
TAMPERE.
FINLAND
Information about the Matriculation Examination
Family evening
4.11.2026
TAMPERE
Kuva: Skyfox / Marko Kallio

The Finnish Matriculation Examination

- The Matriculation Examination is a national examination taken simultaneously in all upper secondary schools in Finland two times a year.
- The examination papers are prepared by the Matriculation Examination Board (YTL). www.ylioppilastutkinto.fi
- The final assessment is conducted by the Matriculation Examination Board's examiners.



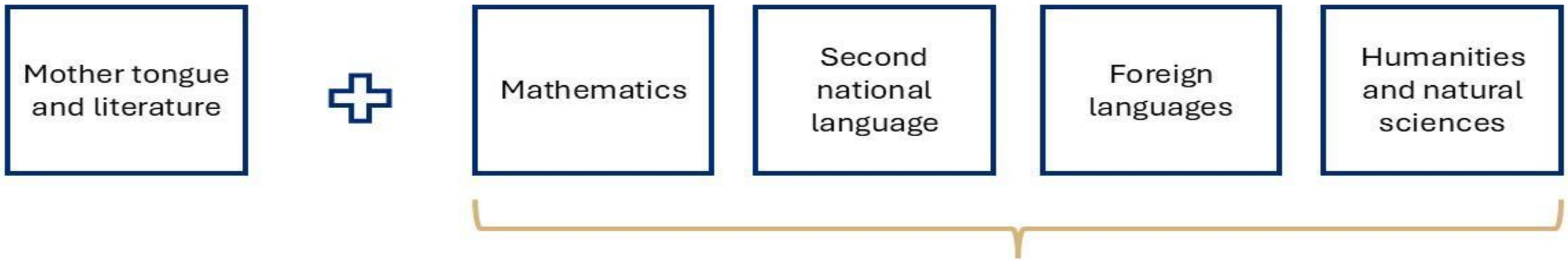
Kuva: Laura Happo

General Notes about the Matriculation Examination

- Assesses the learning objectives of the entire upper secondary school curriculum (compulsory and national optional study units) in the selected subjects.
- Emphasises independent thinking and the application of knowledge.
- A Matriculation Examination Certificate can only be awarded once the student has also received the Upper Secondary School Leaving Certificate.
- The importance of the Matriculation Examination Certificate has increased significantly in recent years.

The Structure of the Examination

- The Matriculation Examination consists of **at least five (5) exams**.
- **The mother tongue examination (or Finnish as a Second Language, S2) is compulsory for all.**
- In addition, students must complete **at least four exams from at least three of the following subject groups**: mathematics, the second national language (Swedish), foreign languages, humanities and natural sciences subjects.
- At least one of the exams must be taken at the advanced syllabus level (either an advanced foreign language or advanced mathematics).



compulsory for all candidates

At least four tests must be taken from at least three groups. At least one of the completed tests must be based on the advanced syllabus.

Additional Considerations

- Students may take more examinations than the minimum requirement.
- Candidates may choose to take examinations based on different syllabi within the same subject (for example, both advanced and basic mathematics). However, examinations based on different syllabi within the same subject can only be counted once towards the Matriculation Examination.
- The Matriculation Examination Board (YTL) provides an online tool where students can explore which combinations of examinations meet the degree requirements: https://ilmo.ylioppilastutkinto.fi/fi - Try it yourself! The requirements are often easiest to understand through practical exploration.



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Spreading the Exams

The tests may be completed over one, two, or three consecutive examination sessions.

- For example: Autumn 2027 and Spring 2028.
- For example: Spring 2027, Autumn 2027, and Spring 2028.

The most common option is to spread the examinations over two sessions: the autumn and spring of the third year of studies.

Upper secondary school students may take a Matriculation Examination test once they have completed the compulsory study modules in the subject concerned (or 6 credits in the case of elective short foreign languages).

