

FOSSIL FREE UK

A University Guide to Fossil Fuel Divestment

people & planet

student action on world poverty and the environment

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This guide is designed to help you set up, plan and run a successful Fossil Free campaign on your campus. Make sure you check out our website peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free for all the latest information, and don't hesitate to get in touch with the team with any ideas or questions:

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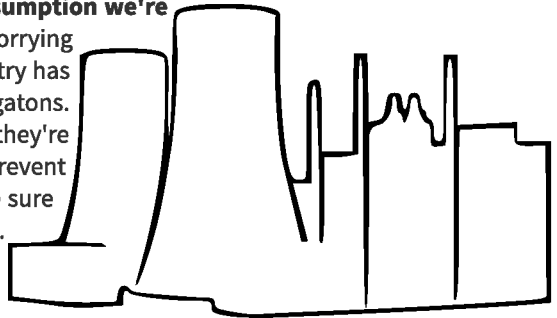
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Introduction

WHY FOSSIL FUELS?

Climate change is happening, that's a fact. Whilst there is little the international community can agree on with regards to how to stop it, they agree on one thing; **if we exceed a 2°C increase in global temperatures we will see catastrophic global effects.**

The fossil fuel industry is unequivocally driving us towards a global climate crisis: we will not keep dangerous climate change at bay without halting our extraction of fossil fuels. Scientists have calculated how much carbon we can burn to stay below a 2°C rise: this is around 565 gigatons. This sounds like a lot, but **at current rates of consumption we're going to hit that in the next 16 years.** The worrying news is how much carbon the fossil fuel industry has to burn. Their reserves currently hold 2795 gigatons. That's 5 times more than is safe to burn, and they're constantly looking for more. If we are to prevent catastrophic climate change we need to make sure 80% of known fossil fuels stay in the ground. It's a big task, but it's a vital one.



WHY UNIVERSITIES?

UK universities are deeply entangled in the fossil fuel industry. **They currently invest up to £6.6 billion in the industry** depending on the university, with money from their pension funds and endowments (donations, tuition fees, etc). That's an investment in fossil fuels of **£1,804 for every student in the UK**. If it is wrong to wreck the climate, then it is wrong to profit from that wreckage.

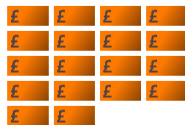
Not only are universities financially supporting the fossil fuel industry, they are giving it a social license. Universities are meant to be a bastion of forward thinking and life changing research in our society. To invest in fossil fuels goes completely against this, in every way.

No UK university invests in tobacco, it would go against their research on cancer treatments. So why do they invest in something which is literally killing the planet?

It is not just financial investments; too many UK universities also support the fossil fuel industry directly through their research and their partnerships with some of the biggest fossil fuel companies in the world like BP and Shell.

Universities provide large amounts of money, valuable credibility, and their students and staff to oil, coal and gas companies. Investments are kept in fossil fuel company shares through pension and endowment funds. Universities

1 £ = £100



Universities in the UK invest up to **£1,804** per student in fossil fuel companies

also accept lucrative sponsorship deals for buildings, staff and events, give senior fossil fuel executives awards and honours, train corporate staff, and design courses with them. Universities encourage students to work for fossil fuel companies, and conduct advanced research and development on their behalf, investigating new ways to drill for inaccessible fossil-fuel resources.

Oil, gas and coal companies are more profitable with these relationships because they help them finance their work, recruit staff, drill for new, riskier resources, sell products, and build a 'social license to operate'. Universities, pushed by governments fixated on the commercialisation of higher education, enter into these relationships to enable them to offer new staff positions, fund courses and pay for equipment and buildings. Yet by engaging with fossil fuel companies in these ways, universities are damaging their credibility and leadership role in shaping a fossil free future, and failing in their responsibilities to tackle climate change

"The similarity between fossil fuels and tobacco runs deeper than gumming up the lungs of the planet. As tobacco companies once (and to a certain extent this continues) oversaw vast plantations of indentured workers which essentially amounted to private empires, big oil is now tearing up Canadian boreal forest and condemning thousands of indigenous people to wage slavery. – Ben Powrie, Reading University People & Planet

FOSSIL FREE UNIVERSITIES?



Public institutions such as universities can take the responsible step and start untangling themselves from relationships with fossil fuel companies. Instead of financing the fossil fuel sector, universities can keep money in clean, less risky investments. Instead of greenwashing those industries that exacerbate climate change, universities can support those who are leading the way in the transition to a low-carbon economy. Instead of training the industry and researching new ways to extract fossil fuels, they can conduct research and train people in technologies which will build a clean and healthy future. These are the aims of People & Planet's new Fossil Free campaign.

In the process of putting their house in order, universities will be pioneering a new way for public institutions to become truly independent of the fossil-fuel economy, trailblazing a path for wider society to follow.



