



Pennsylvania
Department of Education

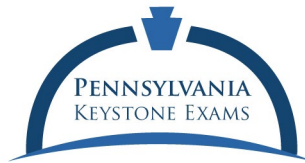
—KEYSTONE BIOLOGY TEST DESIGN—
2025



Keystone Exams Test Design

← STEELS Aligned →

Designs for
Biology





BIOLOGY

The Biology Keystone Exams will consist of two modules as outlined below.

Module 1—Molecules to Organisms - Structures, Functions, and Natural Cycles

Module 2—Continuity and Unity of Life - Biodiversity, Genetics, and Changes over Time

Biology Module Design

Biology	Module 1 % of points	Module 2 % of points
	50% 12 Standards	50% 12 Standards

The Biology Keystone Exams will measure the High School Life Science Standards as defined by the Pennsylvania STEELS Standards.

Module 1

Core autoscored items 27 points

2 core 3 pt.-CR items 6 points

Total 33 points

Module 2

Core autoscored items 27 points

2 core 3 pt.-CR items 6 points

Total 33 points

There will be a total of 66 points (Module 1 and Module 2 combined) with approximately 80% autoscored (MC/TE) items and 20% CR items.



The operational plan is provided in the chart below.

Biology Module Plan (no. of items)

Biology	Module 1		Module 2		Biology Total		Estimated Time (Module 1 and Module 2)		
	50%		50%		100%		Core Only	Field Test Only	Core & Field Test
	MC/TE Items	CR Items	MC/TE Items	CR Items	MC/TE Items	CR Items			
Core	27	2	27	2	54	4	110 minutes	44 minutes	154 minutes
FT	8	1	8	1	16	2			
				Total	70	6			

Biology Test Book and Answer Book Section Layout

Biology Section Layout Plan

Biology	Module	Number of MC/TE	Estimated MC/TE Item Breakdown	Number of CR	Estimated CR Item Breakdown	Testing Time	Administration Time
	1	35	27—Common (Core) Items 8—Embedded Field Test Items	3	2—Common (Core) Items 1—Embedded Field Test Items	77	87
	2	35	27—Common (Core) Items 8—Embedded Field Test Items	3	2—Common (Core) Items 1—Embedded Field Test Items	77	87