



BACCALAURÉAT 2021

THE MAJOR REFORM OF THE FRENCH BACCALAURÉAT

Amendments to this reform instituted in July 2021

Anjli Shah, Head of Careers and UCAS Adviser at the Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle in London, provides a synopsis of the reform, with a focus on the 'Baccalauréat Général' and the Option Internationale du Baccalauréat (OIB).

The French Baccalauréat and the Option Internationale du Baccalauréat (OIB) have both undergone a major reform and the first cohort took the reformed qualification in June 2020. There have been further amendments to the reform in July 2021, with those in the current Year 13 taking this latest format of the qualification. The rationale behind the reform is to:

- simplify the qualification
- provide more flexibility and choice to pupils, and
- equip them with the necessary skills, competencies and knowledge to successfully embark upon and complete higher education studies.

NO MORE 'STREAMS' (SÉRIES)

From September 2019, for those starting in Year 12, the three 'streams' (Scientific (S), Economics & Social Science (ES) and Literary (L)) as we know them, no longer exist.

Traditionally, pupils in the Scientific stream would study Mathematics, Physics & Chemistry and Biology & Earth Sciences as their core subjects (carrying the higher coefficients in the baccalauréat), whilst those in Economics & Social Science would study Mathematics (but a different curriculum from those in S), History & Geography and Economics & Social Science as their core subjects. Literary stream pupils would study French Literature, with Philosophy and French carrying a higher weighting than in the other streams.

In the reformed baccalauréat, all pupils will study a common curriculum and choose three speciality subjects, one of which will be dropped at the end of Year 12. In principle, pupils have the freedom to choose any three specialities, for example, a pupil could study Mathematics, Art and History, Geography, Political Science or choose Economics & Social Science; Humanities, Literature & Philosophy and Biology & Earth Sciences.

However, there will be some constraints such as:

- some subjects are complementary - for example it is likely that pupils who choose to study Physics & Chemistry, will also study Mathematics
- choice will be limited by the subjects they may require for future studies, or
- the number of possible combinations a school can logistically and realistically offer

As before, pupils will also have a number of optional subjects to choose from in both Years 12 and 13.

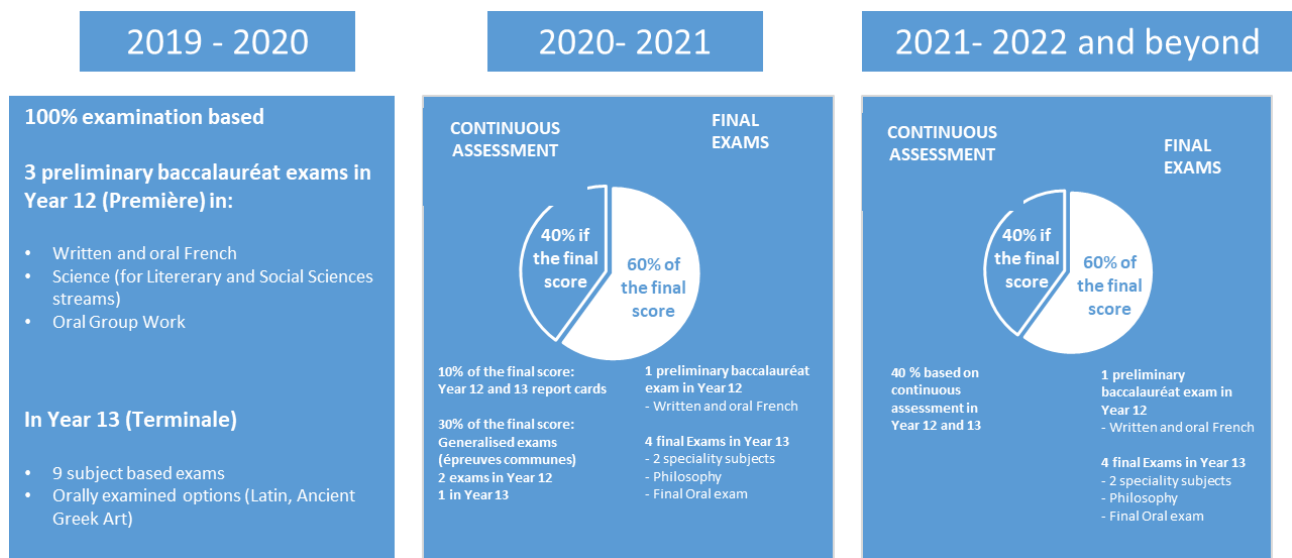
FORMAT OF THE REFORMED BACCALAURÉAT GÉNÉRAL