Greenwash: a form of spin in which green PR or green marketing is deceptively used to promote the perception that an organisation's products, aims and/or policies are environmentally friendly.

WHY DIVESTMENT?

Divestment is the act of removing money from a particular fund or asset; in essence, it is the opposite of investment.

200 publicly traded companies hold the vast majority of the world's proven coal, oil and gas reserves. Those are the companies we'll be asking our institutions to break their links with. Together they hold five times more carbon in their fossil fuel reserves than we can safely afford to burn to stop runaway climate change.

The Fossil Fuel divestment movement is already winning. In just over a year the US campaign saw 44 organisations and cities pull their money out of the fossil fuel industry, including 6 universities.

This is just the start. Divestment campaigns are springing up across the world from the Netherlands to Australia. Our campaign is part of a global struggle, one that's set to define the climate movement for years to come.

Divestment has seen historic campaign wins. In the 1980s divestment campaigns sprung up on campuses across the world against apartheid. In the UK banks such as Barclays were boycotted by student unions and universities, pushing them to withdraw support for the regime. Apartheid fell with the help of solidarity pressure from these campaigns.

UK Universities invest their money in stocks and bonds to generate income to run their institutions, but they can do this without wrecking the planet. Although the fossil fuel industry is a profitable one in the short term, it's a risky one in the long term. Their profits rely on using up all their oil, coal, and gas reserves. It's becoming clear that 80% of these reserves have to stay in the ground in order to stop runaway climate change. The profits from fossil fuel extraction, and the university investments in it, will inevitably become worthless. There are plenty of investment opportunities that make a positive impact to the planet.



GOING BEYOND DIVESTMENT

Divestment is at the heart of the Fossil Free campaign but it is not the end. We want to sever all the links between the fossil fuel industry and universities.

We want to stop the Greenwash, such as giving honorary degrees to fossil fuel CEOs. Senior executives from BP and Shell have received 20 awards from universities in the last decade alone.

We also need universities to start supporting a clean energy future, such as providing ethical career advice and investing in and researching renewable energy sources.

Many universities are also supported by the fossil fuel industry in funding their research or building a new departmental building. This means university research can be skewed to fit a fossil fuel companies aims. **Shell, BP and Exxon alone fund £56.7 million of University research.**

Although this represents a small proportion of the total research budgets of these companies, such programmes help unlock more carbon by discovering new sources of fossil-fuels, and increasing the amount of fuel that can be extracted from existing sources. When we already have 5 times the amount of fossil fuels that is safe to burn, this cannot be allowed to happen.

WHAT ABOUT OTHER ORGANISATIONS?

Universities must lead the way on fossil fuel divestment, but People & Planet isn't working alone. Our partners *Operation Noah* are focusing on getting religious institutions to divest and *ShareAction* are targeting pension schemes' fossil fuel investments. We're also working closely with *350.org* in the US who are leading divestment work everywhere from universities to whole cities.

The logo for 350.org, featuring a blue circular arrow icon to the left of the text "350.org" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

OPERATION
NOAH
Climate abuse. Our problem. Our solution.

The logo for ShareAction, featuring the word "ShareAction" in a bold, dark blue font, followed by a purple double chevron symbol. Below it is the tagline "the movement for Responsible Investment" in a smaller, purple font.

formerly **FairPensions**

Campaign Aims

We're seeking to break all the links between universities and the fossil fuel industry, as well as ensuring universities are fulfilling their role in society as a force for good.

We want all universities to:

1. MOVE THE MONEY

- ✗ Screen for and exclude the fossil fuel industry from their investment portfolio
- ✗ Immediately freeze any new investment in fossil fuel companies
- ✗ Divest from the fossil fuel industry and shift funds to lower risk, ethical investments within 5 years

2. STOP THE GREENWASH

- ✗ Publish full details of their financial and other ties to the fossil fuel industry
- ✗ Stop giving out honorary degrees to fossil fuel industry CEOs (and start giving more to real leaders!)
- ✗ Stop accepting sponsorship and advertising from fossil fuel companies

3. SUPPORT A CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE FOR ALL

- ✗ Provide students with ethical careers advice and opportunities
- ✗ Refocus research & expertise on climate solutions and phase out climate-damaging fossil fuel research
- ✗ Demand more research funding for renewables from fossil fuel companies and government

The 6 Step Plan

Whether you've been campaigning for years or are completely new to organising, here is a six-step plan to help you start a Fossil Free campaign at your university. Feel free to mix up the steps and add things, you'll know what will work best at your own university.

STEP 1: Build your Fossil Free group or team

STEP 2: Plan your Fossil Free campaign

STEP 3: Raise awareness and build support on campus

STEP 4: Turn up the heat

STEP 5: Convince the decision-makers

STEP 6: Escalate (or Win!)

