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Pedagogical Development Unit

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“Assessment Secondary” WG – Modification of the General Rules (Article 59) related to the A and B marks

Approved by the Extraordinary Board of Governors on 20 October 2020 – (Online)

Introduction

The current proposal has been put forward by the Secondary Assessment Working Group and aims to amend Article 59 of the General Rules of the European Schools. The following three changes are proposed in this document:

1. Amendment of Article 59.5: new definition of the A mark
2. Amendment of Article 59.5: a new paragraph added to the definition of B marks (to regulate the situation when distance teaching takes place)
3. Amendment of Article 59.6: a new paragraph added to regulate the situation in S7 when long and short examinations cannot be performed on site.

1. Amendment of Article 59. 5. – New definition of A mark

The mandate to re-define A marks in the General Rules comes from the Board of Inspectors Secondary (5 February 2019). The document *Examinations and tests leading to official marks in the secondary cycle – status and follow up on the question* (2019-01-D-30-en-2), approved by the BIS reiterated that in line with the original mandate of the Secondary Assessment WG (2014):

- It was important to have a “*more in-depth reflection on the need for two marks (A mark and B mark) and, in any event, on the method to be used for award of those marks, also in the light of the recently approved assessment policy*”.
- And that “*a clear definition of the A mark*” was needed.

The Working Group agreed that the current wording of the definition of A mark in the General Rules gives way to several interpretations and leads to various ways of awarding the A mark, which are often not in line with the new assessment system in the secondary cycle. The new definition emphasises that when awarding the A mark, students’ competences should be observed and assessed over a longer period, and the progress should be recorded.

(The proposed amendments are shown in '***bold italics***' in the 'New text' column. What is deleted is shown in '~~*strike through italics*~~'.)

Current text	New text
<p>Article 59. 5.- In years 4-6, the semester mark shall comprise two numerical components: A mark and B mark.</p> <p>The A mark is a reflection of all the observations and of the pupil's overall performance, both written and oral, not taken into account in the B mark for the subject in question.</p>	<p>Article 59. 5.- In years 4-6, the semester mark shall comprise two numerical components: A mark and B mark.</p> <p><i>The A mark reflects the ongoing observations of the pupil's competences (knowledge, skills and attitude) and performance gained within the subject, which are not taken into account in the B mark of the subject. The ongoing observations require the recording of the pupils' progress.</i></p>

2. Amendment Article 59. 5 – B marks when examinations cannot be performed on site

According to the risk analysis carried out due to the COVID-19 pandemic, document 2020-07-D-9 *Analysis and Proposals of the Task Force 'Preparation of the 2020/21 school year*:

“With respect to the tests and exams in S 1 to S 6 the expert group underlines that even in scenarios 2 and 3 test and exams ‘in situ’ should be given priority by providing the necessary conditions to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff.

However, on system level on-line tests and exams should be developed which will require also an amendment of the existing assessment policy document and the guidelines on assessment.¹”

Furthermore, in the sections *“Required decisions on system level”* (p. 17) and in the Action Plan (Annex 2), the document envisioned the modification of Article 59 of the General Rules, redefining criteria for A and B marks.

¹ The Assessment Policy of the European Schools (2011-01-D-64) will be amended by the Secondary Assessment Working Group with an annex dedicated to providing schools with practical guidance, in particular concerning A marks and B marks in a distance learning situation.

With this mandate in mind, the Working Group proposes the following changes in Article 59 of the General Rules.

(The proposed amendments are shown in '***bold italics***' in the 'New text' column. What is deleted is shown in '~~*strike through italics*~~'.)

Current text	New text
<p>(Article 59. 5.)</p> <p>The B mark is based on the marks obtained in examination(s) or through other forms of assessment. It covers the pupils' competences acquired during an extensive period of time in certain subjects.</p>	<p>The B mark is based on the marks obtained in examination(s) or through other forms of assessment. It covers the pupils' competences acquired during an extensive period of time in certain subjects.</p> <p><i>In accordance with Article 26a, the assessment system described in Article 59. 1-5. is also applicable in a distance teaching and learning situation. In such a situation, where B tests and B examinations cannot be performed on site, preference will be given to B tests and B examinations identical to the ones in situ. In addition, such B tests or B examinations can be replaced by alternative tasks for assessment.</i></p>

3. Amendment Article 59. 6 – the situation in S7 when long and short examinations cannot be performed on site

The Action Plan of the document of the Task Force COVID-19 (2020-07-D-9) also envisioned the modification of Article 59. 6 of the General Rules to establish the situation when the tests in year 7 cannot be performed on site. The Working Group proposes the following change in the General Rules.

