



COURSE DESCRIPTOR

IBDP ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS AND SOCIETIES

SUBJECT OVERVIEW

ESS is a dynamic interdisciplinary subject that takes 21st-century challenges and socio-environmental real-world issues and looks at them through the lens of human societies and the interrelationships of the natural world: biosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere and lithosphere. Students explore how these relationships change over time and space, consider the potential adaptations and mitigations that human societies and the natural world may currently be undergoing, and how these could impact the future and our place in it.

PRIOR LEARNING REQUIRED

The interdisciplinary nature of the DP course requires a broad skill set from students, including the ability to perform research and investigations, participation in philosophical discussion and problem-solving. The course requires a systems approach to environmental understanding and promotes holistic thinking about environmental issues.

GCSE or equivalent

IELTS 5.5 or equivalent

EXAM BOARD

IBDP

COURSE CONTENT

Year 1	Year 2
Topic 1 – Foundations of environmental systems and societies (perspectives, systems and sustainability)	Topic 3 – Biodiversity and conservation

Topic 2 – Ecology	Topic 5 – Land and terrestrial food production systems and societies
Topic 4 – Water and aquatic food production systems and societies	Topic 6 – Atmosphere and climate change
	Topic 7 – Natural resources
	Topic 8 – Human populations and urban systems

ASSESSMENT

Formal internal assessments take place regularly about once every half term and homework is set on a regular basis.

Grades are determined by three components: two external assessments and an internal assessment. Final examinations for components 1-2 take place in May at the end of the 2-year course.

An end of year exam must be passed for entry to year 2 and a mock exam must be passed for entry into the public exams.

Paper	Length of paper	Weighting
1. Case Study	70 marks 2 hours written paper	30% of the final grade
2. Short Answers and Structured essays	80 marks 2,5 hours written paper	50% of the final grade
Internal assessment – Individual Investigation	30 marks Max 3000 words (non-exam assessment)	20% of the final grade



TEXTBOOKS/REVISION GUIDES

Title	ISBN	Author
Environmental Systems and Societies (Oxford IB Diploma Programme)	978-0198332565	Jill Rutherford and Gillian Williams

Summaries of each unit, your notes and past examination papers will be your major source of revision.

HIGHER EDUCATION PATHWAYS

ESS will enhance your skills in critical thinking and analysis, which are highly valued by universities and employers. ESS is popular with students who wish to study Multiple subjects and pathways from fashion to law as well as the obvious environmental sciences and development studies at university and/or enter careers in government and charity work.

Previous students have gained acceptance in undergraduate courses in social sciences.

CURRICULUM DIRECTOR

Mr Dims Ashton