



Schola Europaea

Office of the Secretary-General

European Baccaalaureate Unit

Ref.: 2014-06-D-5-en-5

Orig.: EN

## **Proposal for the harmonisation of the L1 written examination in the European Baccaalaureate**

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**BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Meeting of 15, 16 and 17 April 2015 in Prague

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### **Harmonisation of the L1 written examinations**

Document 2011-01-D-61-en-3 “Assessment policy in the European Schools” provides a broad framework to guide assessment and evaluation practices in the European Schools. It establishes a competence-based approach in line with EU strategic documents.

Assessment and evaluation must be coherent with teaching practices and with the reference documents guiding the way a subject is taught and learnt. In this sense, the adoption of a competence-based approach for assessment and evaluation implies that all syllabuses must be revised or rewritten in order to follow the same competence-based approach. They must contain specific assessment and evaluation criteria for every cycle. Band descriptors for the different levels of attainment of competences by pupils must also be produced. This is an ongoing task that should be finalised as soon as possible and in any case by September 2017 for the European Baccalaureate cycle.

L1 examinations, just like the rest of the subjects’, must measure to which extent pupils have attained **all** competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) required after a given period of teaching and learning. In this sense, Baccalaureate examination papers must be comprehensive and aim at covering all the main areas in the syllabus. They must avoid that pupils may neglect or leave out certain parts of the syllabus, as stated in document 2014-10-D-3 “Structure of the European Baccalaureate written papers: Harmonisation”.

A major step towards elaborating comprehensive, fair, valid and reliable exams has been the abolition of choice questions as decided by the board of Governors in April 2012 (See 2012-04-D-9-en-3) in most subjects.

L1 papers must also have a common structure and must assess all required competences avoiding that pupils may neglect or leave out parts of the different L1 syllabuses.

The competence model in the annex of this document is proposed as the basis for the harmonisation of L1 syllabuses and assessment practices. This document also proposes a common framework for L1 Baccalaureate papers

## II. COMPETENCE MODEL

By the end of year 7 pupils should have attained the following competences:

- a) Subject-specific competences in the narrower sense: the ability to elaborate a personal interpretation and to express different points of view using different sources of information and set texts or book(s) covering a wide range of social, cultural, political and literary topics.
- b) Subject-specific competences in the broader sense: differentiated communication skills and interpersonal and social skills through engagement and reflection on language, literature and media.
- c) Cross-curricular competences: acquisition of learner independence and autonomy. Development of metacognitive strategies and techniques such as academic writing and presentation skills in order to guarantee success in further education.

These competences will be acquired in the course of the secondary education from the orientation cycle (1<sup>st</sup> cycle) up to the Baccalaureate cycle (3<sup>rd</sup> cycle). They can be learnt and assessed separately or in combination. They are:

- Reading competence
- Writing competence
- Argumentation/reasoning competence
- Interpretation competence
- Subject and specialist competence
- Language awareness
- Critical thinking competence.

A description of these competences can be found in the annex to this document. They will serve as reference for the assessment in European Baccalaureate L1 written examinations.

## III. STRUCTURE OF THE L1 WRITTEN EXAMINATION IN THE EUROPEAN BACCALAUREATE

### 1. Objectives

This examination seeks to assess the candidates' ability to comprehend intellectually complex literary and non-literary texts and to make connections between the contents of the text, their knowledge of the subject and their personal context. Candidates must be able to produce coherent written texts (argumentation and interpretation).

In addition, the examination seeks to assess the ability to write texts reflecting linguistic and situational appropriateness.

The examination must be comprehensive so that all competences are assessed in such a way that candidates may not neglect or leave out parts of the syllabus.

## 2. Examination content

The written examination will be based on the contents covered in years 6 and 7, whilst also incorporating and drawing on competences acquired earlier.

## 3. Length of the examination

The time allowed for the examination is 240 minutes.

## 4. Form of the examination

The examination requires candidates to read, reflect, interpret and produce writing related to the proposed texts.

## 5. Number of examination tasks

**One, two or three compulsory tasks.** Sub-tasks may be proposed. **If only one task is set, it must contain sub-tasks.**

## 6. Nature of texts

The examination will include both literary and non-literary texts.

Texts must be authentic

Long factual or descriptive texts or texts that could offend the candidates' sensibilities or disturb their consciences must be avoided.

## 7. Text complexity

The level of difficulty of the texts, i.e. vocabulary (lexical range), syntactical complexity, density of content, level of abstraction and register used must be appropriate for the assessment of the competences of candidates who have studied the language in question as L1 for a period of 12 years.

## 8. Length of texts

The total length of all the texts in the examination paper will be between 1000 and 1600 words. **If the chosen texts include a poem(s) the minimum number of words needn't be respected.**

The lines will be numbered in fives and the accurate source of the texts will be provided.

