

# THE FINNISH MATRICULATION EXAMINATION



YLIOPIILASTUTKINTOLAUTAKUNTA  
STUDENTEXAMENSÄMÄNDEN

[ylioppilastutkinto.fi](http://ylioppilastutkinto.fi)

[digabi.fi](http://digabi.fi)



# History

- The Matriculation Examination was first arranged in Finland in 1852:
  - Entrance exam to university: skills in Latin and Christian doctrine
  - Number of students:
    - 1850s: about 70
    - 1920: 1000
    - 1950: 4000
    - 2000s: 35 000 (about half of the age group)
- The purpose is to discover:
  - whether the students have assimilated the skills required in the curriculum for the upper secondary school and
  - whether they have reached the adequate level of maturity.

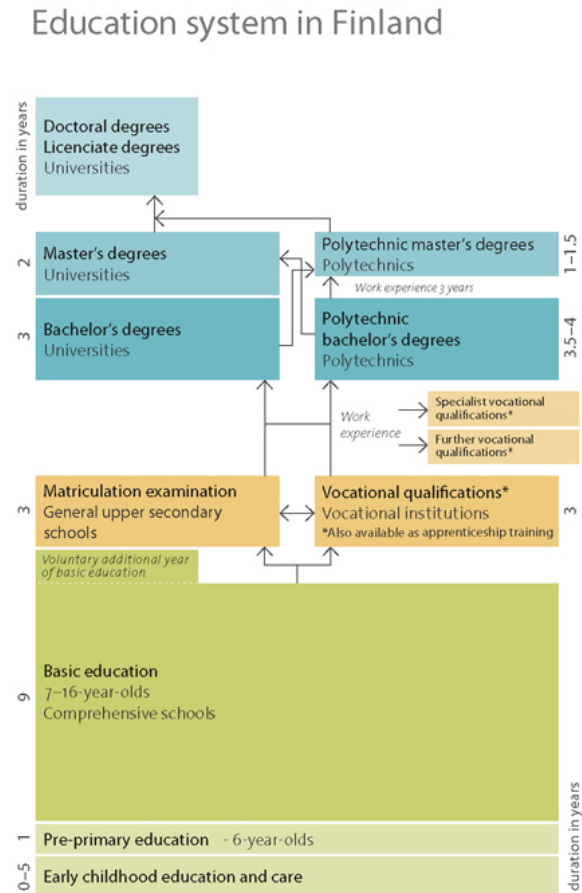


# The Matriculation Examination today

- The Matriculation Examination is arranged biannually (spring/autumn), in all Finnish upper secondary schools at the same time.
- A candidate must complete the examination during not more than three consecutive examination periods.
- All the tests are assessed first by the upper secondary school teachers and then by censors, who are members or associate members of the Matriculation Examination Board.



# The role of the Matriculation Examination in the Finnish education system



- The examination is arranged in upper secondary schools as a final examination.
- Passing the Matriculation Examination entitles the candidate to continue his or her studies at university.
  - Admission to Finnish universities is also possible without passing the Matriculation Examination. These candidates are eligible to apply in a separate quota.
- Every year, about 35 000 candidates take the exam:
  - altogether 200 000 tests
  - 6% of the candidates fail the exam
- The exams are arranged in Finnish and Swedish



# The compulsory and optional tests

- The examination consists of at least four compulsory tests:
  - candidate's mother tongue (Finnish, Swedish, Sami):  
**compulsory for all candidates**
  - three other compulsory tests from the following group:
    - second national language (advanced/intermediate level),
    - a foreign language (advanced/basic level),
    - mathematics (advanced/basic level),
    - one test in the general studies battery of tests (sciences and humanities)
      - The general studies test can have questions that cross the boundaries of different subjects
  - Additional (optional) test(s) may be included in the examination



# National Matriculation Examination board

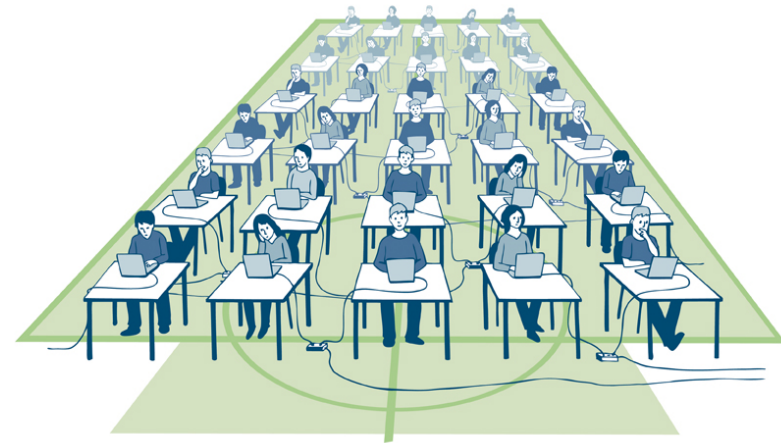
- Selected for three years (The Ministry of Culture and Education)
  - Issues guidelines and instructions for the examination
- The Board has an office working with all the arrangements
  - In charge of all arrangements for the tests
  - Develops the examination