		Teaching time in Years 12 and 13
COMMON CURRICULUM		
French (Year 12 only)	16 HOURS	
Philosophy (Year 13 only)		
Ethics & Citizenship		
History & Geography		
Modern and Foreign Languages A and B		
Sport		
Scientific Education		
SPECIALITY SUBJECTS*		
Art	12 HOURS	
Classics with Ancient Greek or Latin		
Economics & Social Science		
Biology & Earth Sciences		
Physics & Chemistry		
Computer Science & Programming		
Language, Literature & Culture (available to study in a number of different languages including English)		
English Language, Literature & Culture in the Contemporary English-Speaking World (AMC)		
History, Geography & Political Science		
Human Sciences, Literature & Philosophy		
Engineering Sciences		
Mathematics		
*3 specialities chosen by pupil, one dropped at the end of Year 12		
OPTIONS - ONE OPTION CAN BE CHOSEN IN EACH YEAR		
Year 12*	3 HOURS	
Modern Foreign Language C		
Art (Art, Theatre, Cinema & Film Studies, Music)		
Sport		
Classics (Ancient Greek or Latin)		
Year 13		
Advanced Mathematics**		
Additional Mathematics***		
Law & Contemporary Issues		
*Option chosen in Year 12 is also taken in Year 13. An additional option can be chosen in Year 13. **Mathematics must be taken as a speciality in order to study Advanced Mathematics in Year 13. ***Additional Mathematics can be taken by those no longer studying Mathematics as a speciality in Year 13.		

Source: French National Ministry of Education and Youth

The two speciality subjects that are taken in both Year 12 and 13 will carry the highest weighting (coefficient) in the overall qualification. The pie charts below provides further information on the weighting of all subjects. Results for the common curriculum are based purely on continuous assessment over the Year 12 and 13. Pupils also have a number of optional subjects to choose from in both Years 12 and Year 13s. Optional subjects now carry weighting.

SHIFT FROM 100% EXAM-BASED EVALUATION TO A BLEND OF 40% CONTINUOUS AND 60% EXAM-BASED ASSESSMENT



Source: French National Ministry of Education and Youth

At the end of Year 12, pupils take national written and oral exams in French Language & Literature, and get a final grade in the speciality subject they drop at the end of Year 12.

In Year 13, students take four final national exams:

- two written tests in the speciality subjects they have chosen (+ a practical test in Art, Biology & Earth Sciences, Computer Science & Programming, and Physics & Chemistry)
- a written Philosophy test
- an oral presentation prepared on both of the speciality subjects retained in Year 13.
- Pupils studying the OIB will also take final exams in English Language & Literature, and in History & Geography studied in English and French

For the French Baccalauréat, the final grade is broken down as follows:

- 60% based on final exams in French (written and oral), Philosophy, the two chosen specialty subjects, and an oral exam focusing on either just one or both of those specialty subjects.
- 40% based on continual assessment in Year 12 and 13 of the following common curriculum subjects: English, Ethics & Citizenship, History & Geography, Science, Sport, Second modern language and optional subjects

For the Option Internationale du Baccalauréat the final grade is broken down as follows:

