

## The French baccalaureate until 2020

### 1. What is the French Baccalaureate or the Bac?

- The French Baccalaureate is a three-year college-preparatory program.

To succeed, students must demonstrate thorough knowledge in a wide variety of compulsory academic disciplines as well as in-depth understanding of their chosen field of specialization.

- It is culminating in an extensive, national examination taken at the end of the “Lycée” (High School), upon completion of 11th and 12th grade. It marks the successful conclusion of secondary studies and it is the required qualification in France for students wishing to carry on their studies in Higher Education.

Worldwide, each year, The French Baccalaureate is prepared by more than 12000 students in 250 French accredited schools abroad in more than 100 countries.

- The French Baccalaureate (Bac) is the diploma that marks the completion of a French high school program and follows the curriculum guidelines established by the French Ministry of Education, a demanding pre-university program of study taught entirely in French. A diploma from a French International high school reflects success in a demanding, comprehensive, integrated, internationally-based college preparatory program unique in Australia.

- France's Baccalaureate is divided into three types – general (53% of the students), technological (23%) and professional (26%) -

with the "general" type being further divided into "scientific", "socio-economic" and "literary" streams, each denoting different combinations of exam papers.

In Australia and other countries, French schools prepare students for the General Baccalaureate with academic concentrations in one of three streams, or séries, corresponding to their scholastic aptitudes or future college plans: Languages and Literature (L) Economics and Social Sciences (ES) Mathematics and Experimental Sciences (S)

### 2. A challenging and comprehensive curriculum

In every basic subject at a French lycée, each student receives a solid education that develops their intellectual curiosity and critical thinking. It is an outstanding preparation to post-secondary education.

At the end of the lycée program, regardless of the chosen specialization, all students have acquired a solid educational background by taking at least:

- 3 years of English courses, another foreign language and Civic Education
- 2 years of courses in Biology, Physics and Chemistry, French Literature, Mathematics, History and Geography
- 1 year of courses in Economics and Sociology, as well as Philosophy.

All students study a wide variety of subjects: French, two other languages, Sciences, History-Geography, Philosophy, Physical & Sports Education and, should they wish to do so, one or two elective subjects.

The quantity of work required is substantial but most is covered in class; hence, daily written homework tasks are limited. There is no continuous assessment element to the French Bac.

- As a complement to their programme, students are encouraged to select one or two options : these may be: a fourth or fifth language, Art or another sport. In doing so, students increase their overall chance of passing the Baccalaureate as only scores obtained for an option which are higher than 10/20 will be taken into account and included in the general average.
- In their first year of the French Baccalaureate, students must undertake their TPE/Supervised and Personalised Projects in groups of 2 or 3. TPE is defined as a piece of original personal research which aims to allow students to study an interdisciplinary topic linked to the dominant subjects.
- In their final year, students select a spécialité ; the teaching periods of the subject and the final weighting will be increased.

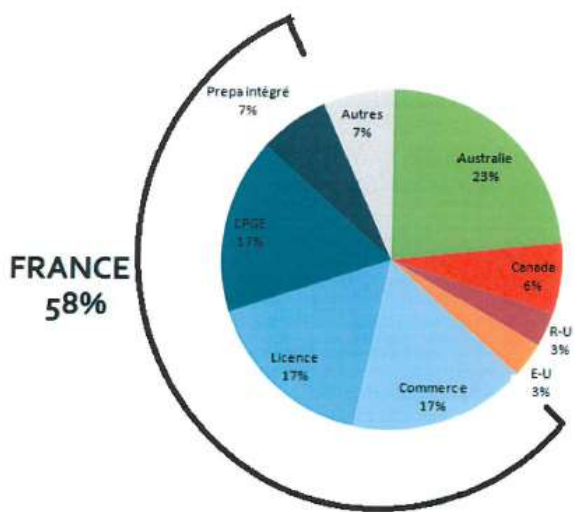
Most of the students in the French high schools in Australia have followed a bilingual curriculum from K to Y12, and, besides, they also master a third language.

The International French School of Sydney follows the NSW curriculum as well as the French one. It is fully accredited by NESA and receive subsidies.

