

Curriculum planning and the Ebacc

The Ebacc is a performance measure. It will measure the number of students who achieve a grade C (the current good pass) and above in a specific set of subjects.

These are:

- Maths
- English (Language, or the best from Literature and Language when both are taken together)
- Science (2 Sciences are required to meet this requirement)
- History or Geography
- a Language

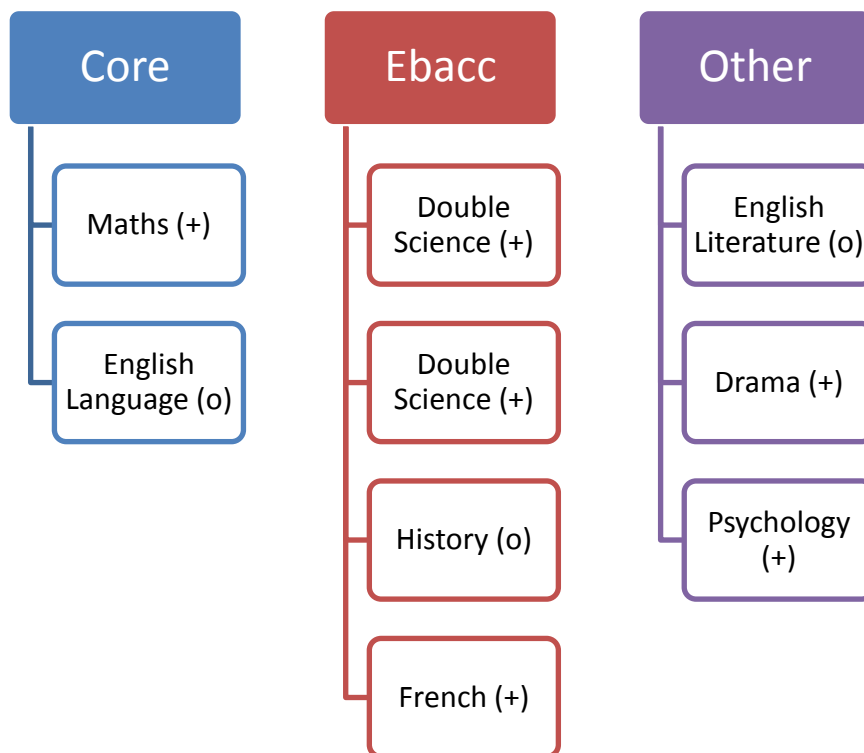
This is 6 GCSE qualifications in total.

There is then a performance measure called Progress 8. The Department have produced a factsheet about Progress 8 which contains basic the information needed to see how this works. This can be viewed [here](#).

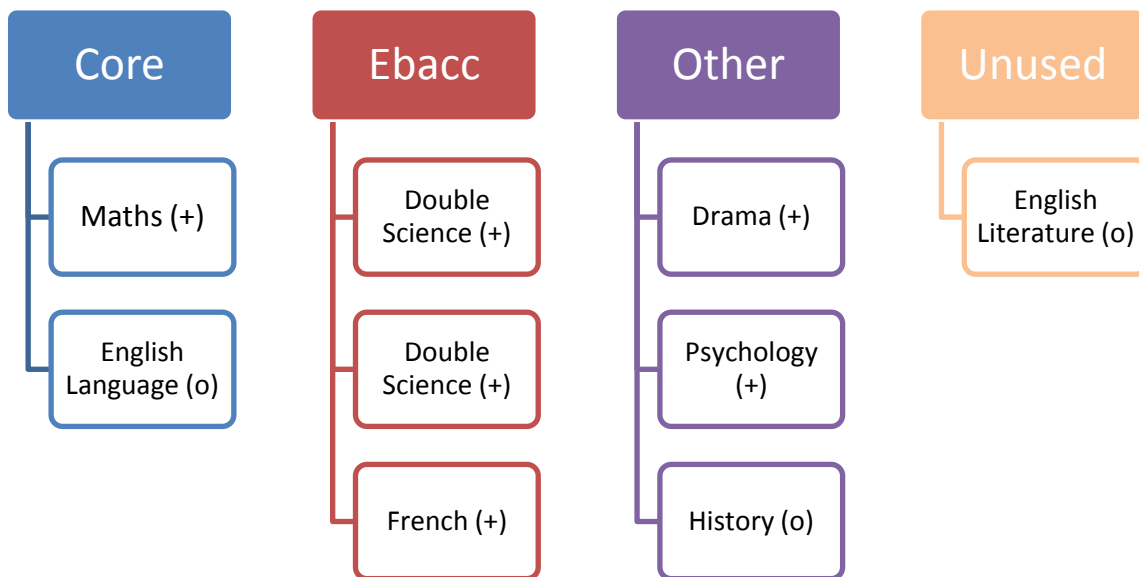
Maths and English are core in the measure. There are then 3 'buckets' or 'slots' for EBacc subjects and then 3 extra 'buckets' or 'slots' to make 8 in total.

