

IB Environmental Systems and Societies



Introduction:

IB Environmental Systems and Societies (ESS) is an exciting course which is part science and part humanities and takes a multidisciplinary approach to understanding the challenges facing our environment, and the solutions to them.

On the ESS course, you will learn about the science of the interaction between the natural systems of the planet on which we depend – the biosphere, the hydrosphere, the atmosphere and the lithosphere - and the human activities that both harm and benefit them.

Sustainability is at the heart of the ESS programme, and we will discuss issues ranging from the local to the global, considering issues of justice, fairness, ethics, practicality and effectiveness, developing both your academic knowledge and your ability to effectively communicate issues of global importance.

Course structure:

The course covers 10 large topics:

- ESS Foundation (perspectives, systems and sustainability)
- Ecology
- Biodiversity and conservation
- Water
- Land
- Atmosphere and climate change
- Natural resources
- Human populations and urban systems
- Environmental law (HL only)
- Environmental economics (HL only)
- Environmental ethics (HL only)

Entry requirements:

To be admitted onto this course you will need to meet the following requirements:

- GCSE grade 6+ in Combined Science, GCSE Separate Sciences or GCSE Geography

Careers:

A good grade in IB ESS can help unlock a wide range of careers including:

- Anthropologist
- Biologist
- Environmental consultant
- Environmental engineering
- Environmental health and safety specialist
- Environmental lawyer
- Geographer
- Geoscientist
- Hydrologist
- Nature conservation
- Sustainability officer
- Teaching
- Wildlife biologist

Assessment:

Internal assessment (80%):

- Paper 1, 2 hours – Questions on an unseen case study (30%)
- Paper 2, 2 ½ hours
 - Section A: Short-answer and data-based questions.
 - Section B: Two structured essays from a choice of three.

External assessment (20%):

- Individual Investigation – students collect and analyse data to address a research question of their choice.