The French high schools offer more than one level of English in the standard Baccalaureate program. Courses that prepare students for the French Baccalaureate are taught at the college level. As a result, most of both Canadian and US colleges and universities for example grant college credit or scholarship to French secondary graduates on the basis of their performance on the Baccalaureate.

Students from French schools in Australia pursue more than 50% of their higher education in Australia or in another Anglo-Saxon country where the French diploma is highly recognised.

In the International French school of Sydney, in 2018:  
23% of the students pursued their education in Australia,  
6% in Canada,  
3% in England  
3% in US.



They do it very well because they are well prepared and have an excellent knowledge of the countries, their university system and their expectations.

Their bilingualism, even their multilingualism is an asset sought by world universities as the international openness that our students enjoy throughout their schooling. They have the opportunity to participate to projects with the schools of the countries of the Asia-Pacific area. French Agency for French Education Abroad – AEFÉ- is to coordinate, guide these common projects in different countries, defining to allow the 500 schools and 350.000 students, that are part of its network to respect the French recommendations and curricula.

### 3. The three series (groups of subjects)



Students can follow one of three series: literature (L), Economics and Social Studies (ES) and Sciences and Math (S).

Within the tracks, certain courses are considered to be more challenging than others and are weighted more heavily. All students study take the common core subjects: French, two other languages, Sciences, History-Geography, Philosophy (T/12th), Physical & Sports Education and, should they wish to do so, one or two elective subjects (see options below). The level of difficulty of some subjects will depend on the série chosen. In 12th grade or Terminale, the students must also select a “speciality or SPE” (see below).

Terminale ES	Maths or Economics (honors)
Terminale L	Maths or 4th language (LV3) German, Arabic, Spanish or other...
Terminale S	Maths (honors), Physics-Chemistry (honors), Biology (SVT), or Computer Science*

\*Computing Science and Digital (ISN – Informatique et science du numérique)

The speciality adds teaching time in the subject and the value of the subject counts more in the overall baccalaureate score.

### ❖ Bac L (Literature)

This track is based on literature, philosophy and foreign languages. It is recommended for those students looking to read law, literature and languages at university. The content of the Science and Mathematics programmes corresponds to a general culture and understanding in these areas. Students take a programme of literature in a foreign language. The literature course has a separate exam which is distinct from the French exam and is taken at the end of the final year. A spécialité must be chosen from the following: reinforcement of a modern language, third language, Latin or Art.

Subjects and number of hours per year

Subjects	Première	Terminale	Weight for the final exam
French	136	-	5

Philosophy	-	272	7
French Literature	68	68	2
English Literature	68	51	
English	85	68	4
Foreign language 2	68	68	4
History/Geography	153	153	4
Science	51	-	2
Physical education and sport	68	68	2
Specialisation: choose one			
Complementary foreign language	102	102	2
Foreign language 3	102	102	2
Latin or Ancient Greek	102	102	2
Mathematics	102	136	2
Maximum 2 options from the following:			
Latin or Ancient Greek	102	102	3
Art	102	102	2
Cinema	102	102	2
Theatre	102	102	2

### ❖ Bac ES: Economics and Social sciences

This serie is recommended for those students who are considering a future in Economics or Law. It has a good balance of human sciences, languages and Mathematics. Science is reduced to one course of Biology. In terms of the obligatory specialty , Economic Sciences or Mathematics may be reinforced with a supplementary question at the obligatory written test. Mathematics is usefully reinforced for future students of HEC (Hautes Ecoles Commerciales) or Economics at university.

Subjects and number of hours per year

Subjects	Première	Terminale	Weight for the final exam
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Economics and social sciences	170	170	7
Mathematics	102	136	5
History/Geography	153	153	5
French	136	-	4
Science	51	-	2
Philosophy	-	136	4
English	85	68	3
Foreign Language 2	68	68	3
Physical education and sport	68	68	2
Spécialization: choose one			
Mathematics	-	51	2
Social and political Science	-	51	2
Advanced Economics	-	51	2
Maximum 2 options from the following:			
Latin or Ancient Greek	102	102	3
Art	102	102	2
Cinema	102	102	2
Theatre	102	102	2

### ❖ Bac S : Science and mathematics

This série focuses on the sciences and is only appropriate for students who are very good at science. Having a Bac S paves the way for study at all universities and is essential for all grandes écoles scientifiques, medical schools and for reading the sciences at university. It is also recommended for anyone interested in a good foundation for the “grandes écoles commerciales” (the top business schools in France). One of the three scientific areas must be chosen as a spécialité, which will add 2 points to its coefficient and leads to a different question in the obligatory written test.