This is one way it can work in practice.

Student A (9 GCSEs – achieves their target (o) or above (+) in all qualifications and completes the EBacc)

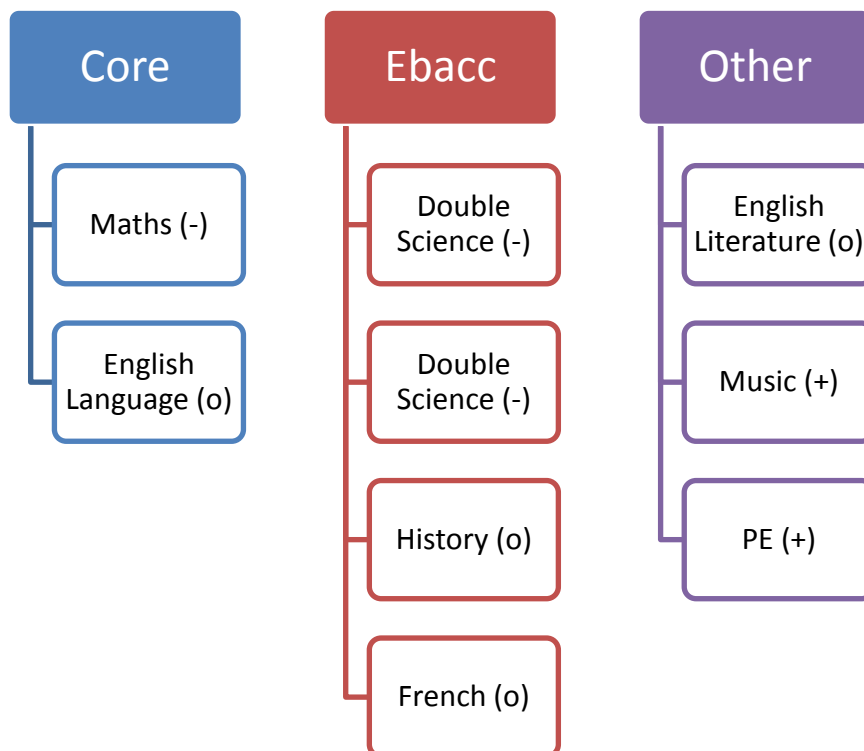


So, what does this look like as a progress measure?