Graduating

- Students who complete all required upper secondary school studies and pass the required Matriculation Examination tests receive both an Upper Secondary School Leaving Certificate and a Matriculation Examination Certificate.
  - All studies required for the Upper Secondary School Leaving Certificate must be completed by Period 4 for students graduating in the spring, or by Period 1 for students graduating in the autumn.

Practical Information about the Tests

- Each test has its own designated date: https://www.ylioppilastutkinto.fi/fi/tutkinnon-suorittaminen/koepaivat
- The Mother Tongue / S2 examination is conducted over two days.
- There are two exam dates for humanities and natural sciences subjects, which means that students can take two different exams in this subject group during a single session.
- All examinations are administered digitally.
- Further information about the exams: https://www.ylioppilastutkinto.fi/en/implementation-examination/regulations-and-guidelines/test-specific-regulations-and-guidelines


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Recommendations from Pyynikin lukio

- It is important to consider carefully how many examinations to take (the minimum five or more).
- Students are encouraged to take the Matriculation Examination in any basic level foreign language they have studied in upper secondary school.
- The qualification can be supplemented later with additional examinations.

How to Spread the Tests?

- Our recommended approach is to spread the Matriculation Examination over two examination sessions:
  - 1st session: 1-2 subjects, 2nd session: 3-4 subjects
- Do not start too early.
  - It is important to recognise the significant benefits that an additional six months of maturity and study can bring.
  - Delaying is often a better choice than taking exams too early. However, if a student wishes to start in the spring of Year 2, we recommend taking only chemistry or geography at that stage.
- Subjects in which the syllabus is largely completed by the end of period 1 in year 3 are well suited for the fall of year 3:
  - Swedish or English
  - Basic Mathematics
  - Biology, History, Ethics, Philosophy, or Health Education
- Subjects in which optional study modules are typically completed during year 3 are best taken in the spring of year 3:
  - Mother tongue and literature / S2
  - Advanced Mathematics
  - Physics, Chemistry, Geography, Religion, or Psychology

Registration for the Spring 2027 Matriculation Examination Takes Place in November 2026

- Guidance counselors will provide instructions on registration to students on **Tuesday 10.11. at 13:00 in the Multipurpose Hall**.
- In Wilma, go to "Forms" and complete the form "Upper Secondary School: Registration for the Matriculation Examination". Remember to save.
- Visit your guidance counselor to sign the form **between 12.-25.11.2026** (during the office hours announced by your counselor).
- Registration is binding. Absence from an examination is considered an examination attempt. Registration may be cancelled for health-related reasons.



Special Arrangements in the Matriculation Examination

- Special arrangements may include additional time, a separate room, access to a rest area, enlarged text or a larger display, accommodations for visually or hearing-impaired candidates, the use of an assistant, or adjustable furniture.
- The grounds for application include:
  - Learning difficulty in reading and writing (dyslexia)
  - Illness or disability
  - Insufficient command of the language of instruction in the case of a S2 candidate
  - Exceptionally difficult life situation
- The special educational needs teacher prepares the applications for special arrangements in the matriculation examination together with the student and, when necessary, with subject teachers. After approval, the principal submits the applications to the Matriculation Examination Board (YTL).


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Application for grade compensation

- If a candidate has circumstances that may adversely affect their performance in the examination, they can apply to have these taken into account in the grading.
- The same application form is used as for special arrangements.
- These factors may be taken into consideration in the grading of the Matriculation Examination only if the candidate would be receiving a failing grade.

Compensation

A candidate may pass the Matriculation Examination even if they fail one of the tests required for the qualification. The Matriculation Examination Board awards **compensation points** based on the grades received in the candidate's other examinations as follows:

A candidate needs a total of **10 compensation points** to compensate for a failing grade (**i**).
Only **one failed test** can be compensated.

laudatur	7 points
eximia cum laude approbatur	6 points
magna cum laude approbatur	5 points
cum laude approbatur	4 points
lubenter approbatur	3 points
approbatur	2 points

Fees for the Matriculation Examination

- Registration for the first five examination tests is free of charge. A fee is charged for any additional tests beyond these five.
- If a candidate receives a failing grade in an examination taken free of charge, they may retake the examination without a fee, subject to certain exceptions.
- Free-of-charge status ends at the end of the calendar year in which the student turns 20 years old.



