

IB ESS Internal Assessment guide - Suggested timeline

Stage	Description
1. Introduction of the IA	Teacher explains the ESS IA purpose, assessment criteria, and how environmental strategies and tensions are central to the investigation.
2. Topic Selection	Students explore environmental issues with a clear strategy to address them (e.g., conservation plan, pollution control) and identify potential tensions between stakeholders. Submit 2–3 topic ideas for approval.
3. Research Question, Variables & Strategy	Formulate a research question that connects to a specific environmental strategy. Clearly identify independent, dependent, and control variables. Define the chosen strategy and briefly outline potential stakeholder tensions.
4. Tension Analysis Planning	Identify relevant stakeholders with different worldviews or interests. Consider possible conflicts, trade-offs, and outcomes linked to the strategy (e.g., economic vs. environmental priorities, cultural vs. governmental perspectives).
5. Investigation Proposal	Prepare a detailed plan including: Introduction, Research Question, Background Context, Hypothesis, Variables, Methodology, Strategy description, Stakeholder Tensions, Procedure, Diagram of set-up, Materials, Data Analysis Plan, and Risk Assessment.
6. Data Collection	Collect data (primary or secondary) that provides evidence on both the environmental effects and stakeholder perspectives related to the strategy.
7. Data Analysis	Process and present data using ESS statistical tools and visual aids. Identify trends, patterns, and uncertainties. Link data interpretation to the chosen strategy and tension analysis.
8. Evaluation	Assess methodological limitations, discuss improvements, and consider unresolved questions – including whether tensions could be reduced or strategy outcomes improved.

9. Rough Draft Submission & Feedback	Submit a full draft for feedback, ensuring clear explanation of strategy and tension.
10. Final IA Submission	Refine and submit the final IA with integrated analysis of environmental strategy, stakeholder tensions, and data evidence.
11. Teacher Marking & Standardisation	Teacher assesses IAs, ensuring strategy and tension analysis is well integrated.
12. Upload to IBIS	Marks are uploaded; selected IAs are sent for moderation with comments.