



HUMAN BIOLOGY

ATAR course

**Year 12 syllabus – What’s changing: Rationale and Aims
For teaching in 2027**

Acknowledgement of Country

Kaya. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

Background

As part of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Refreshment for reviewing the nomenclature of courses, the Authority has updated the rationale and aims of each syllabus.

The revised rationale and aims are aligned with the mapping of the general capabilities to provide clear connections between the rationale, aims and syllabus content. The rationale outlines what the subject is about and why it is important. It describes what students can expect to study in the course, along with the knowledge, skills and understandings they will develop throughout the course. It also explains how these can be applied in everyday life and references potential future pathways, outlining how students might connect what they learn in the course to further education, training and employment opportunities.

Important information

WACE Refreshment: Reviewing the nomenclature of courses

This document contains information that will be included in the syllabus effective from 1 January 2027.

Users of the syllabus are responsible for checking its currency.

Syllabuses are formally reviewed by the Authority on a cyclical basis, typically every five years.

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Rationale

The Human Biology ATAR course introduces students to the language of the discipline and to key concepts around the structure and function of the human body. An understanding of human biology provides a valuable foundation for students who wish to follow a variety of career pathways and is essential for making informed choices regarding health and lifestyle and contributing effectively to discussions related to health issues in the community.

Students learn about themselves, relating structure to function and understanding how integrated regulation allows individuals to survive in a changing environment. They explore new discoveries that are increasing our understanding of the causes of dysfunction, leading to new treatments and preventative measures. They learn how their immune system responds to invading pathogens and the importance of community and global responses for the prevention and control of infectious disease transmission. They study population genetics to understand the long-term changes leading to natural selection and the evolution of our species.

The course is founded on knowledge and understanding that has been gained through systematic inquiry, scientific research and practical application. Students develop scientific literacy along with a deep understanding of the subject. They are challenged to ask questions and draw evidence-based conclusions using scientific knowledge and practices. Students develop the knowledge and skills to think critically, evaluate evidence, solve problems, and communicate understandings in scientific ways.

Responsible citizens need to be able to evaluate benefits, risks and ethical concerns to make informed decisions about lifestyle and health. Issues such as alternative medical treatments and responses to preventing disease transmission, such as vaccination and isolation, are examples in which personal choices have an impact on individual and community health and wellbeing. With an understanding of human biology, students are able to make better life decisions and to be more informed contributors to discussions related to health issues in the community.

An understanding of human biology is valuable for a variety of career paths. The course prepares students for further studies and training in the fields of medicine, paramedicine, nursing and allied health (for example, nutritional health, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), food and hospitality, childcare, sport, science education and social work. An understanding of human biology helps to prepare all students, regardless of their background or career aspirations, to take their place as responsible citizens in society.

Aims

The Human Biology ATAR course aims to develop students’:

- understanding of the structure and function of human biological systems to maintain homeostasis, and the importance of inheritance and its interrelationships with human variability and evolution
- knowledge and understanding of human biological systems in a wide range of real-world contexts
- investigative skills, including planning and conducting investigations, collecting and analysing qualitative and quantitative data and interpreting evidence
- critical evaluation of scientific arguments and claims in order to solve problems and generate informed, responsible and ethical conclusions
- use of appropriate representations, multimodal mechanisms and platforms to communicate scientific understandings.