

**Bi- and multilingual universities – Challenges and future prospects  
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## **The Two National Languages of Finland in the University Curricula**

In all education in Finland, from secondary school to university degrees, studies in the country's second national language, Swedish or Finnish, depending on the student's mother tongue, are a requirement. This is laid down in the language laws according to which all citizens have the right to use their mother tongue in all contacts with authorities. Therefore civil servants have to pass a language exam before they are qualified for their position. This language exam is part of the degrees both in the universities and in the polytechnics.

In this paper I will discuss the following issues:

- how the students' language skills develop during their studies in Swedish;
- how the objectives of teaching at language centres correspond to the national language exam required for civil servants;
- the relevancy and equality in testing these language skills at the various language centres of Finland ("How do I know that your B1 is my B1?");
- some examples of the language skills required at university level,
- various types of Swedish language courses offered at the University of Helsinki Language Centre.