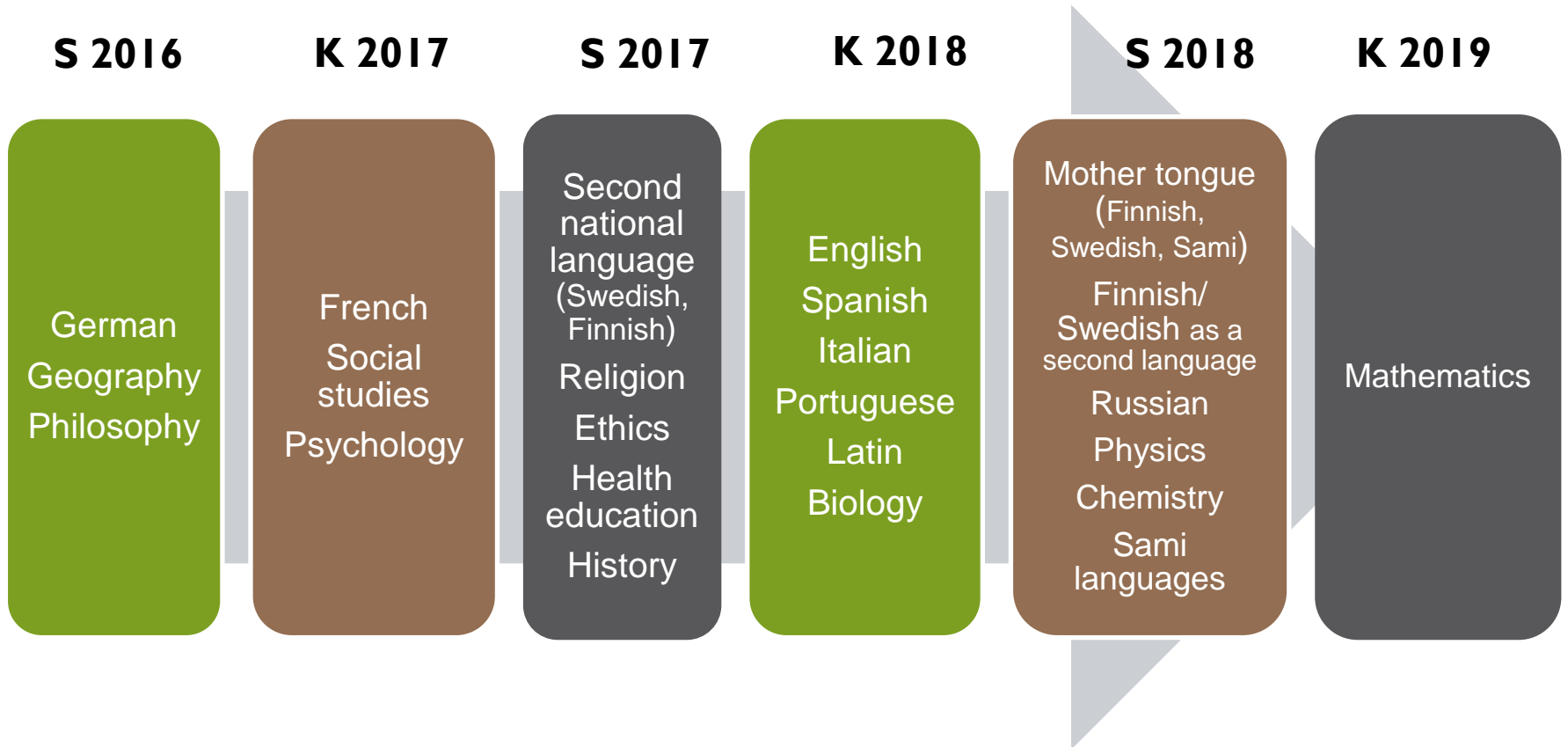
# Digabi

## - the digitalization project of the matriculation examination

- From paper format to electronic exam
  - first tests autumn 2016, all tests 2019
- Digitalization of the whole process

