropology & Geography	1	L1
87	Warwick	Politics & International Studies	2.1	L2
90	York	Environmental Science	1	L2
91	York	PPE	1	L1

EB score (%)	Institution	Course of Study – Business/ Management/Economics	Degree result	EB English Level
82	Design Academy Eindhoven	Management & Communication	2.1	L2
87	LSE	Economics	1	L2

EB score (%)	Institution	Course of Study – Law	Degree result	EB English Level
67	Kent	Law	2.2	L1
76	Sussex	Law with French Law	2.2	L1
80	Kings College London	Law & French	2.1	L1
86	University College London	Law with French Law	2.1	L1
87	Cambridge	Law	2.1	L2
91	KCL	English & French Law	1	L1

EB score (%)	Institution	Course of Study – Mathematics/ Science	Degree result	EB English Level
72	Imperial College London	Chemistry	3	L1
74	Warwick	Biochemistry	3	L1
74	Nottingham Trent	Sports Science & Maths	2.2	L1
78	Imperial College London	Physics	2.2	L1
79	Sussex	Multimedia/Computing	2.1	L2
81	The University of Bath	Physics	2.2	L1
81	Imperial College London	Mathematics	1	L1
84	Cambridge	Natural Sciences	2.1	L1
84	University College London	Astrophysics	1	L1
86	Edinburgh	Mathematics	1	L1
87	Cambridge	Natural Sciences – Biochemistry	2.1	L2

<b>EB score (%)</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Course of Study – Engineering</b>	<b>Degree result</b>	<b>EB English Level</b>
88	Imperial College London	Electrical & Electronic Engineering	1	L2

<b>EB score (%)</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Course of Study – Medicine</b>	<b>Degree result</b>	<b>EB English Level</b>
82	Manchester	Medicine	MBChB	L1
89	Edinburgh	Medicine	MBChB	L1

# Appendix 3: European Baccalaureate to English 'A' Level and UCAS Tariff Conversion Table

**Please note: this is only an *approximate guide* and *not* an official conversion table.**

Three A level Points	A level grades	% European Baccalaureate
360	AAA	84+
		83
		82
		81
340	AAB	80
		79
		78
320	ABB	77
		76
300	BBB	75
		74
280	BBC	73
		72
		71
260	BCC	70
		69
240	CCC	68
		67
220	CCD	66
		65
200	CDD	64
		63
180	DDD	62
		61
160	DDE	60

## Appendix 4: Case Studies

### Joanna (Brussels)

Art was always my passion at school so after taking my Baccalaureate with Art and Philosophy as optional subjects I took a foundation course in Art and Design at University College Falmouth which I passed with distinction. I then went on to Kingston University for a BA in Fashion Design which I passed with a 2.1, receiving a recommendation for my dissertation. I am now working as an assistant Fashion Designer in New York City for American Eagle Outfitters.

### Francesca (Varese)

After gaining the Baccalaureate I continued my studies in Scotland. I chose to study biology at Glasgow University, because the modular course structure allowed me to continue studying a broad range of subjects, as I had done at the European School. I eventually graduated in Genetics, after completing a work placement in a pharmaceutical company. Having decided a career in research was not for me, I joined the auditors Deloitte and Touche, to develop business experience. I later moved into business consulting with McKinsey and Company, and more recently, organisational consulting in Sierra Leone with the Office of Tony Blair.

### Chris (Munich)

At the European School in Munich, my favourite subjects were biology and geography. I also studied Spanish as my 3rd language as I thought it would help for work and travel abroad. Growing up bilingually (English and German) meant adding a third language was easier and this has proved very useful in my career since obtaining the European Baccalaureate in 1998. At Sussex University I studied Biology with North American History and Politics, in order to keep my options open. After my degree, I worked for NGOs running Marine Conservation projects in Central America, and then agricultural and community projects in South America. This was made easier due to my early exposure to Spanish and ability to communicate with diverse groups of stakeholders (another benefit of being educated in an EU framework). After five years running these projects, and taking a Masters Degree (Environment & Development with Spanish at Kings College London) my final project included securing funding for, recruiting for, and managing the building of a 300 child primary school in Mozambique (Spanish again helped being similar to Portuguese). This fulfilling and rewarding experience brought that chapter full circle and demonstrated the value of a European School education. I am currently beginning a new job with Natural England; running stakeholder participation for the setting up of Marine Protected Areas in the UK, part of the EU habitats directive.

### **Frederik (Brussels)**

I am German, but grew up in Brussels. I studied in the German section and going to a European School was a great experience. You go to school with people from all over Europe and get used to foreign languages by using them with your friends on a daily basis. My second language was English and I took French as a third language. Furthermore, History, Geography and Economics were taught in English. I really appreciated the breadth of subjects to which we were exposed and the multilingual aspect of the studies. In my last year I had 11 subjects taught in 3 languages! After finishing the European Baccalaureate I chose to study Economics in London and I feel that the education I received at school had prepared me very well for university. I had as much mathematical background as most other people on my course, but some of the others seemed to lack knowledge in History, Philosophy or Current Affairs, which are also very important when studying Economics.

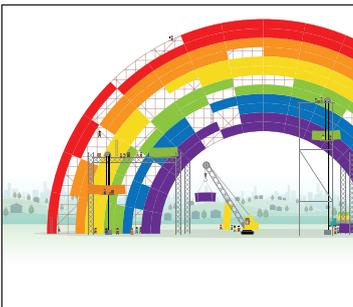
### **Aura (Brussels)**

I am Finnish by nationality, and have so far lived and studied in Finland, Denmark, Belgium and the United Kingdom. I spent six years at the European School, and graduated in 2004. In European Schools each EU country is represented by their own language section, so the diversity of languages, cultures and people is impressive. After the first culture-shock, one comes to appreciate the richness and experience gained from such a multi-cultural atmosphere. I did not want to return to Finland after finishing the European Baccalaureate. I am very patriotic and am passionate about my country, but felt that it did not fulfil my need for internationality. Instead, I chose to study Environmental Science at the University of York in England. The high quality teaching of Biology and Geography at the school had prepared me well for my studies, but the value of the European School goes way beyond the academic. One is able to bring a more international breeze to coffee break debates and to form a more balanced point of view on many issues. It is also an asset in the more casual part of social life if nothing else, by being able to boast about the number of languages one can speak!

## Corinne (Culham)

I attended both the primary and the secondary of the European School in Culham in the French language section. I did a Baccalaureate in which I chose to specialise in the humanities while maintaining mathematics, science, languages and the other compulsory subjects. It was a syllabus that suited me very well as it enabled me to keep my options open and have a rounded education – ideal for someone who didn't have a strong sense of what career they wanted to go into.

After a gap year in South America during which I was able to use my languages, I studied Geography at Cambridge. It was a varied degree which included statistics as well as human, cultural and physical Geography and my grounding in mathematics, science, history and philosophy proved useful. Outside the lecture theatre I also felt I benefited from having continued sport and other less 'academic' subjects all the way through school. Since university, I have worked as a market and social researcher. In my initial role I organised research at international conferences and was called on for ad hoc work in the European arm of the company because of my language skills. Later, I used my languages for international accounts and I have little doubt this made the nature of my work more interesting. My current employment focuses on the UK arena, but I imagine languages and a broad education may prove a useful plus in an increasingly competitive job market.



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