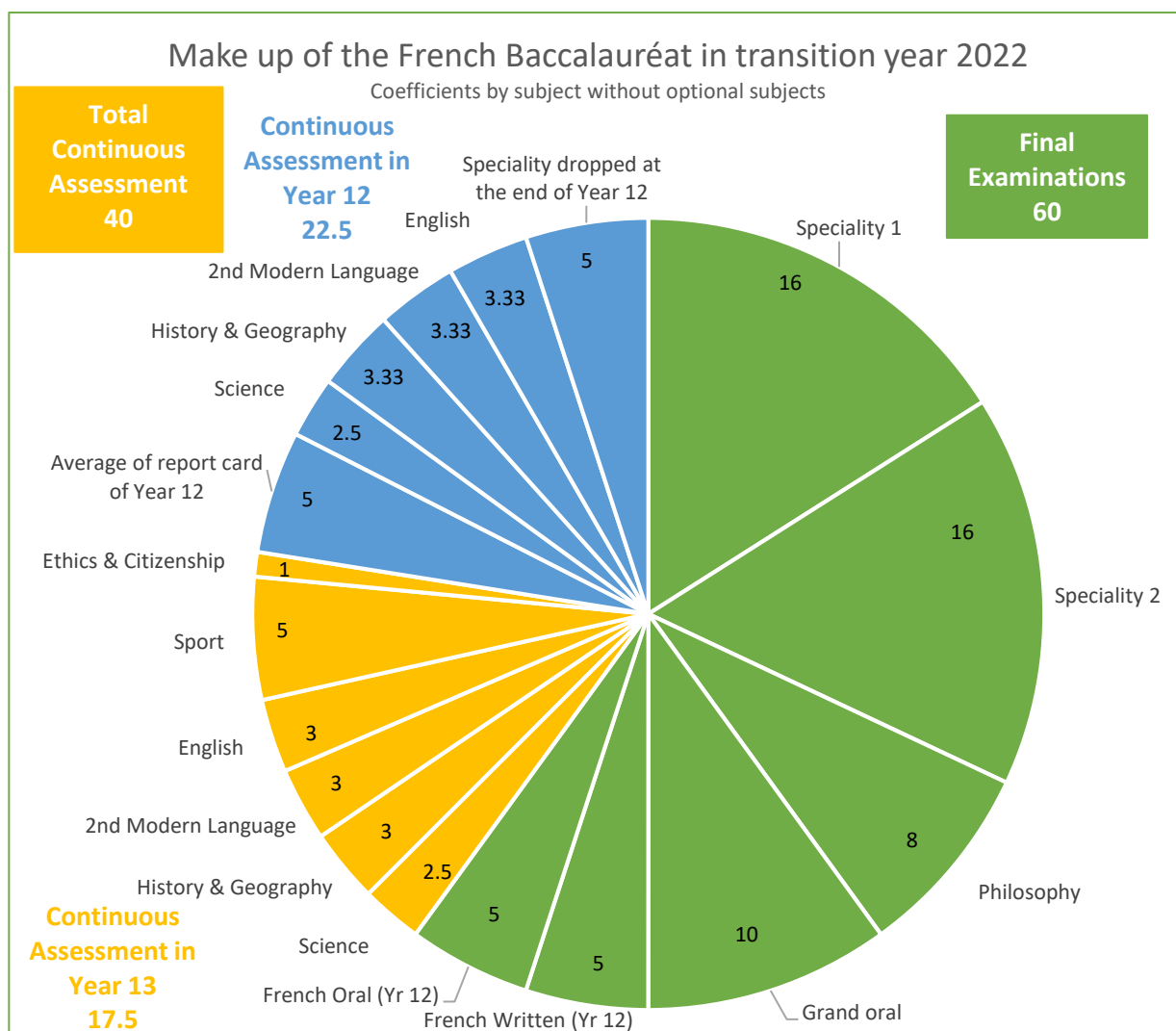
- 78% based on final exams in French (written and oral), Philosophy, the two chosen specialty subjects, an oral exam focusing on either just one or both of those specialty subjects and final examinations in English Language & Literature, and in History & Geography studied in English and French
- 22% based on continual assessment in 11th and Year 13s of the following common curriculum subjects: Ethics & Citizenship, Science, Sport, Second modern language and optional subjects.

