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](http://www.edge.co.uk/research).
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.