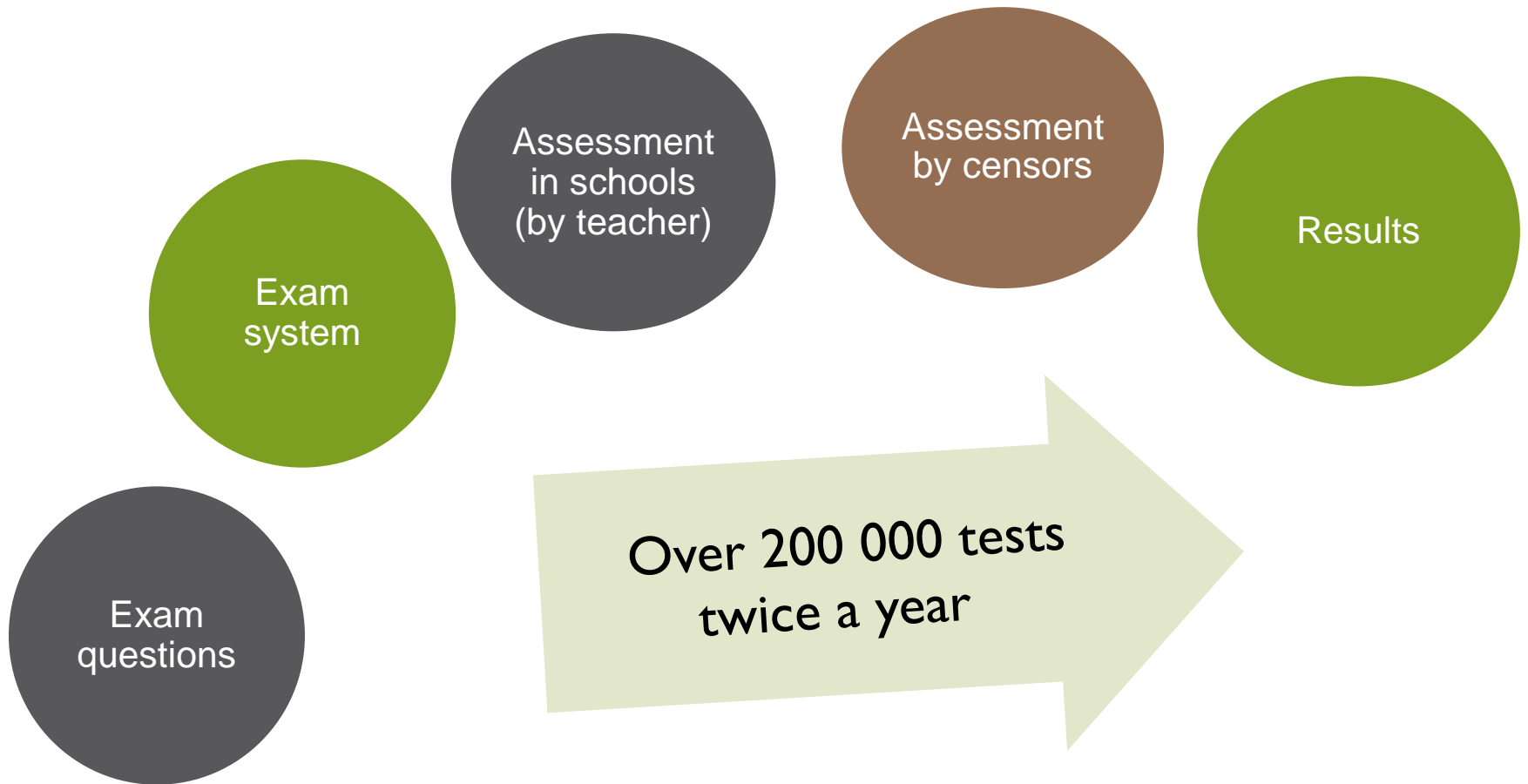


# Digitalization schedule





# All this will be digital!



# Future challenges and prospects (1/2)

- Computers or tablet devices?
- BYOD: the candidates should be able to use their own devices
- Limited access to the Internet
- Information security
- Anonymity
- Linux based operating system (Digabi OS)



# Future challenges and prospects (2/2)

- 1-day language test (listening comprehension as a part of the 6-hour exam)
  - Testing of oral skills (in the future)
- Speech communication
- Authentic situations
- ICT skills (especially making good use of them) will become an essential part of teaching and learning
- Research needs



# Abitti

## - the electronic exam system

- [www.abitti.fi](http://www.abitti.fi) (in Finnish and Swedish)
- Launched 30.1.2015
- Developed by the Matriculation Examination Board for Finnish upper secondary schools
- free registration: teachers, students, administration, researchers...