## 9. Tasks relating to set books or topics in the syllabus

Tasks may also relate to the set books or topics dealt with in years 6 and / or 7. They can be aimed at assessing the interpretation competence / argumentation competence

## 10. Examination proposals.

Examination proposals must be original. Texts and tasks used in class must not be used as examination proposals.

## 11. Material aids

No material aids are allowed

Annotations to clarify vocabulary, idiomatic expressions or facts can be provided (A maximum of 8 annotations for all the texts).

## **12. Font**

The font used in the L1 examination paper will be Arial 12

## **13. Assessment of candidates' performance**

Assessment relates to the standards of attainment of competences, which are built on the learning objectives for years 6 and 7.

Assessment criteria and marking guidelines for each examination must be provided. Suggested answers may also be provided.

## **IV. PROPOSAL**

The Board of Inspectors is requested to approve the present document for its implementation at the latest for the Baccalaureate session 2018. It can be implemented earlier if the inspectors responsible for the different L1 consider it convenient.

The Joint Teaching Committee is requested to take note of the present document for its information.

## **V. OPINION OF THE BOARD OF INSPECTORS (SECONDARY)**

The BIS approved the document 'Proposal for harmonisation of the Language 1 written examinations', with revision of Annex I to the document and harmonisation of the French language version.

## **VI. PROPOSAL**

The Board of Governors is requested to take note of the present document for its information.

Annex I : Description of the competence model

Annex II :Examples of models for harmonised L 1 Examination papers

## **Annex I: THE COMPETENCE MODEL <sup>1</sup>**

### **READING COMPETENCE**

Identifying and using the general and particular information which a text contains.

Ability to reflect on the purpose of the text, on the communication objectives, on what the text articulates, on the intention of the author/narrator, on the different respective viewpoints, whatever the kind of text.

Competence: Reading

- Sub-competences:
1. Understanding and using information.
  2. Picking out the significant details in the text.
  3. Analysing the significant details in texts from a linguistic viewpoint.

### **WRITING COMPETENCE**

Ability to use language with sufficiently accurate syntax, vocabulary and spelling.

Ability to produce texts which comply with the instruction given and with their context.

Ability to use different language registers and the stylistic devices which are suited to the kind of text and to the theme.

Competence: Writing

- Sub-competences:
1. Producing texts which take account of the target readership
  2. Meeting textuality criteria
  3. Meeting style / expression criteria
  4. Formal accuracy, compliance with the rules.

### **ARGUING/REASONING COMPETENCE**

Ability to argue on contentious questions and important, not to say controversial issues of a social, political and/or cultural nature, by adopting different viewpoints.

Ability to convince, to persuade, to refute or to take a line of argument on board, using theses, arguments and examples.

Ability to formulate a clear, structured and coherent strategy for presenting arguments based on linguistically appropriate means (syntactical, lexical and grammatical elements).

Competence: Arguing

Sub-competences:

1. Identifying and presenting lines of argument
2. Appraising strategies for presenting arguments in a given text
3. Forming a personal opinion on a set theme.

### **INTERPRETATION COMPETENCE**

Ability to put forward explanations and to evaluate and appraise polysemic sources, such as poetic texts, songs and images. Ability to recognise the extra-linguistic factors which determine language use (pragmatic awareness).

Interpretation competence allows the meaning of the text as it has been understood to be transcribed in a personal text, drawing on knowledge external to the text and formulating interpretation hypotheses.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the document "Standardisierte kompetenzorientierte Reife- und Diplomprüfung im Klausurfach Deutsch" by the "Schriftliche Reife- und Diplomprüfung Deutsch (AHS und BHS)" WG at Apen-Adria Universität. [https://www.bifie.at/system/files/dl/srdp\\_de\\_positionspapier\\_2012-04-19.pdf](https://www.bifie.at/system/files/dl/srdp_de_positionspapier_2012-04-19.pdf)

Sub-competences:

1. Grasping the source text's intentions and reporting them critically
2. Formulating interpretation hypotheses.

### **SCIENTIFIC COMPETENCE**

Knowing the relevant concepts and the terminology of the subject areas.

Knowing the main aspects of a subject and its links with others.

Specialist competence in a subject is expressed through the use of appropriate language and the accuracy of the content presented. Scientific competence encompasses knowledge of the world and knowledge of scientific subjects in L1.

Sub-competences:

1. Identifying and understanding a theme or facts and their context
2. Drawing on knowledge external to the text (knowledge of the world and of topics)
3. Drawing on and selecting specialist knowledge.

### **LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE**

This involves both reading and writing competence. This competence is demonstrated in the ability to analyse the features of a given text and in the student's ability to create and appraise his or her personal text as a language act (related to the form of discourse and the communication context).

### **CRITICAL THINKING COMPETENCE**

This involves reflection on social reality, the concepts of reality and their transcription in forms of linguistic expression.

