

THE FINNISH MATRICULATION EXAMINATION



YLIOPIILASTUTKINTOLAUTAKUNTA
STUDENTEXAMENSÄMÄNDEN

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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.

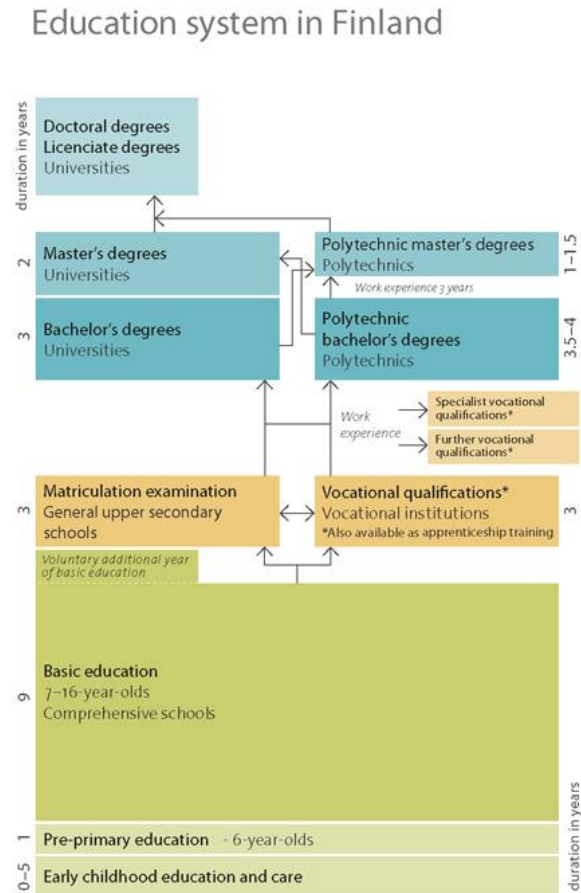


The Matriculation Examination today

- 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



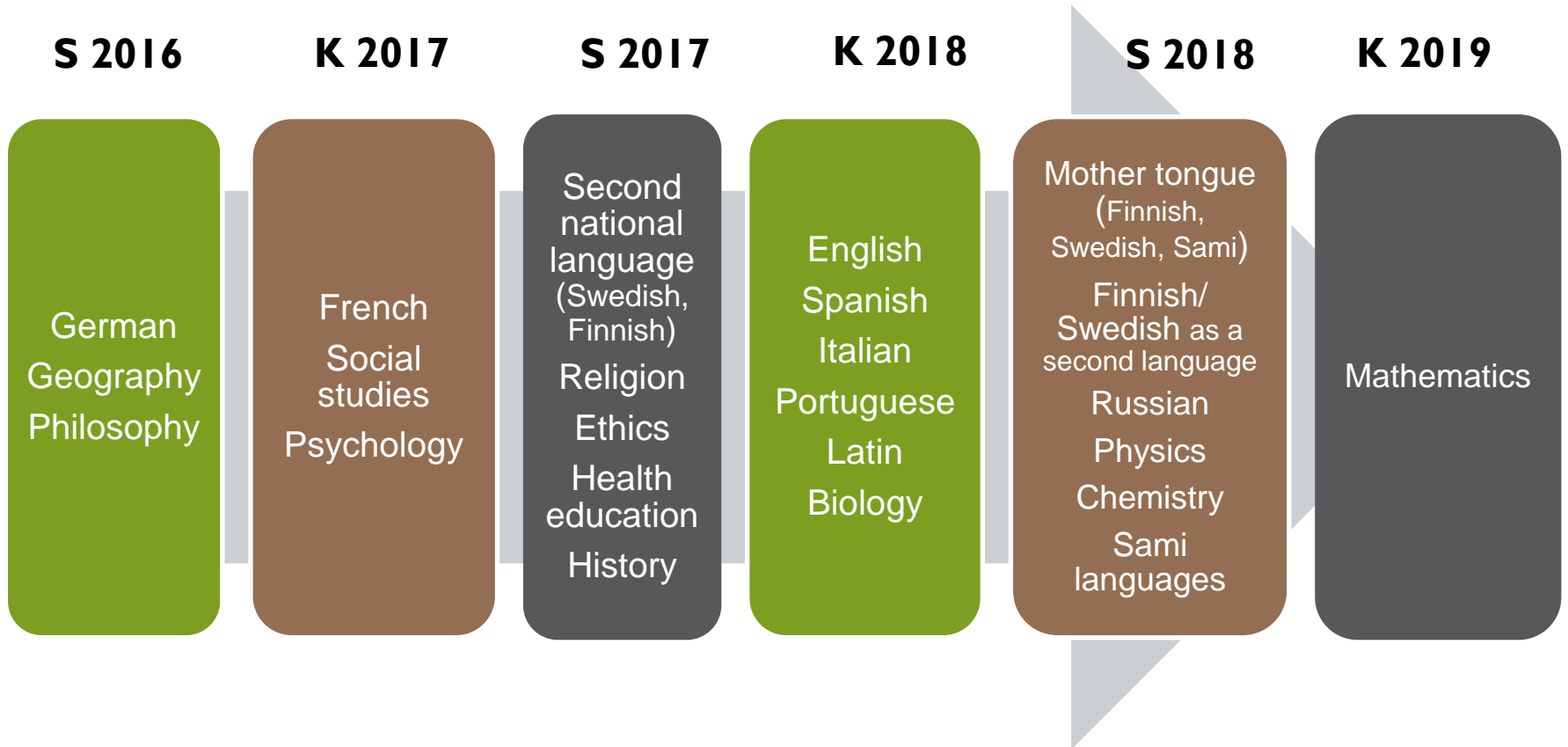
Digabi

- the digitalization project of the matriculation examination

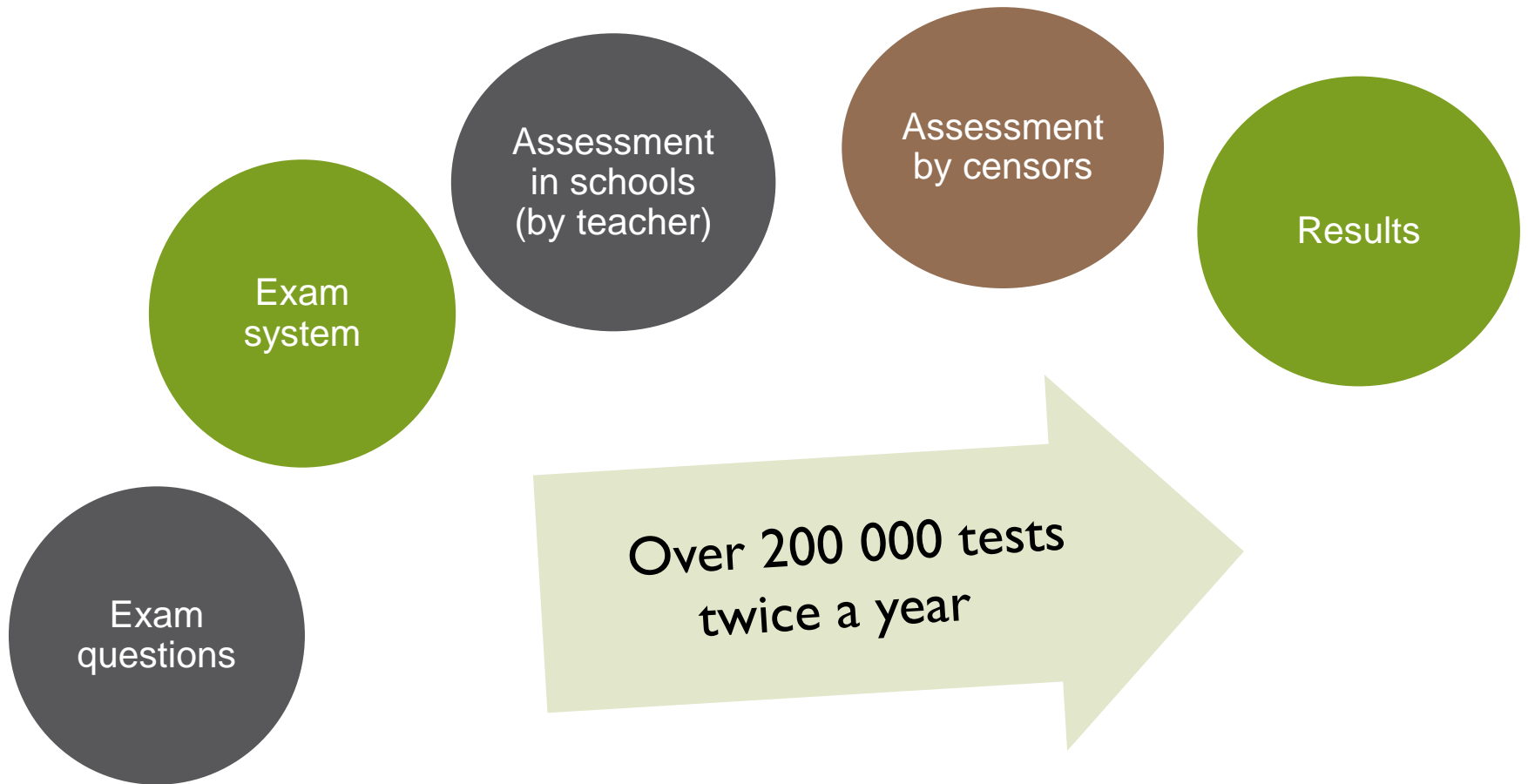
- From paper format to electronic exam
 - first tests autumn 2016, all tests 2019
- Digitalization of the whole process