Subjects and number of hours per year

Subjects	Première	Terminale	Weight for the final exam
Mathematics	136	204	7
Physics/Chemistry	102	170	6
Life and Earth Science	102	119	6
French	136	-	4
Philosophy	-	102	3
English	85	102	3
Foreign Language 2	68	102	2
History/Geography	153	-	3
Physical education and sport	68	68	2
Specialisation: choose one			
Mathematics	-	68	2
Physics/Chemistry	-	68	2
Life and Earth Science	-	68	2
Maximum 2 options from the following:			
Latin or Ancient Greek	102	102	3
Art	102	102	2
Cinema	102	102	2
Theatre	102	102	2
History/Geography	-	68	2

#### 4. The « Option Internationale du Baccalauréat » (OIB) British section - Lycée Condorcet - Sydney

Bilingual students wishing to study at overseas universities may also opt to take the « Option Internationale du Baccalauréat » (OIB) – British section.

At the lycée (High school), students have 4h of English classes and 2h of history classes in English added to the mainstream curriculum.

OIB is an additional option to the general baccalaureate which offers more subjects taught from a British perspective and taken in English, and which is totally different from the International Baccalaureate (IB). These additional exams are offered in literature, history and geography allowing a higher grade to be achieved towards the final baccalaureate mark.

The OIB provides students with a university entrance qualification valid in UK, North America and France. It makes academic and linguistic demands on an equal level in English and French. Cambridge University and the French Ministry of Education work in partnership to implement and ensure the quality of the British section of the OIB.



France is the only country in the world to have officially incorporated an optional international component into its established secondary school curriculum: the OIB. The Option Internationale du Baccalauréat is not a separate diploma but rather a specialization within the framework of the French Baccalaureate.

Students prepare for the British section of the OIB during the last two years of the Lycée (classes of Première and Terminale) and final examinations of the OIB cover the curriculum taught in these last two years. The English language and literature segment of the OIB is a rigorous program taught entirely in English in seminar style classes, which include up to five hours of classroom time. The OIB history and geography program includes up to four hours of classroom per week. Both sections culminate in written and oral exams in English.

### ❖ OIB Courses and Exams

Candidates studying English language and literature follow a curriculum set by the Inspection Générale, which is part of the French Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the subject-level Inspectors and the teacher-examiners. The curriculum comprises 12 literary works chosen from a variety of genres, representing diversity in the ethnic backgrounds and genders of the authors.

In history-geography, the teaching structure is bilingual, as the program of study includes American teachers who teach the history portion and French teachers or French-speaking teachers, who teach geography based on a French pedagogical tradition. Candidates who study history and geography follow a themed-based curriculum established by the French Ministry of Education. At the end of the multiyear course work, OIB students take a 4-hour written examination in each of the two subjects as well as a 30 minute oral examination in language and literature and a 20 minute oral examination in history and geography, in addition to the French Baccalaureate.



### ❖ Benefits of the OIB

- OIB students learn to handle an unusually heavy workload, and to prioritize conflicting commitments.
- OIB students acquire a cultural mobility — the ability to think from a French cultural viewpoint or an English cultural viewpoint — that gives them different perspectives on their university studies, whatever the subject.
- OIB students have learned different approaches to thinking and methodology from two different education systems; this can give them unusual flexibility in problem solving or in adopting a suitable method for a particular task.
- The OIB is a rigorous program devoted to educational excellence and sets high performance standards for students and faculty.
- The OIB involves dedicated and creative teachers committed to their students, their disciplines, and their profession.
- The OIB attracts highly motivated students who wish to excel academically and attend the most selective colleges and universities.
- The OIB program provides for articulation between middle school and high school, terminating with the French Baccalaureate.
- In support of the academic program, the OIB offers professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators worldwide.

## 5. Assessing the French Baccalaureate

The national French Baccalaureate examination consists of analysing a set of texts — one in each of the subjects that comprise the série that the student has followed. Students are required to compose essays that demonstrate not only depth of comprehension and analytical ability, but also extrapolation from acquired knowledge to new situations. The written parts of the French Baccalaureate last a week, and depending on the students' série, encompass 17 to 23 hours of testing.