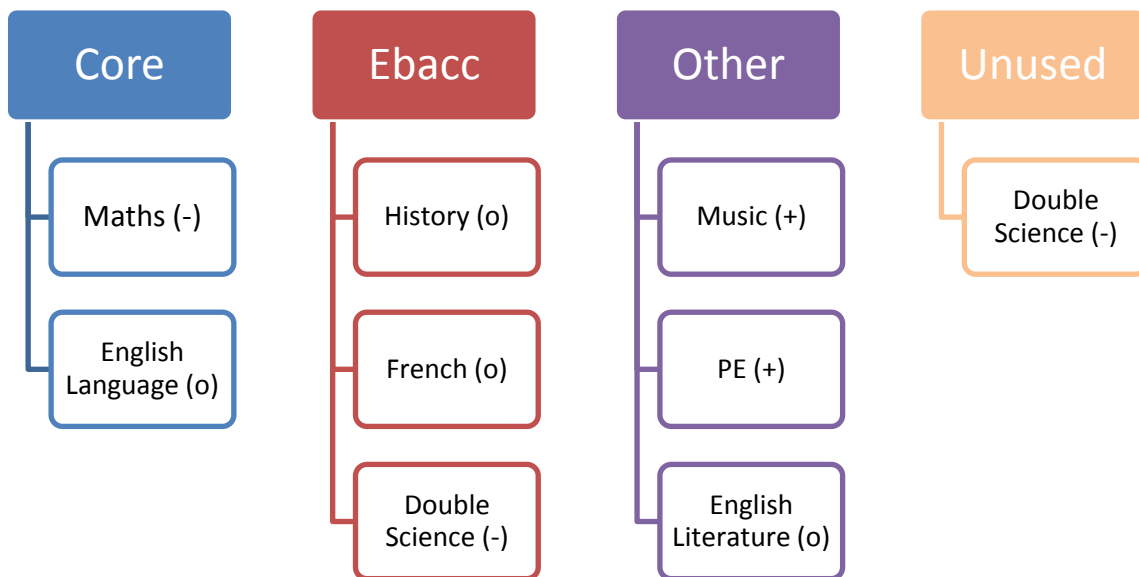


As there are 4 EBacc grades to choose from, the best three count. As History and English Literature are the same grade, the result would be the same if English Literature was counted in this diagram rather than History. This would equally work with Psychology being swapped for a second Arts subject.

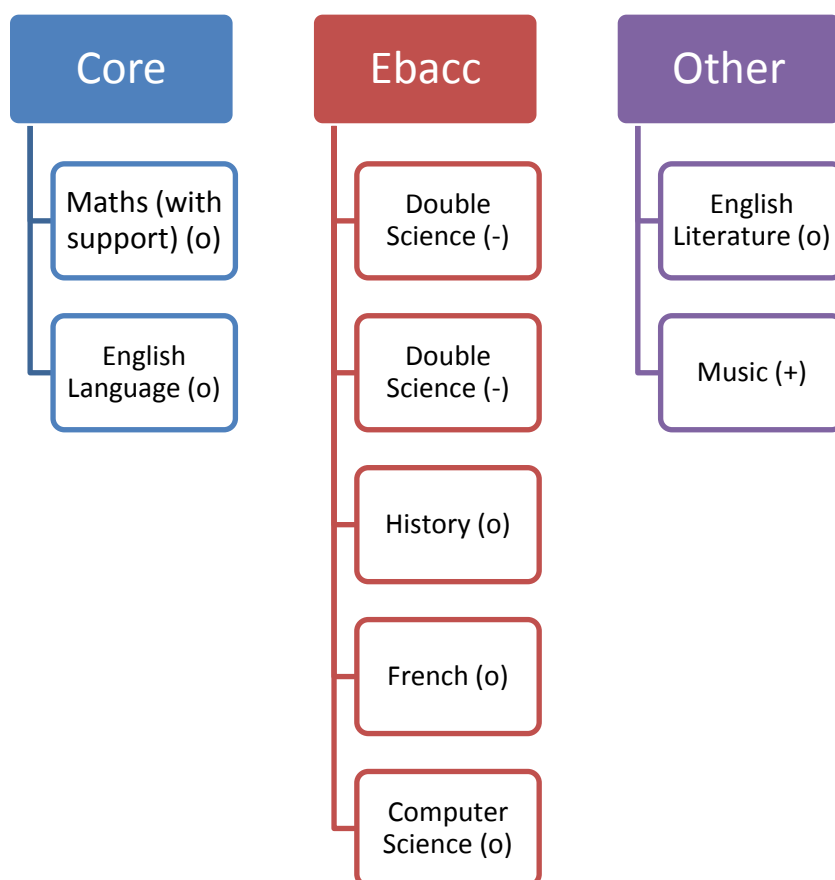
Student B (9 GCSEs – achieves under their target (-), at target (o) or above (+) and studies the EBacc subjects, but does not achieve good passes)