Weighting of subjects and method of assessment

For the transition year of 2022

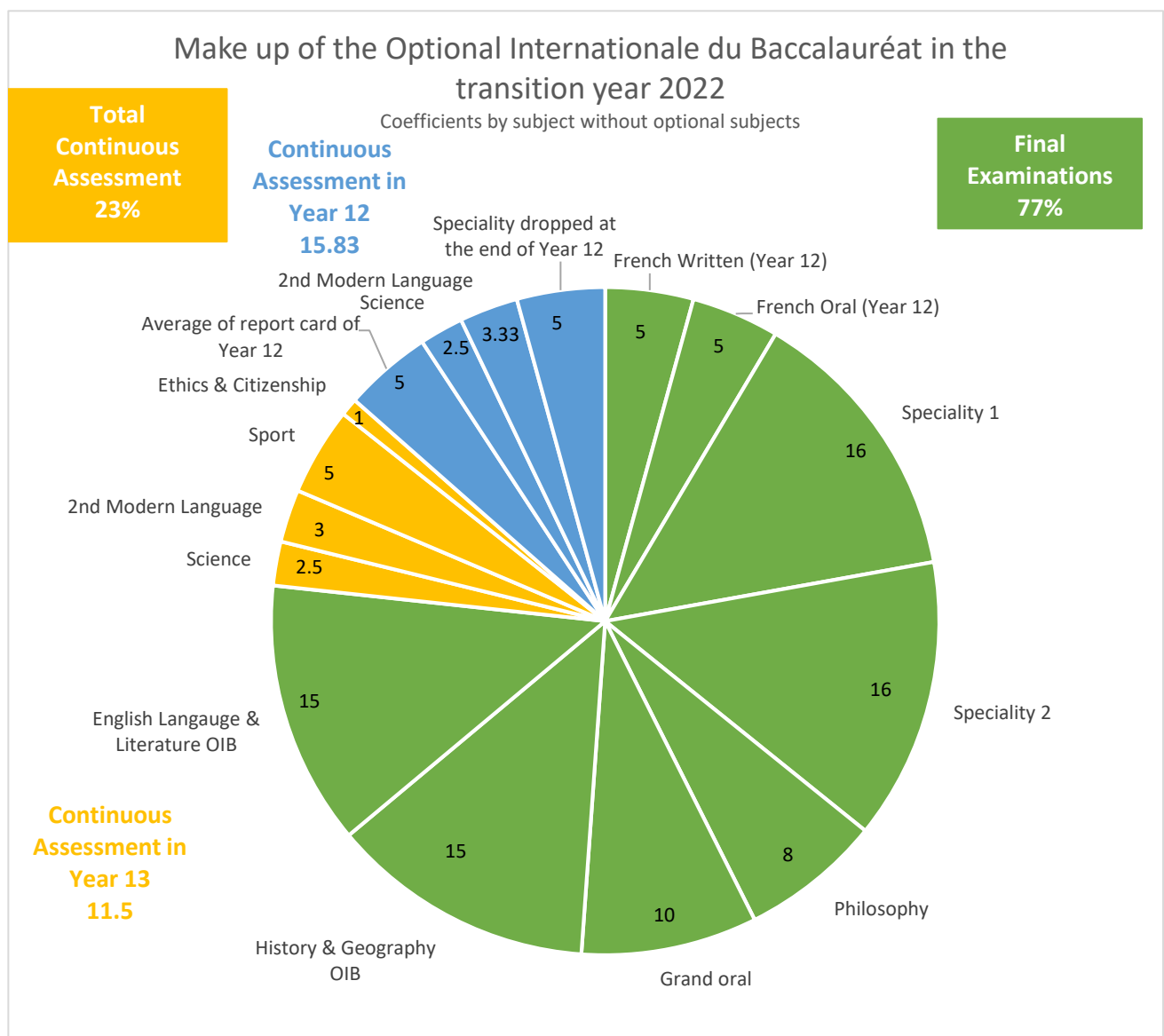
As further amendments to the reform were rolled out as late as July 2021, there is a transitional year before the final changes will be implemented from 2023. Below we outline the weighting and assessment for the transitional year for both of these qualifications, followed by what the qualifications will eventually look like from 2023.