Baccalaureate exams are taken over a two-year period: students usually take three to four exams at the end of the first year, such as in French literature (oral and written exams) and the presentation of the TPE. Students take their main subjects at the end of their final year.

### ➤ Graduation Standards

A student's success on the Baccalaureate exam is the sole criterion for satisfactory completion of high school. The Baccalaureate exam is graded on a 20-point scale. A 10/20 or higher is a passing grade. Between 12 and 13.99 receive "Mention Assez Bien" (Honors), between 14 and 15.99 receive "Mention Bien" (High Honors,) and above 16 receive "Mention Très Bien" (Highest Honors). A grade of 20/20 is a perfect score and is rarely awarded. Depending of the subject a grade of 15, 16 are considered excellent result. In some subjects a grade of 12 can even be considered a fairly good result.

As a result, grades earned by French Baccalaureate students are converted for entry into Australian universities

In Canberra, all French Baccalaureate courses delivered at Narrabundah College undertaken by French Baccalaureate students are recognised in full and reported on the **ACT Year 12 Certificate**. Provided they met the normal ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) conditions for its award, completing students receive an ACT Year 12 Certificate in December of the year they complete their French Baccalaureate with "satisfactory" grades reported on the certificate for units completed at Narrabundah College.

### ➤ French Bac results in Australia

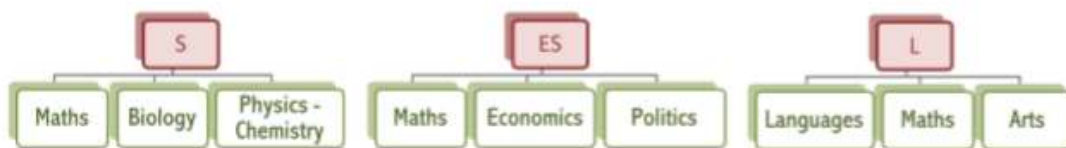
Despite being a small cohort, the students graduating with the French Baccalaureate from Lycée Condorcet and Telopea Park School/ Lycée franco-australien de Canberra achieve outstanding results, which place them at the same level as the most prestigious high schools in France.

	in France		In Australia
	88%		100%
including	15%	with High Honors (B)	26 %
	8%	with Highest Honors (TB)	48,1%

## 6. What choices does the French Bac offer?

- Choice of série to direct one's studies towards the areas of interest, skills and university plans
- Choice of spécialité to give more weight to one subject
- Choice of options to use one's talents in languages, arts or sports
- Opportunity to take the International Option – with English Literature and History Geography

*Choice of série to direct one's studies towards the areas of interest, skills and university plans*



*Choice of spécialité to give more weighting to one subject*

*Choice of one or two options to use one's talents in languages, arts or sports*



## 7. What are the major advantages of the French Bac programme?

- The French Baccalaureate prepares students extremely well for the rigours of university study through the skills that are developed.
- Students will develop first and foremost, skills of reasoning, analysis and synthesis. They will be required to demonstrate a critical mind, for example, during philosophy class discussions, and need to show initiative and creative skills, especially for the TPE (personal project work).
- The French Baccalaureate develops structured argumentative rigour through written tasks and oral presentation skills which will be assessed by an examiner from anywhere in Asia-Pacifique AEFÉ.
- The choice of pathway allows students to study their chosen subjects in more depth whilst keeping a general dimension.
- Globally, the French Bac is considered to be a programme par excellence in preparation for further education.

## 8. To what extent is the French Bac recognized by universities?

The French Bac is widely recognized around the world.

English-speaking universities, particularly American ones, value the French Bac as it is often considered difficult to obtain. It is recognized as being a comprehensive rigorous program which guarantees in-depth knowledge.

To better meet the English requirements for entry to tertiary institutions in Australia, students in Canberra are enrolled in an English course during year 11, session 2, in addition to French Baccalaureate courses. It is sufficient to meet English entry requirements of some Australian Universities. Other Uni in Australia may require some additional evidence of English proficiency beyond the studies completed for the Baccalaureate. Taking the Cambridge examination offered by Telopea Park School/Lycée franco-australien de Canberra is strongly recommended.