

Rancho APES FAQs

1. What is this class about?

AP Environmental Science is the equivalent of a one-semester college “survey” course. In other words, it is a survey of all of the topics that fall within the environmental science umbrella. These include ecology, systems analysis, agriculture and the environment, deforestation, ocean fisheries, endangered species, air and water pollution, energy and the environment, environmental meteorology (ozone depletion and climate change), waste management, urban development, environmental law, and environmental economics.

2. Is APES an “easy” AP class?

There is no such thing as an “easy” AP class. Although the book is thinner, and there is less daily work load than other AP science courses, the course is highly conceptual and there is an emphasis on analysis and writing over memorization. Some students find the tests quite challenging because of this - tests are 80% of the grade. I think even the most advanced students would tell you the course is not an “easy A.”

3. Is it true that a lot of colleges don't give credit for AP Environmental science?

Most public colleges and universities give credit for AP Environmental Science.

Because the course represents only one semester of learning, colleges and universities generally award a maximum of one semester of credit for a score of 3 or higher on the AP exam. Most colleges and universities give elective credit for a score of 3 and credit for a specific course for a score of 4 or 5. Credit given by some of the more common public schools is given in the table below (according to their websites, August 201).

School	Score of 3	Score of 4 or 5
UC Irvine	Elective Credit	Social Ecology E8 or Earth System Science 1.
UCLA	Geog:Environmental Science	Geog: Environmental Science
UC San Diego (varies with college)	Elective Credit	SIO10 -The Earth (one course towards natural sciences requirement)
Berkeley	no credit	no credit
UC Santa Barbara	Env Studies 2	Env Studies 2
Cal State Fullerton	Geography 120	Geography 120
Cal State Long Beach	General Education Physical Sci w/Lab	General Education Physical Sci w/Lab

4. What is your passing rate?

The size of the class, percentage of students taking the exam, and percentage of those who pass the exam vary from year to year. The percentage of students who take and pass the exam each year varies from about 50% to about 65%. Because the size of the course has tended to be about 35 students and many of them take the exam (usually over 80%), I consider this a successful passing rate, and it is above the national average. In general - students who get As pass the exam, about half of the students who get Bs pass the exam, some of the students who get Cs pass the exam and those with Ds and Fs generally do not pass the exam. The past six testing years (2011-2016) most of the student who passed did so with scores of 4 or 5.