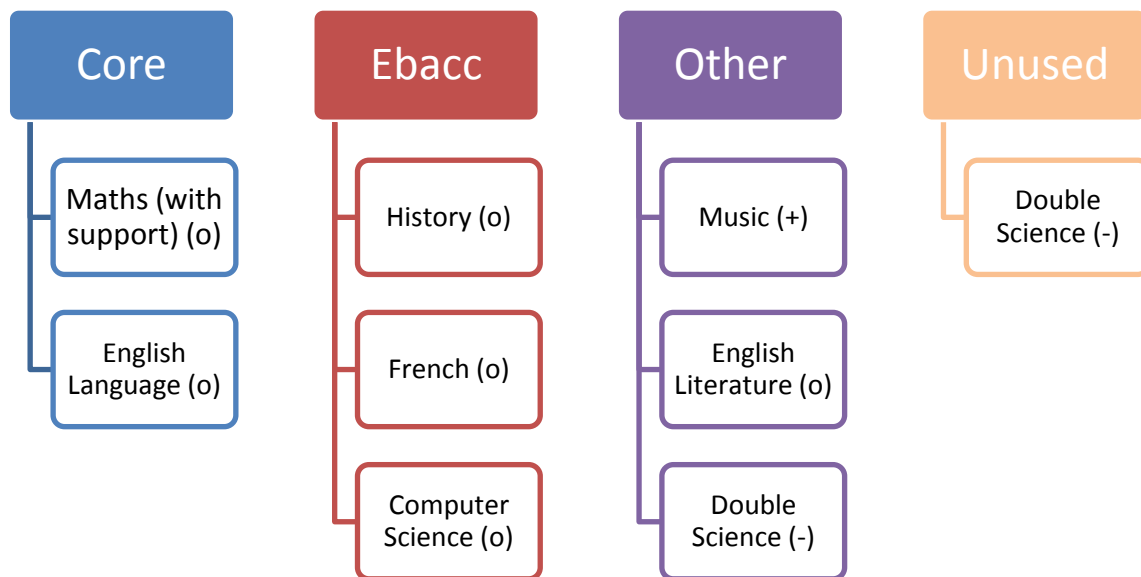
What does this look like in the progress measure?



Imagine that the student's targets were C across the board. They achieved a D in Maths and Double Science in this model. The student wants to get into college and so needs a C in Maths. They come into school for additional Maths intervention and this additional work means that the student achieves a C. The curriculum can then be arranged to add another Science, Computer Science, which is eligible for the EBacc slot. Their curriculum would then look like this:



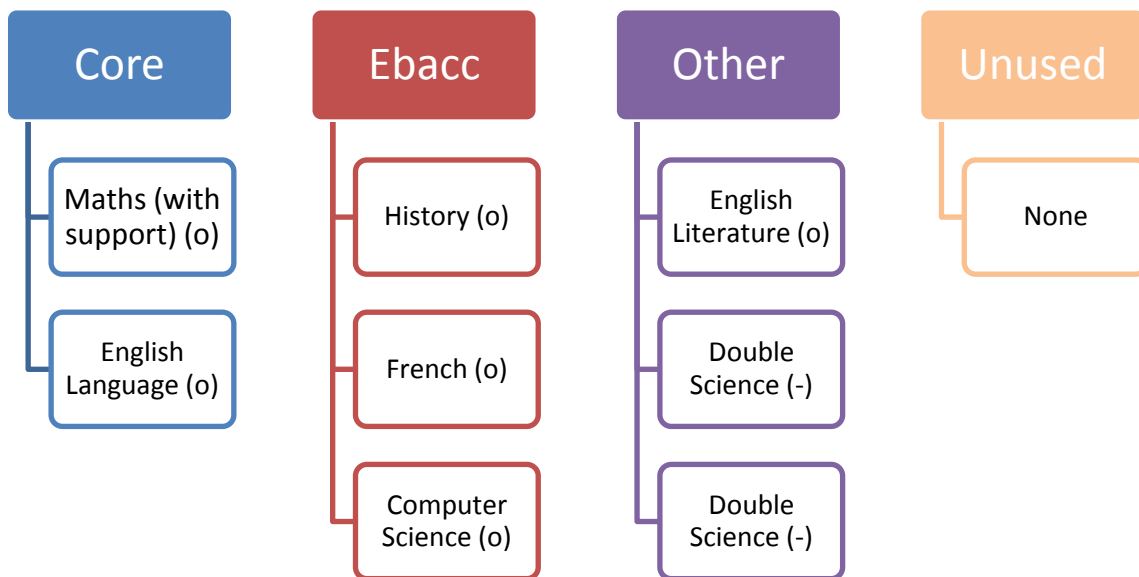
If the student gains a C in Computer Science and Maths, they have then achieved the EBacc measure. In the Progress measure it looks like this:



The student in this case has had to choose between PE and Music GCSEs. If Computer Science is made a compulsory part of the curriculum for this student they would only be able to choose 1 option in the 'other' category. This is also the same for a student who chooses to study the three separate sciences.