How to Prepare for the Examination?

- Study all the national optional study units as well as the revision courses ("abikurssit/kertauskurssit") in the selected subjects. The last courses should be taken as close to the exam as possible.
- Take the mock exam ("preli") before taking the final exams. This is usually done in the revision courses.
- Follow current affairs and news regularly.
- Focus on school: Keep paid work to a reasonable minimum (or avoid it).
- Create own study timetable for the "study leave" before the spring examination.

How Can Families Support a Student Preparing for the Matriculation Examination?



- By encouraging hard work while at the same time avoiding placing excessive pressure on the student.
- By helping the student break the material to be reviewed into manageable daily study sessions and create a study plan.
- By taking good care of the student's overall wellbeing (sleep, diet, exercise).
- By discussing current topical issues together.
- By allowing the student to make their own choices.

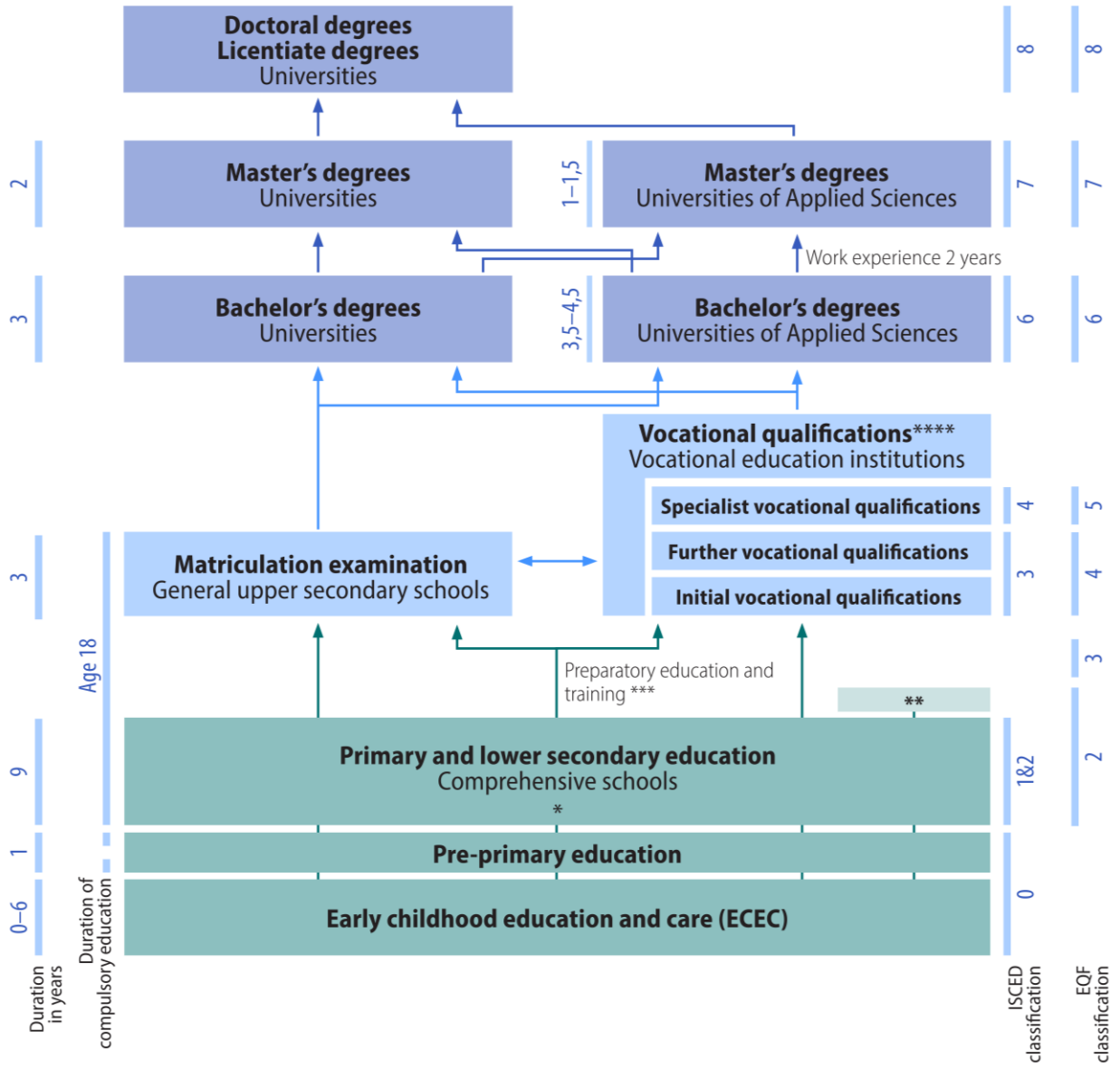


TAMPERE. FINLAND

Admissions to Higher Education Institutions

- Approximately half of higher education students in Finland are admitted through **certificate-based admissions**, and approximately half through **entrance examinations**.
- All fields of study award points for the mother tongue and literature examination (or S2), so it is worthwhile for all students to invest effort in this subject.
- Consider which subjects are the student's strengths and what they are interested in.
    - Students are likely to perform better in matriculation examinations in subjects they enjoy and excel in, which can also result in a higher certificate admissions score.

EDUCATION SYSTEM IN FINLAND



Universities focus on scientific research and academic education, while **universities of applied sciences (UAS)** emphasize practice-oriented, professionally focused studies and close cooperation with working life.

Both are higher education institutions, but they differ in their educational objectives, teaching approaches, and the degree programmes they offer.

Certificate-based Admission to Finnish Universities

- The system was reformed in spring 2026: there are now 11 different scoring tables (instead of the previous 50).
