

Letter to guardians about the 9th grade joint application system 2021



Dear guardian of a 9th grade student,

Your child is facing an important choice as it is time to apply for further education in the joint application system. Choosing a new educational institution can be a difficult and demanding process. At the same time, it is an interesting and exciting opportunity that is one of the most important choices in life. The Finnish school system is flexible, and regardless of a student's primary choice it offers the possibility to re-choose or study further. No option is worse than another. It is essential, however, that everyone has a chance to apply for the most appropriate educational option. Everyone has their own wishes, interests, individual characteristics, strengths and talents. Most importantly, people of all trades are needed. It is vital that we plan and reflect upon the future in a constructive manner, taking our time, both at school and at home. The mere knowledge of different schools is not enough. When choosing a career, the most important element is knowing oneself.



We cover the basic facts about educational options and the application process during student counselling lessons. You can find additional information about the joint application system at www.opintopolku.fi. The same site is also available in English at www.studyinfo.fi. We also have counselling through Google Classrooms, which we use for sharing important information with students.

We encourage students to visit different educational institutions (up to a maximum of three during school time but students may visit as many as they like outside school time). Guardians may visit the institutions with their children when schools organise open days.

We also provide individual counselling. Guardians may contact the student counsellor via Wilma or email or by phone. Guardians are involved as we ask you to fill out a **planning form** (in Finnish) and return it just after the winter holiday.

9ABF

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Facts about the joint application system

- The joint application system in spring 2021 is a **nationwide process** and is used to apply for upper secondary or vocational study programmes beginning in the autumn term 2021.
- The application form is completed online starting **23 February 2020, closing at 3pm on 23 March 2021**.
- There is **one form** to be completed at www.opintopolku.fi
- You can include **five educational institutions on the form**. The order is binding!
- The application form is completed at school with the student guidance counsellor or at home with a guardian.
- Student selection is based on the **grades in the final report card**.
- In case there are aptitude tests or entrance exams, check the info from the school's website or Opintopolku.
- Educational institutions inform applicants about the results on **17 June 2021 at the earliest**.
- You must confirm the study place with the educational institution by **1 July 2021**.

Timeline 2021

Joint application timeline

Process	Date
1. Application time for vocational education and upper secondary education	23.2 – 23.3.2021
2. Invitation to entrance exams and aptitude tests. Some schools do not send invitations or require students to attend. Tests are organised in April–May.	April – May 2021
4. Applicants are informed of the results beginning 17 June 2021.	17.6.2021
5. Confirmation of the study place with the education provider by 1 July 2021.	1.7.2021

Application timeline for voluntary additional basic education (Year 10), preparatory education for vocational training (VALMA) and preparatory education for upper secondary training (LUVA)

Application period is the same as the Joint application period, 23.2 – 23.3.2021.

Criteria for student acceptance

Students are required to have a basic education certificate to be accepted into an educational programme included in the joint application system. Vocational programmes cannot accept applicants whose illness or handicap clearly prevents them from participating. Student guidance counsellors and the school nurse can help to clarify aspects linked to health in career planning.

The minimum grade point average and points gained in entrance tests varies from year to year in upper secondary schools and vocational schools. Typically 7.00 has been the minimum in order to enter an upper secondary school or a dual certificate programme.

In the case that a student has a special reason such as a learning disability, a social reason that has affected their achievement at school, or a certificate completed abroad, he or she can apply for discretionary consideration. An official document is required and it is to be delivered according to the instructions given at www.opintopolku.fi.

Vocational upper secondary qualification programmes

Points are given to applicants in the following manner:

- A. Completing basic education or voluntary additional basic education in the year of submitting the application: 6p
- B. General success in studies: max. 16p
- C. Emphasised subjects (arts and skills subjects): max. 8p
- D. The first school on the applicant's list: 2p
- E. Possible entrance or aptitude test: 1–10p

Applicants are ranked based on points gained according to the above system. Applicants can often gain extra points based on previous studies, hobbies and other extra activities in dance, music and sports instructor programmes. More information about the points can be found on school websites and at www.opintopolku.fi.

The points provided by General success in studies (B) are calculated based on the arithmetic average of the following subjects to two decimal places:

Finnish as a native language	Chemistry
or Finnish as a second language	Biology
Second national language	Geography
Foreign languages	Health Education
Religion or Ethics	Physical Education
History	Music
Civics	Art
Mathematics	Handicrafts
Physics	Home Economics

Upper secondary education

Students are selected according to their theoretical subjects' grade point average. The theoretical subjects in the above list are written in black. Some upper secondary schools organise an entrance exam or an interview or require a personal application in addition to considering the grade point average. Some upper secondary schools also ask students to fill out a separate subject selection card that is returned according to the school's instructions. This card is used to indicate what subjects the student is planning to study during the first year. If a school uses a subject selection card, it can be found on the school's website.

Students can practise completing the form prior to the actual application time through a demo version found at www.demo-opintopolku.fi. The demo version will close about a week before the beginning of the joint application.

Alternative educational paths

- Voluntary additional basic education (Year 10)
- Preparatory education for vocational training (VALMA)
- Preparatory education for upper secondary education (LUVA)
- Upper secondary programmes for adults (well justified cases only)
- Apprenticeship training
- Vocational and general programmes in folk high school

For more information, ask the student guidance counsellors or see www.opintopolku.fi or the institutions' websites.

When applying for programmes that are not part of the joint application system, **students must make sure by themselves** that they fill out a form and deliver it in due time. Student guidance counsellors can help when needed.