Makeup of the French Baccalauréat in transition year 2022



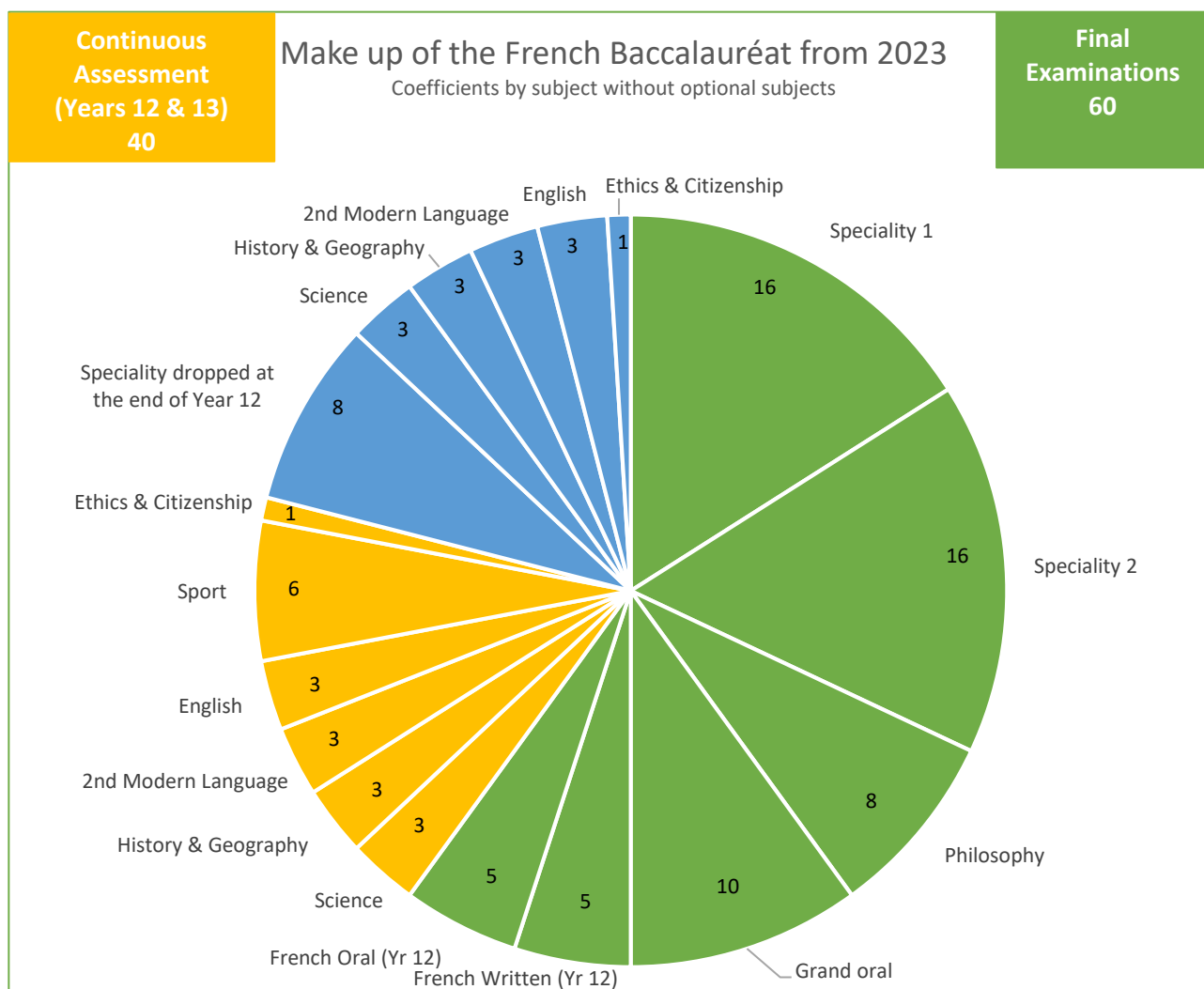
*Weighting of optional subjects is as follows: Optional subjects taken in Year 13 only is 2.

