



The English Baccalaureate

THE WRONG ANSWER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Over one million young people in the UK, who currently receive a maximum of £200 in additional academic subjects, do not study the combination of a baccalaureate that is considered to be the best preparation for the 21st century.

When launched in 2010, the EBacc allowed parents to track their children's progress at their secondary schools. It was a landmark moment in the history of the UK's education system.

It is a common mistake to think that the EBacc is a new initiative. In fact, it is a return to a traditional model of education that has been shown to be the most effective in preparing young people for the 21st century.

However, secondary schools have been slow to adopt it. In fact, only 10% of young people in the UK are currently studying the EBacc. This is a significant failure of the current system.

As more young people are directed towards the university route, the need for a broad and balanced baccalaureate will increase. The current system is not meeting the needs of all young people.

Where does technical education start in other countries?

21 countries

14 countries

16 countries

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Subject	2010/11	2012/13
Electronics products	10,000	12,000
Food technology	15,000	18,000
Design products	20,000	25,000
Business studies	30,000	35,000
Systems and control	40,000	45,000
Health technology	50,000	55,000
Other ICT*	60,000	65,000
Total	200,000	220,000

14-19 Education
A new Baccalaureate

Edge Foundation
Chairman of the Edge Foundation: Kenneth Baker

14-19 EDUCATION

A New Baccalaureate

“With hindsight, I now wish I had ended the National Curriculum at 14. We had assumed that our curriculum would meet the needs of all 14-16 year olds. Experience proved that we had been too prescriptive”

Kenneth Baker

A landmark paper making the case for a broad and balanced baccalaureate by Lord Kenneth Baker, former Secretary of State for Education.

Lord Baker sets out compelling international, historical and economic evidence to support the creation of a broad baccalaureate incorporating creative and technical education and recognising the achievements of all young people.

14-19 Education: A New Baccalaureate and many other Edge Foundation reports are available to download free of charge from www.edge.co.uk/research.



Champion of technical, practical and vocational learning

14-19 EDUCATION

A New Baccalaureate

English

Maths

Two Sciences

(e.g. Chemistry,
Computer Science)

Humanity

(e.g. History,
Foreign Language)

Creative

(e.g. Art, Music, Drama)

Technical

(e.g. D&T, BTEC)



The government is proposing that 90% of 14-16 year olds take the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), currently defined with a narrow academic focus on English literature, English language, maths, at least two sciences, a foreign language and either history or geography.

This is an old fashioned curriculum, almost identical to regulations introduced in 1904. Even these allowed for part-time technical education from the age of 12.

The value of technical and vocational education has never been in doubt in our continental competitors and is growing in importance in areas like New York and Canada. We are going in the opposite direction.

The Government's main argument for the narrow EBacc is 'to ensure that all young people take the combination of GCSEs that are taken by young people in the most privileged schools'. It is simply not the case that if something works for the most privileged it works for all.

On average, young people take 8.1 GCSEs (5.8 for lower attainers). EBacc will become the whole curriculum for many young people with little space for any wider creative or technical education.

The EBacc measure has already encouraged a 10% drop in Design and Technology entries in the last year. Based on 2015 data, 225,000 more young people will need to drop a subject to take up a foreign language – yet less than one in ten who take a language GCSE continues to A-Level.

Focusing on a narrow set of subjects automatically devalues others and sends a signal that bright capable young people should actively avoid technical and creative subjects – the very ones that help them develop the skills that employers will need in the future.

We must broaden the definition of EBacc, offering a solid academic core alongside creative and technical subjects, supporting the government's own Progress-8 school performance measure more effectively and driving forward social mobility.

Then in time we must remove the artificial divide at 16 between academic and technical education, just as we already do in University Technical Colleges. An overarching award, combining GCSEs, A-Levels and technical qualifications, should become the new measure of success at the end of a unified 14-19 phase of education.

This will ensure that we value the talents of all young people and help them develop the skills and behaviour required for the workforce in the age of digital revolution.



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