

Since 1977, SweSAT has been used for selection to higher education, as a complement to grades from upper secondary school. The test is optional, and it is supposed to be a second chance for those who, for some reason, do not have competitive grades. The test is given twice a year, once in spring and once in autumn, and you can take the test as many times as you wish. The results are valid for five years, and the best achieved result (if more than one) is used in the selection process. At least one third of the study places in every study programme is allotted to candidates with SweSAT results.

The test is norm-referenced, and it is supposed to rank the test-takers as fairly as possible according to expected study success.

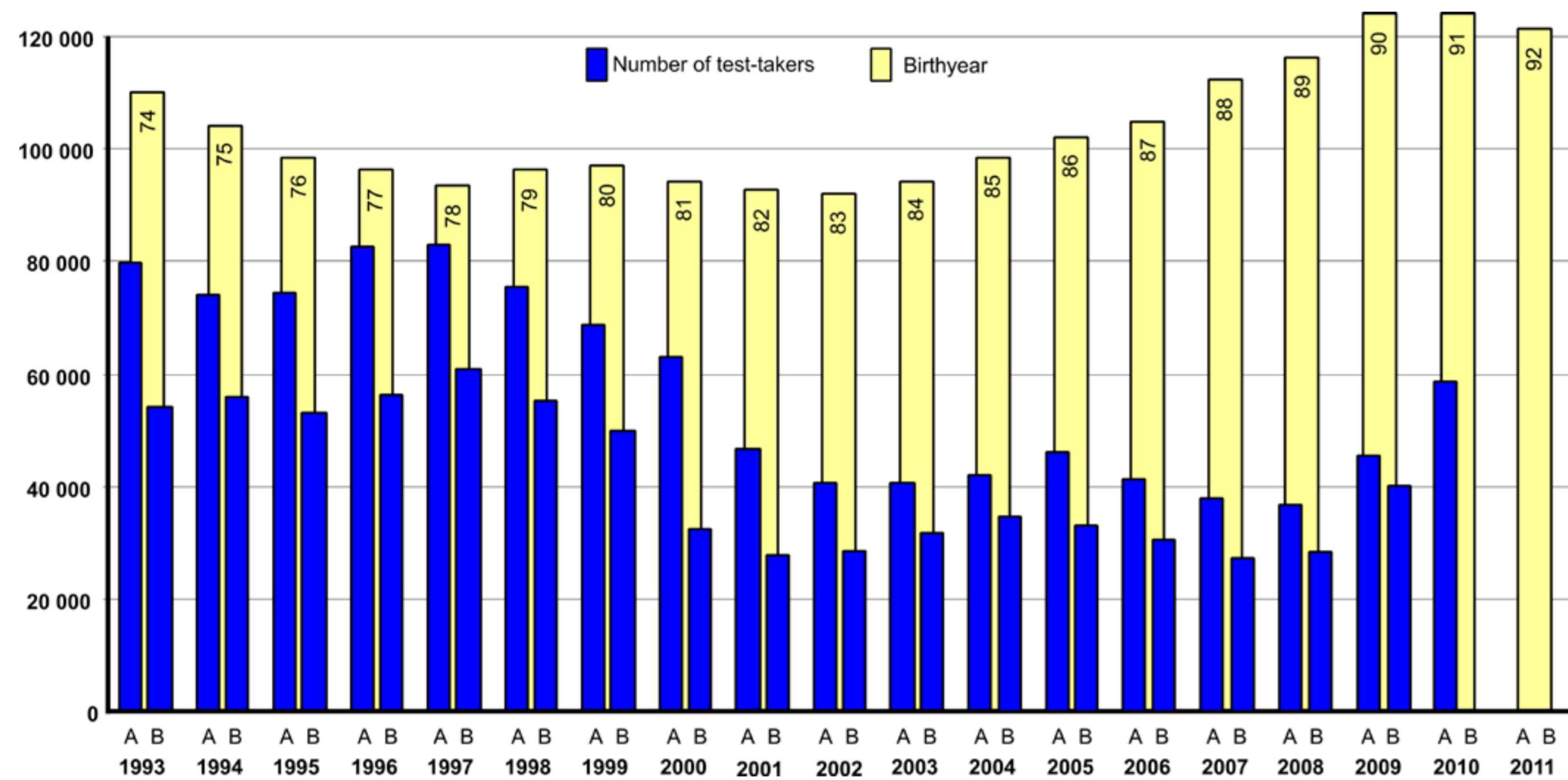


Figure 1. Number of test-takers since 1993, on each spring test (A) and autumn test (B), and in relation to the total number of 20-years old individuals in the same year.

General requirements on the test:

- The test should be in line with the goals and content of higher education, and be relevant to the entire sector of higher education.
- The test-takers should experience the test as meaningful, and suitable for selection to higher education.
- It should not be possible to improve your results by mechanical practice or by learning certain strategies, i.e. coaching should not be possible.
- Comprehensive recruiting is important. Nobody must be treated unfairly due to e.g., sex, social status, or ethnicity.
- The test should be marked fast, cheaply, and objectively.

After each administration the test is made public, and for each test occasion a completely new test is developed one year in advance. Since 1996 SweSAT consists of 122 multiple-choice items distributed on five sub-tests:

Table 1. The SweSAT since 1996

Sub-test	Number of items	Time in minutes
WORD (Vocabulary)	40	15
ERC (English reading comprehension)	20	35
READ (Swedish reading comprehension)	20	50
DS (Data sufficiency)	22	50
DTM (Interpretation of diagrams, tables, maps)	20	50
(Pre-test items)	(20-60)	50
The total test	122 (+ 20-60)	4 h. 10 min

Problems with the present test:

Inefficiency

Total testing time is four hours and 10 minutes out of which 50 minutes are used for pre-testing of new items. In particular the Swedish Reading Comprehension subtest (READ), and the subtest measuring the ability to interpret diagrams, tables and maps (DTM) were criticized, by our advisors, for being inefficient, since each item

in these two subtests needed two minutes and a half to be answered. Also the data sufficiency subtest (DS) was somewhat inefficient since each item took more than two minutes.

Abundance of verbal items

The vocabulary test (WORD) has been criticized, especially by young test-takers and immigrants, for having too great impact on the test results. 40 items i.e. 40 possible scores out of 122 can be earned in 15 minutes of the total testing time. Another purpose with the changes was to find a complement to the WORD sub-test.

The present test contains in all 122 items of which 80 (WORD, READ, ERC) are verbal and only 42 (DS, DTM) are quantitative. This fact has made it impossible to follow the advice we have got from our own advisors as well as a group of international assessors of SweSAT: To give a possibility for separate scores for Verbal and Quantitative ability. The present standardized score scale is from 0.0 to 2.0 (i.e. 21 steps). It is not possible to standardize 42 points into 21 steps in a reasonable way.

Development Work

Since 2006 development work has been going with the aim of making the test more efficient, and to get an even distribution of verbal and quantitative items.

In summary the assignment was to increase the total number of items in the test in order to get a more efficient test. To find/develop new quantitative items, as complement to the two existing types, and to find a complement to the WORD sub-test.

The restrictions were:

- the testing time should NOT be increased.
- the number of quantitative items should be increased, preferably to the same number as the verbal items.
- the test should continue to fulfil the general requirements.

A prototype of a new SweSAT is illustrated below, and presented in more detail on the following posters.

The New SweSAT