Makeup of the Option Internationale du Baccalauréat in transition year 2022



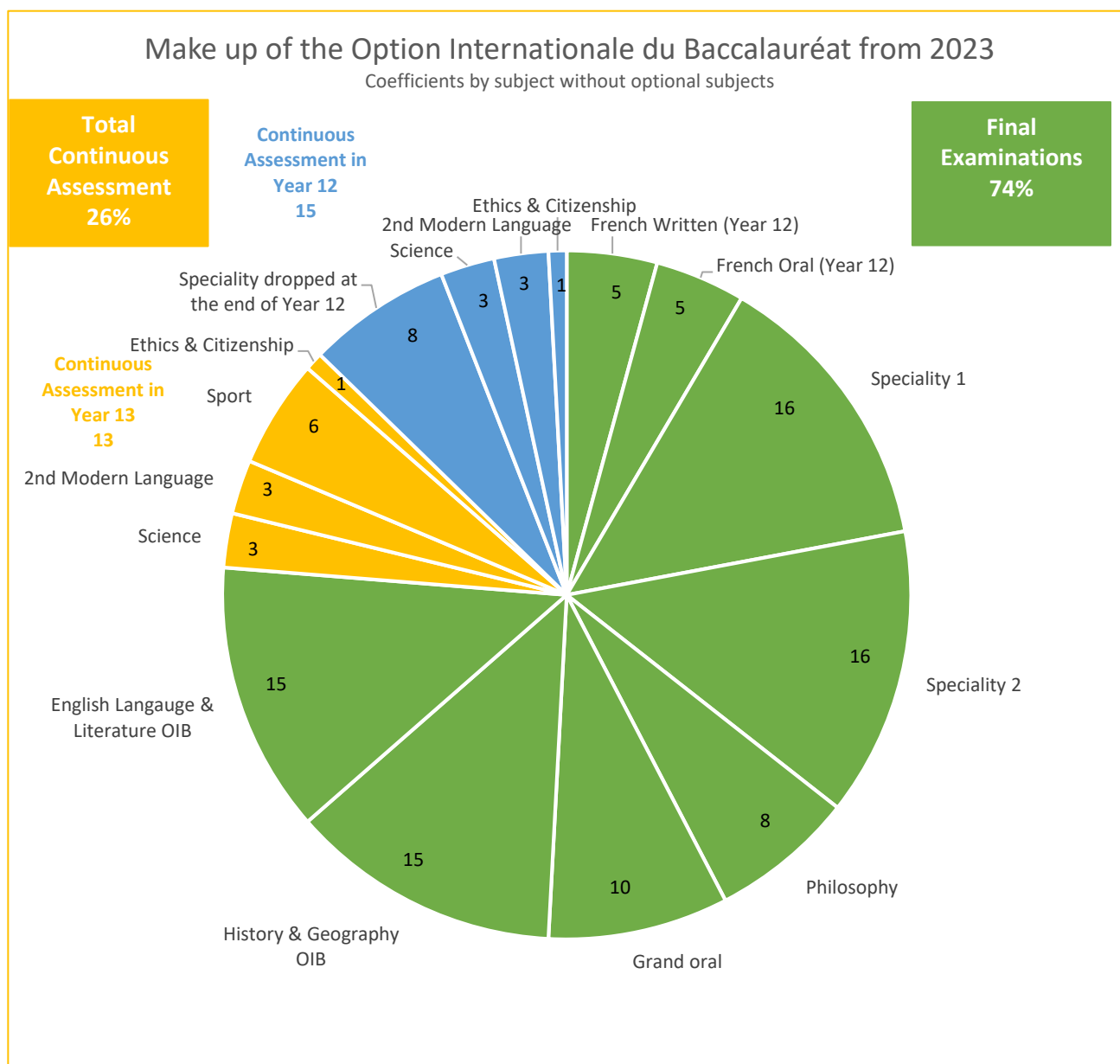
*Weighting of optional subjects is as follows: Optional subjects taken in Year 13 only is 2.