# How Abitti works?



*Teacher prepares exam questions*



*Exam questions are saved on a USB stick.*



*Teacher downloads the questions from the USB stick to a server computer.*

*Students answer the questions.*



*Exam answers are copied from the server to a USB stick.*

*Exams are assessed.*



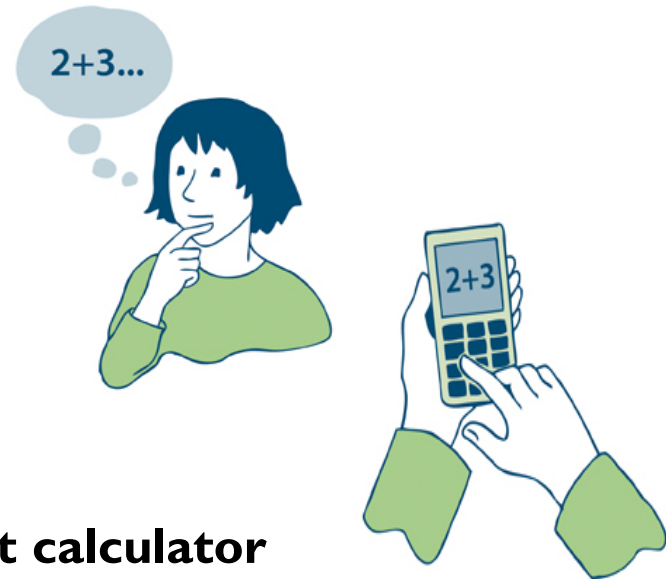
# Other ongoing changes

- The core curriculum of the upper secondary schools is being reformed and will be implemented in the schools in 2016.
- A Common European Framework of Reference for languages
- Structural changes in the exams
  - mathematics, mother tongue
- A new method for defining the grades: based on the average of standardized scores (calculated for each candidate)



# Structural changes in the mathematics test

- To be implemented in spring 2016
- The same change both in the advanced level and the basic level
- New structure of the test:
  - Section A: 4 questions (4 completed), **without calculator**
  - Section B1: 5 questions (3 completed), with calculator & book of tables
  - Section B2: 4 questions (3 completed), with calculator & book of tables



# A new method for defining the grades

- The Finnish matriculation exam was restructured in two big reforms in 2005 and 2006:
  - Exam in mother tongue – the only compulsory test for all candidates
  - Separate tests for all general studies (science and humanities) instead of a combined test
- > the candidate populations for each test are different

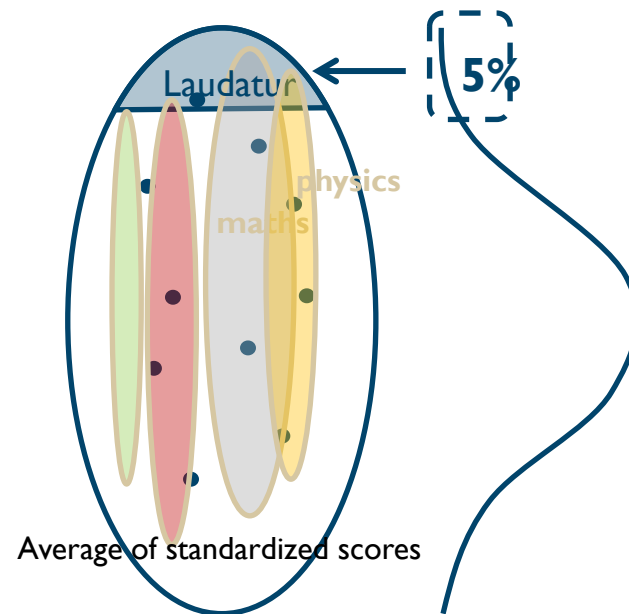




- Before the reforms the normal distribution method in defining the points for each grade worked well:
  - all the age group took the matriculation examination all at once
  - there was not very much flexibility and optionality in the subjects: all candidates took the same exams
- After the reforms: The usage of the normal distribution appeared to be unjust especially in subjects where the candidate groups are small and highly selected (e.g. physics, chemistry, some of the languages).
- Hence, candidates who have obtained better than average scores in the tests have been given grades that have not coincided with their real skills and knowledge.



- the average of standardized scores is calculated for each candidate
  - Better comparability between different subjects and years
  - Normal distribution applied for the whole candidate population, not for each subject separately



- The new method was introduced in spring 2014
- The new procedure was first applied in the following subjects: mathematics (advanced syllabus), physics, chemistry, German, French , Italian, Spanish and Finnish (advanced syllabus)

### Physics