(The proposed amendments are shown in '***bold italics***' in the 'New text' column. What is deleted is shown in '~~*strike through italics*~~'.)

Current text	New text
<p>(Article 59. 6.)</p> <p>The marks in year 7 (European Baccalaureate) follow the specific rules established in the Arrangements for Implementing the Regulations of the European Baccalaureate.</p>	<p>The marks in year 7 (European Baccalaureate) follow the specific rules established in the Arrangements for Implementing the Regulations of the European Baccalaureate.</p> <p><i>In such a situation where the short and/or long written examinations cannot be performed on site, preference will be given to the short and long written examinations identical to the ones in situ. In addition, the short and long written examinations can be replaced by alternative tasks for assessment. The same is valid for the assessment of other subjects taught in S7.</i></p>

4. Opinion of the Board of Inspectors Secondary

The BIS expressed a favourable opinion on the proposal to amend Article 59 of the General Rules of the European Schools with a proposal for amendment. The amendment consists of changing the last sentence of Article 59.5 to: "*The ongoing observations **require** ~~include~~ the recording of the pupils' progress.*"

The document will also be presented to the JTC and, finally, to the Board of Governors at its extraordinary meeting on 20 October, for approval.

5. Opinion of the Joint Teaching Committee

This document was presented to the Board of Inspectors Secondary. It received a favourable opinion with proposals for amendments. The amendment adopted consists of changing the last sentence of Article 59.5 to: "*The ongoing observations **require** ~~include~~ the recording of the pupils' progress*". The rest of the document remained unchanged

Comments were raised regarding a lack of detail in the wording of the proposed amendments to Article 59 of the General Rules. It is recalled, on the one hand, that the « Assessment

Secondary » Working Group will produce guidelines concerning A and B marks. On the other hand, the possibility of recourse to other tasks for evaluation purposes when B tests and B examinations cannot take place in situ was already explicit in the proposal for a Distance Teaching and Learning Policy.

The Joint Teaching Committee gave a favourable opinion on the document, including the amendment made at the meeting, which would be reflected in the document sent to the extraordinary Board of Governors on 20 October. The Board of Governors would be invited to approve the proposed amendments to Article 59 of the General Rules of the European Schools.

6. Decision

The Board of Governors decided to approve the amendments to Article 59 of the General Rules, with immediate entry into force.

New text
<p>Article 59. 5.- In years 4-6, the semester mark shall comprise two numerical components: A mark and B mark.</p> <p><i>The A mark reflects the ongoing observations of the pupil's competences (knowledge, skills and attitude) and performance gained within the subject, which are not taken into account in the B mark of the subject. The ongoing observations require the recording of the pupils' progress.</i></p> <p>The B mark is based on the marks obtained in examination(s) or through other forms of assessment. It covers the pupils' competences acquired during an extensive period of time in certain subjects.</p> <p><i>In accordance with Article 26a, the assessment system described in Article 59. 1-5. is also applicable in a distance teaching and learning situation. In such a situation, where B tests and B examinations cannot be performed on site, preference will be given to B tests and B examinations identical to the ones in situ. In addition, such B tests or B examinations can be replaced by alternative tasks for assessment.</i></p>

New text

(Article 59. 6.)

The marks in year 7 (European Bacculaureate) follow the specific rules established in the Arrangements for Implementing the Regulations of the European Bacculaureate.

In such a situation where the short and/or long written examinations cannot be performed on site, preference will be given to the short and long written examinations identical to the ones in situ. In addition, the short and long written examinations can be replaced by alternative tasks for assessment. The same is valid for the assessment of other subjects taught in S7.