Makeup of the French Baccalauréat from 2023



**Weighting of optional subjects is as follows: Optional subjects taken in Year 12 and 13 is 4 and optional subjects taken in Year 13 only is 2.*

Makeup of the Option Internationale du Baccalauréat from 2023



**Weighting of optional subjects is as follows: Optional subjects taken in Year 12 and 13 is 4 and optional subjects taken in Year 13 only is 2.*

All students carry a heavy class load; the typical school day for Première and Terminale students (Year 12 and 13) starts at 8:30am and ends at 6:05pm: this schedule makes for 35-40 hours of class time per week, supplemented by an intensive schedule of homework.

Extra-curricular activities

The French system privileges academics to the exclusion of anything that might interfere with a student's studies, therefore extra-curricular activities are seldom offered at a French school. As of Première (Year 12), most students rarely have time for outside activities due to the demands and long hours of the curriculum and heavy load of homework. However, a number of pupils manage to proactively pursue a variety of activities whilst maintaining high academic standards.

KEY MESSAGES FOR UK UNIVERSITIES:

With the majority of the Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle's 300+ Year 13s applying to UK universities (1,200 applications to 89 universities in 2021) , and many more French students applying from all over the world, there are a number of key points for UK universities to consider:

- No more "streams" - Literary (L), Economics & Social Science (ES) or Science (S)
- Replaced by "specialities" - 3 selected in Year 12, one dropped at the end of Year 12 and two continued in to Year 13 and therefore the introduction of new subjects and pupils to have more freedom of choice
- Assessed from Year 12 (Première). Continuous assessment over the two years for the subjects of the core curriculum and the speciality subject dropped at the end of Year 12.
- Those not choosing Mathematics as a speciality will stop studying it at the end of Year 11.
- However, ALL students who choose Mathematics as a speciality will be studying a curriculum that was previously that of the scientific (S) stream. There are two possible impacts:
 - It is likely that students, who would not have traditionally studied Mathematics in their stream, will take this a speciality to keep options open.
 - All pupils will be studying one single curriculum in Mathematics, which is that based on the current Scientific stream. This may result in some pupils getting lower grades than they would have had they studied the Mathematics curriculum in the current Economics & Social Science stream which is accepted at UK universities for such courses as business studies or psychology, by way of example.
- The combination of the reform and amendments may result in pupils achieving slightly lower overall average grades than in the previous system. This, however, does not diminish a pupil's academic prowess.
- Universities should familiarise themselves with the content of the new speciality curricula and amend their entry requirements as necessary.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Information on the curriculum of core and speciality subjects in Year 12 and Year 13 in French

<http://quandjepasselebac.education.fr/bac-general-cours-communs-et-specialites>

- Information in **English** from the French Ministry of Education on the baccalauréat 2021

www.education.gouv.fr/cid131517/revitalizing-the-baccalaureat.html

- Information in **French** from the French Ministry of Education on the baccalauréat 2021

www.education.gouv.fr/cid126438/un-nouveau-baccalaureat-2021.html

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