Step 1: Build your Fossil Free team

First meeting

Arrange a meeting of your People & Planet group to talk about starting the Fossil Free campaign. If you don't have a People & Planet group, talk to the Student Union and other societies on campus.

A first meeting is a great way to share ideas, plan for the future and build some momentum amongst your core supporters and activists.

Building a team

All good campaigns start with a strong team. Get together with your friends, recruit the best activists on campus, and remember to think outside the box about who to invite: a diversity of experiences and opinions often makes a group stronger. They can support you in gathering a group of people interested in working on this campaign together.

TOP TIP: We've created a handy Fossil Free first meeting guide. You can download it from our website:

peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free/resources



Step 2: Plan your Fossil Free Campaign

The campaign you run will depend entirely on what your university is like - they're all different! Some have obvious, big endowments (savings), whilst others don't but may have strong recruitment partnerships or courses sponsored by BP. Who has decision-making power? What will success look like for you?

Research

We've teamed up with students and *Platform UK* to conduct a comprehensive piece of research into the ties between universities and the fossil fuel industry. This will give you some great facts and knowledge to build up a well researched campaign. We've used some universities as case studies, but if your university isn't mentioned, or you think there are things we haven't uncovered, your group can do its own research.

There are plenty of useful resources to help your research such as your university's People & Planet Green League score and our Fossil Free UK resources page: peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free/resources

TOP TIP: Invite a member of People & Planet to come and help you plan the campaign. A member of the People & Planet team will help you prepare for this really exciting campaign and provide you with any background or resources your group will need to take the next steps in building this movement on campus.

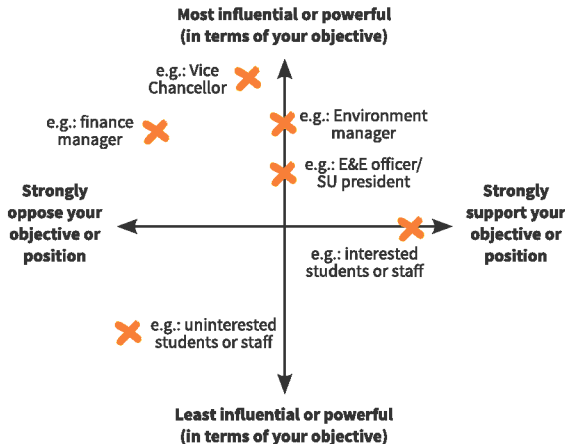


Some questions you'll need answers to in order to work out where to target your campaign:

- ✗ Does your university have an Ethical Investment Policy? How does this policy conflict with other policies/statements on sustainability and climate change they've made previously?
- ✗ How can students feed-in to investment decisions? Has it divested before? (Tobacco? Arms?)
- ✗ Does your university have an endowment? Check this list: bit.ly/youruni
- ✗ Does your university publicly list where it is investing its money? How much is invested in the fossil fuel industry?
- ✗ Does your university have strong links with the fossil fuel industry through studentships and research facilities funded by private energy companies such as Shell or BP?
- ✗ Does your university accept sponsorship for events by private energy companies?
- ✗ Are there fossil fuel companies present at your careers fairs on campus?

Power Mapping

To make your campaign as strong as possible it's important to work out who makes the ultimate decisions on the university's investments or partnerships and who has influence over the decision-maker. Map out all the key players, and think about who you'll need to target.



Campaign Stages

- Set goals
- Educate
- Build organisation
- Negotiate with target
- Low-level confrontation
- High-level confrontation
- Negotiate
- Win
- Monitor implementation
- Campaign Goal**

Write a Campaign Plan

A campaign plan is a living document that you can use to order your thoughts and set clear benchmarks that will help keep your campaign on track. You can find a sample campaign plan up on our website (peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free/resources), but feel free to come up with a format that works best for you. Use this in regular meetings to check on progress towards the milestones you've set for yourselves.

Create a Campaign Timeline

One of the most important things for a successful campaign is keeping up momentum and not trying to do everything at once. Sit down with a calendar and figure out how you can keep up excitement over the coming months – realise that nothing is happening in December? Think about bringing a speaker to campus. We've got a list of awesome speakers ranging from experts in fossil free finances to representatives from 350.org and other organisations.

Remember, good campaigns are like good stories; the more interesting your narrative, the more likely people will want to follow along and take part.