This is fundamentally what has teachers of expressive arts worried. Designing the curriculum to ensure a student maximises their chances of meeting the EBacc measure, leaves less opportunity to choose an Arts subject. All other qualifications are placed into one option which the student can choose one qualification from.

The other thing with these models is that it uses the mode form of average, 9 GCSEs. Change this to the mean of 8 GCSEs and Music would then be removed as well.



The student would have achieved the EBacc, but subjects such as Arts and PE do not feature at all in their timetable. Their progress 8 score would also be lower.

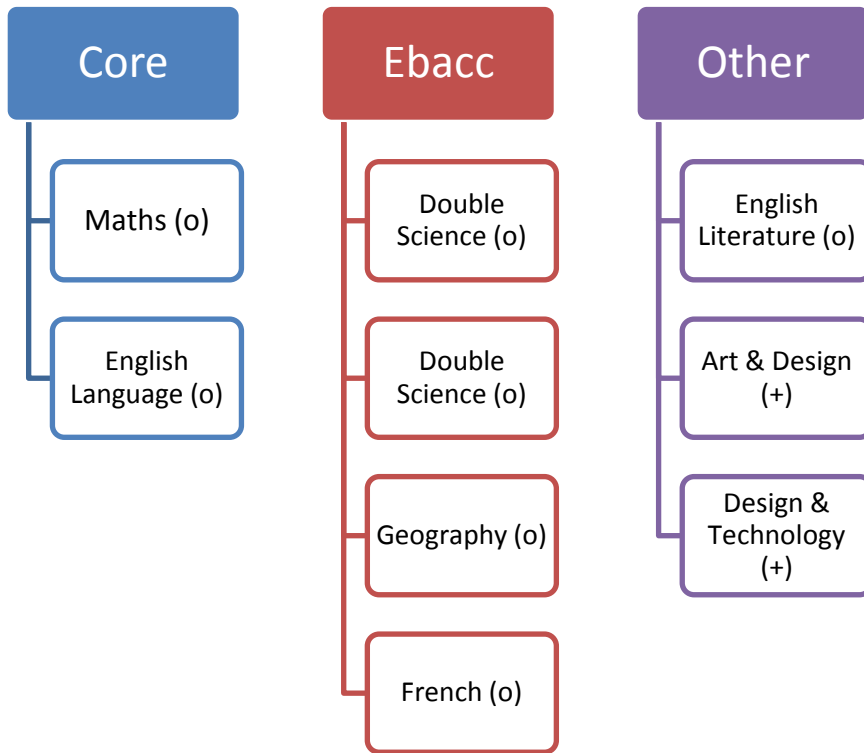
Let's say (+) equals 1, (o) equals 0 and (-) equals -1. (This is NOT how this works, but simplifies the whole process to show the outcome in a simplified way.)

This is what happens when you change this student's curriculum as modelled above.

