KS5 | Curriculum
Biology

THE WALDERSLADE & GREENACRE SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

Qualification type / Exam Board

A-Level / OCR

What will I learn about?

In OCR A-Level Biology A, you will develop a detailed understanding of living organisms, biological processes and the ways in which scientists investigate the natural world. The course explores topics ranging from cells, biological molecules and transport to immunity, communication, genetics, evolution and ecosystems. You will develop practical laboratory skills, scientific literacy, mathematical and data-handling skills, and the ability to apply biological knowledge to unfamiliar contexts. Practical work is an important part of the course and supports your understanding of the theory.

How is my work assessed?

Biological Processes – Written examination • 2 hours 15 minutes • 100 marks • 37% of A-Level
Biological Diversity – Written examination • 2 hours 15 minutes • 100 marks • 37% of A-Level
Unified Biology – Written examination • 1 hour 30 minutes • 70 marks • 26% of A-Level
Practical Endorsement in Biology – Non-exam assessment, reported separately. Practical skills are developed and assessed throughout the course.

The course is assessed through three written examinations, which together account for 100% of the A-Level grade. **The Practical Endorsement is reported separately** and recognises students' practical competency. All three written papers include synoptic assessment, requiring students to make connections across the specification.

What should I consider before starting this subject?

OCR A-Level Biology is an academically demanding course that requires you to learn and apply a substantial amount of scientific knowledge. You should enjoy understanding how living systems work and be prepared to explain processes in detail, interpret unfamiliar data and solve problems. Biology also involves mathematical skills, including calculations, ratios, rates, percentages, statistics and the interpretation of graphs. You will need to work independently, revise regularly and take an active part in practical investigations. Strong literacy skills are important because examination answers often require precise scientific explanations.

Why is this course useful and what might it lead to?

A-Level Biology provides a strong foundation for further study and careers in areas such as medicine, veterinary science, dentistry, biomedical science, biochemistry, genetics, neuroscience, ecology, zoology, environmental science and teaching. It develops transferable skills in analysis, evaluation, problem-solving, practical investigation and handling evidence. The qualification can support applications to a wide range of university courses and science-related careers; specific degree courses may also require other A-Level subjects.

Entry requirements

- Grade 7-7 Combined Science
- Grade 5 in Maths

Where can I find more information?

Speak to Miss Delf-Smith/Mr Lawrence-Wenz or visit the OCR A-Level Biology A qualification page: https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-and-a-level/biology-a-h020-h420-from-2015/