Personal reflection and meta-reflection play a decisive role in honing critical thinking skills. The effects of this reflection provide leverage for the student's personal action.

## **Annex II – EXAMPLES OF MODELS FOR HARMONISED L1 EXAMINATION PAPERS**

According to this Document 2014-06-D-5-en-3 “Proposal for the harmonisation of the L1 written examination in the European Baccalaureate”, an L I exam paper should:

1. Assess all required competences so that candidates may not neglect or leave out parts of the syllabus.
2. Contain one, two or three tasks, sub-tasks possible. Necessary if only one task.
3. Include literary and non-literary texts with 1000 to 1600 words. Minimum number needn't be respected if poems are included.

In the following 6 possible models for L1 written papers are presented. They are all based on the 3 rules from the above mentioned document.

### **Model 1:**

- A. A literary text (around 800 words – 1 task: make an analysis and an interpretation of the text).  
Competences tested: reading competence, writing competence, interpretation competence, subject and specialist competence, language awareness, critical thinking competence.
- B. A non-literary text (around 400 words 1 task: Make a presentation of the points of view and a characterisation of the argumentation form. Give your opinion on the points of view)  
Competences tested: reading competence, writing competence, argumentation competence, subject and specialist competence, language awareness, critical thinking competence.  
There may be no relation between A and B.

### **Model 2:**

- A. A literary text (around 400 words 1 task: make an analysis of the text).  
A poem (around 200 words, 1 task: interpret the poem and compare it to the text 1).  
There is a thematic relation between the two texts.  
Competences tested: reading competence, writing competence, interpretation competence, subject and specialist competence, language awareness, critical thinking competence.
- B. A non-literary text (around 600 words: Make a presentation of the points of view and a characterisation of the argumentation form.  
Competences tested: reading competence, writing competence, argumentation competence, subject and specialist competence, language awareness.

### **Model 3:**

- A. A poem (around 400 words, 1 task: make an analysis and an interpretation of the text).  
Competences tested: reading competence, writing competence, interpretation competence, subject and specialist competence, language awareness, critical thinking competence.



- B. A non-literary text (around 400 words: Make a presentation of the points of view and a characterisation of the argumentation form).  
Another non-literary text (around 400 words: compare the two texts and discuss them).  
Competences tested: reading competence, writing competence, argumentation competence, subject and specialist competence, language awareness and critical thinking competence.

**Model 4:**

- A. A literary text (900 around words: 1 task: make an analysis and an interpretation of the text).  
Competences tested: reading competence, writing competence, interpretation competence, subject and specialist competence, language awareness, critical thinking competence.
- B. A quotation from a non-literary text (around 150 words: Compare the text to the literary quotation.)  
Competences tested: reading competence, writing competence, argumentation competence, subject and specialist competence, language awareness, critical thinking competence

**Model 5:**

- A. A literary text (around 1000 words: Analyse the works of XXX, taking a quotation as a starting point.)  
Competences tested: reading competence, writing competence, argumentation competence, subject and specialist competence, language awareness, critical thinking competence.
- B. A quotation from a non-literary text (around 150 words: Compare the text to the literary quotation.)  
Competences tested: reading competence, writing competence, argumentation competence, subject and specialist competence, language awareness, critical thinking competence

**Model 6:**

- A. Poetry (1 task: make an analysis and interpretation of the text, including comparison if two texts are set).  
Competences tested: reading competence, writing competence, interpretation competence, subject and specialist competence, language awareness, critical thinking competence.
- B. Prose (1 task: present the ideas and points of view expressed and analyse/evaluate the methods used to communicate them, including comparison if two texts are set).  
Competences tested: reading competence, writing competence, argumentation competence, subject and specialist competence, language awareness, critical thinking competence.
- C. Set texts / books and theme (choice of 1 task from two: present an analysis and evaluation of how at least two writers present ideas and achieve their effects).

Competences tested: reading competence, writing competence, reasoning competence, interpretation competence, subject and specialist knowledge, language awareness, critical thinking competence.

If one text is set in Part A, two texts will be set in Part B, or *vice versa*. Parts A and B are not linked. The examination will contain literary and non-literary texts.

**Model 7:**

Choice between two tasks.

Each task will have sub-tasks.

Each task will contain

Either:

A longer literary text(s) that may be also accompanied of a reference to the literary works covered during years 6 and 7 and a shorter non-literary text(s) that may be also accompanied of a reference to a non-literary topic. Both will be related. The tasks set will be aimed at assessing all required competences.

Or:

A longer non-literary text(s) that may be also accompanied of a reference to a non-literary topic and a shorter literary text(s) that may be also accompanied of a reference to the literary works covered during years 6 and 7. Both will be related. The tasks set will be aimed at assessing all required competences.