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



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 (autumn 2014)
- 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 & book of tables**
 - 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

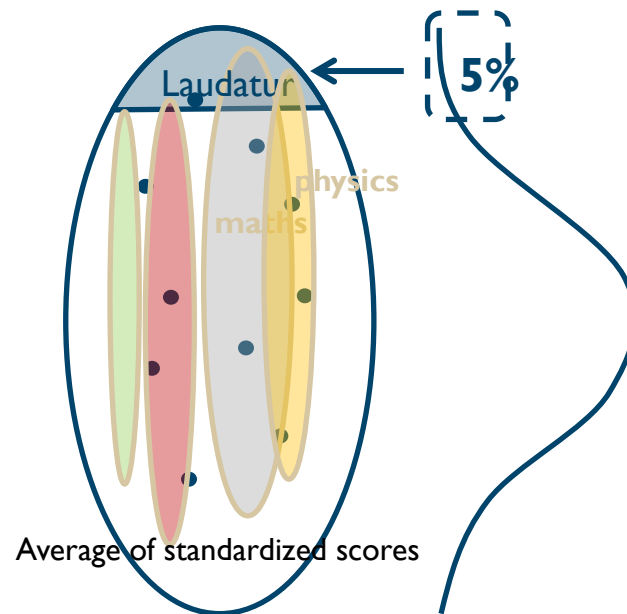
- The Finnish matriculation exam was restructured in two big reforms in 2005 and 2006:
 - Exam in mother tongue – the only compulsory test for all candidates
 - Separate tests for all general studies (science and humanities) instead of a combined test
- > the candidate populations for each test are different



- 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