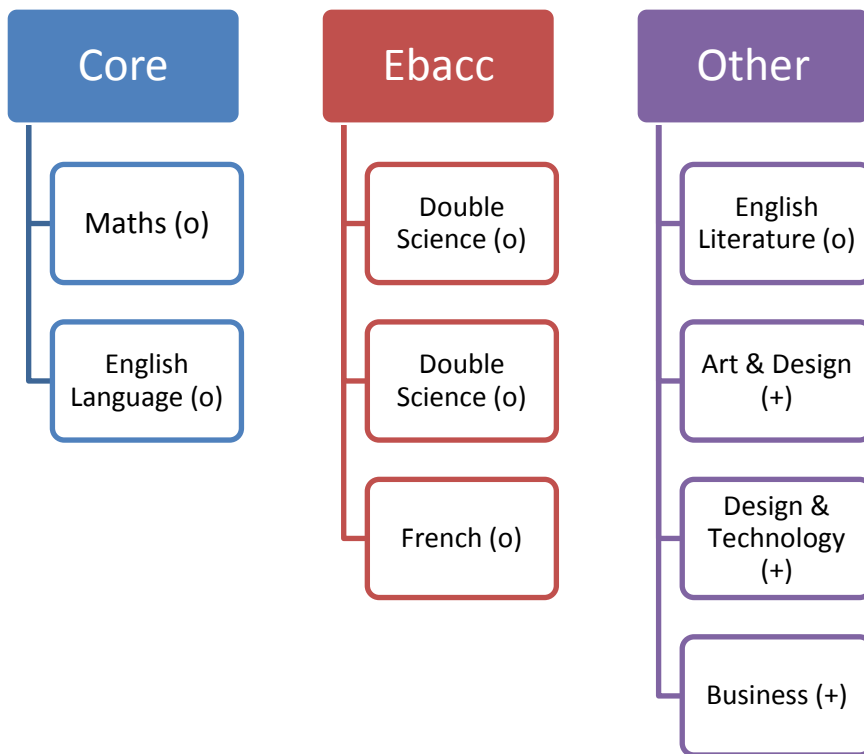
With Music and PE (Maths and English double weighted, and Maths target achieved with additional support)	0+0+0+0+0+0-1+1+1+0	+1
With Computer Science and Music (Maths and English double weighted, and Maths target achieved with additional support)	0+0+0+0+0+0+0+1+0-1	0
With Computer Science, sitting 8 GCSEs (Maths and English double weighted, and Maths target achieved with additional support)	0+0+0+0+0+0+0+0-1-1	-2

There are also concerns raised by teachers for students who have specific career paths in mind.

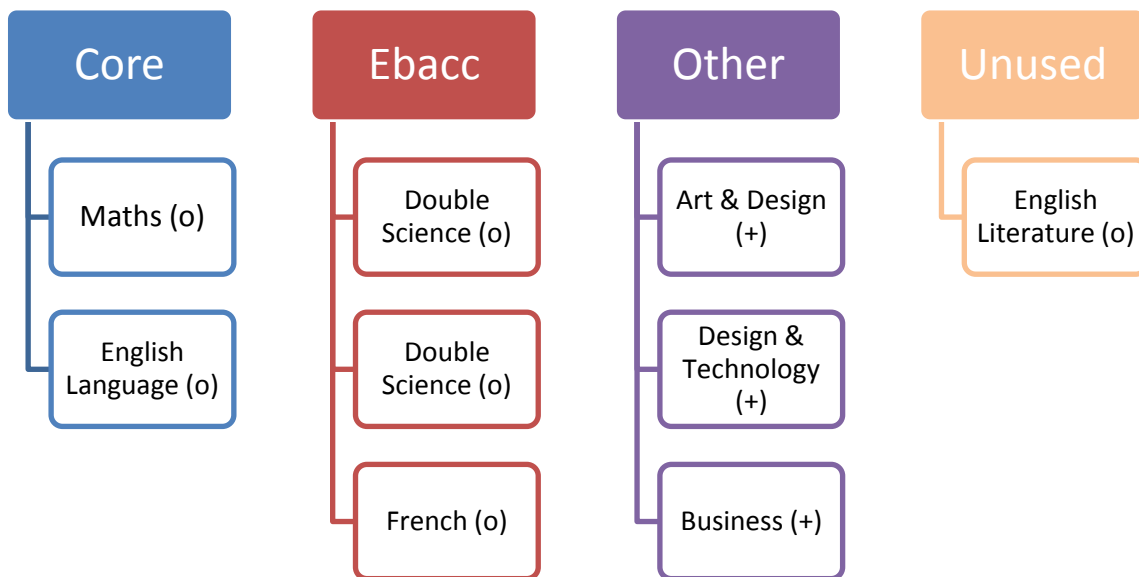
For example, Student C wants to become a fashion designer. They want to study Art & Design, Design & Technology and Business. However, they are also required to study the EBacc combination.



As shown here, there are not enough options available for the student to study the 3 GCSEs they wish. Removing an EBacc subject would allow this student to add Business to their curriculum. For example, changing Geography for Business.



They would have still studied enough EBacc subjects for the Progress 8 measure, to ensure there were no empty slots.



However, the student has not completed the 6 qualifications required for the EBacc performance measure, as neither History nor Geography has been studied. The Department recently consulted on implementing the EBacc proposing a target of 90% of all students having this combination of subjects in their curriculum.