



To All 9th grade students and their parents or guardians

The Government has decided to raise the leaving age in compulsory education from the start of autumn term 2021.

This means that after summer 2021, compulsory education will not end when the 9th grade is over. Instead, starting with the autumn term of 2021, you will continue to study free of charge either in general upper secondary school (high school), in vocational education or in other compulsory education and training programmes.

Here we explain what this means and why and how to apply.

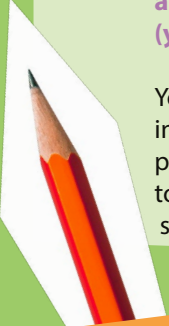


What does extending compulsory education mean?

The law has been changed so that from 1 August 2021 onwards, compulsory education will be extended and upper secondary studies will become free of charge. The aim is that from then on every young person living in Finland will complete a secondary-level qualification. **Compulsory education lasts until you turn 18.**

And what does the obligation to apply mean?

With the extension of compulsory education, all young people who have completed primary and lower secondary school (basic education) are obliged to apply for further studies. This means that **all those who are finishing lower secondary school must apply for further education in the joint application procedure (yhteishaku) in the spring or in the rolling application procedure.**



You can apply to a general upper secondary school, a vocational institute, 10th grade, preparatory education and training or any other programme that belongs to compulsory education. Your obligation to apply will continue until you have received confirmation of a student place and have started your studies.

How do I apply?

The time to apply in the joint application procedure starts on Tuesday 23 February 2021 and ends at 15.00 on Tuesday 23 March 2021.

For information about the joint application procedure, go to studyinfo.fi/wp2/en/, where you will also be able to apply for most upper secondary education places. If you wish, you can apply for programmes that are not part of the joint application procedure. You can also ask your school guidance counsellor (opinto-ohjaaja) for tips and advice.

Why is compulsory education being extended?

Compulsory education is being extended because in the future it will be much harder to cope in the world of work without secondary education and higher qualifications. This is why we want to make sure that every young person can complete a secondary-level qualification.

By extending compulsory education, we aim to:

- raise the level of education and competence in Finland
- reduce learning gaps
- boost equality and non-discrimination in education
- improve the wellbeing of young people
- raise the employment rate.

The extension of compulsory education is also a promise of free upper secondary education. So, in addition to the education and school meals that are already free of charge, things like textbooks, school journeys that are longer than seven kilometres, supplies and other materials needed in lessons, and final tests are then all free of charge.





More information on the extension of compulsory education here:

- [@okmfi](https://twitter.com/okmfi)
- minedu.fi/en/extension-of-compulsory-education
- oph.fi/oppivelvollisuus



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