  - The scoring of mathematics now better reflects the relevance of maths to the specific field of study.
  - The scoring of humanities and natural sciences subjects is more balanced.
  - The weight given to foreign languages has increased somewhat.
- Some study fields have threshold requirements, such as passing specific subjects or achieving a certain grade in one or more exams.
- In some degree programmes, direct admission may be used instead of, or alongside, certificate-based admissions scoring.
- Scoring tables: https://yliopistovalinnat.fi/

Certificate-based Admission to Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences

- In certificate-based admissions, five subjects are taken into account. The subjects considered are:
  - Mother tongue and literature / S2
  - Mathematics
  - A foreign language or the second national language
  - Two humanities and natural sciences subjects or foreign languages
- The combination of subjects that yields the highest score for the applicant is used.
- Applicants with a matriculation examination certificate and those applying with a vocational upper secondary qualification have separate admission quotas.
- Further information: https://www.ammattikorkeakouluun.fi/

Study voucher

- With a study voucher, you can take 30 credits of Open University studies available on Opin.fi free of charge.
- Who can receive a study voucher?
  - Matriculation examination completed between 1 December 2025 and 31 July 2028.
  - You have applied to a higher education institution in the joint application, and you have not received or accepted a place in degree studies.
- You can use open university studies to prepare for, for example, university entrance examinations.
- The study voucher can also be used to complete **pathway studies**. Through pathway studies, students may apply to a higher education institution via a separate admission route without relying on matriculation examination results or taking an entrance examination.

Opopassi

- On this website, you can find most Finnish education programmes, including those offered by vocational institutions, universities of applied sciences, and universities, organised by subject area: https://www.opopassi.com/polut


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