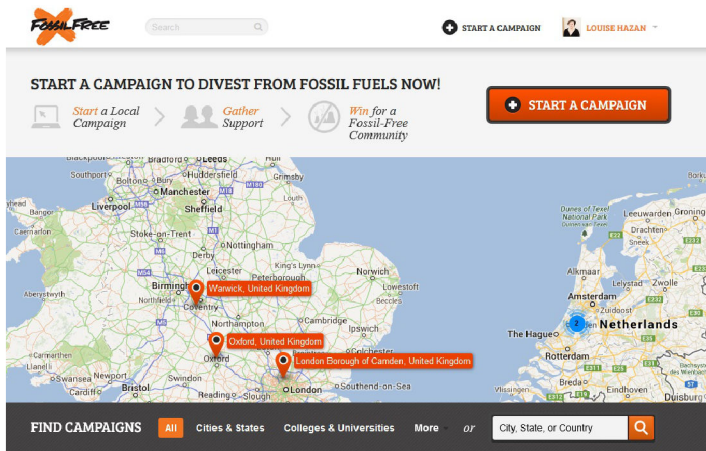
Step 3: Raise Awareness and Build Support on Campus

Campaigns often falter because they turn into backroom negotiations with an investment committee rather than a public facing effort that galvanises campus and community support. As you plan out your campaign, make sure to identify ways that you and your group can build campus support among students and staff.

So, it's time to build the campaign on campus and get the student body involved. There are many ways you can do this, here are just a few ideas.

Create a Fossil Free petition website

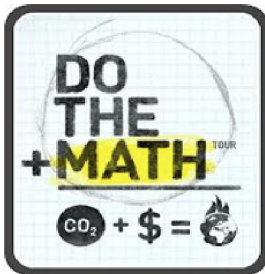
Get started and create your own sophisticated online petition tool using our software. You'll have full control over the wording and design of your petition. The tool also allows you to share it easily on social media and build your contacts list - you can email the people who've signed to keep them updated about your campaign progress and events.



The screenshot shows the Fossil Free website interface. At the top left is the 'Fossil Free' logo. To its right is a search bar. Further right are a '+ START A CAMPAIGN' button and a user profile for 'LOUISE HAZAN'. Below the header is a main banner with the text 'START A CAMPAIGN TO DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS NOW!' and three icons: 'Start a Local Campaign', 'Gather Support', and 'Win for a Fossil-Free Community'. A large orange 'START A CAMPAIGN' button is on the right. Below the banner is a map of the United Kingdom with several locations highlighted in red boxes: 'Warwick, United Kingdom', 'Oxford, United Kingdom', and 'London Borough of Camden, United Kingdom'. At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with 'FIND CAMPAIGNS' and filters for 'All', 'Cities & States', 'Colleges & Universities', and 'More'. A search bar at the bottom right allows searching by 'City, State, or Country'.

Start a petition here: <http://peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free/get-involved>

Get stuck? We've created a 'How To' petition guide which will guide you through step by step: <http://peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free/resources>



Host a screening of Do the Math

Do the Math is a 42-minute film about the rising student-led fossil fuel divestment movement starring Bill McKibben. You could organise a discussion afterwards to see if you can get more people involved and plan your Fossil Free campaign.

Head over to go.350.org/1ehhv3a to find yourself a copy.

Set up a Facebook/Twitter page or direct students to the People & Planet ones

Social media is a great way to spread your campaign messages across campus. Set up your own pages, or direct students to the central campaign pages so they can be kept up to date with the latest information.

Remember to share national campaign updates to your pages and groups regularly.

 facebook.com/FossilFreeUK
 [@FossilFree_UK](https://twitter.com/FossilFree_UK)
peopleandplanet.org/fossilfree

Student Media

Getting your student media to cover your campaign is a great way to attract more students to campaign, and let the wider student body know what you're doing.



Creative Stunts

Creative stunts are all about bringing attention to your campaign whilst having fun. Banner drops, a human ring around Finance Committee meeting or a fossil themed march round campus dressed as dinosaurs.



Other things you can do

- ✗ Write an article for your campus newspaper/magazine. Make it fun and interesting, and don't be afraid to be controversial!
- ✗ Get some air time on your University's radio station: If they have a current affairs, university news or 'drive time' shows try and get interview live on air. Make sure you record your time on the airwaves to be shared online afterwards. (You can do this for free using <http://www.screamer-radio.com/>)
- ✗ Encourage your University's TV station to film one of your exciting actions, get them to stick it on YouTube and spread the word! The best way to get in touch with these is to get to know someone in the editorial or news team, but if not you can just send them a press release.

For more media top tips
download our media guide:
peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free/resources

TOP TIP: Having a really clear visual identity for your campaign (and linking it to the wider global struggle) will also be important - think **ORANGE!** There's a handy downloadable design pack on our website.



Other campaigning ideas and tools include:

- ✓ Open Letter to the VC urging them to divest/drop sponsorship
- ✓ Debates and speaker events
- ✓ Parties, gigs, fundraisers, socials
- ✓ Presentations - Prepare a slick intro to the campaign that you train people up to deliver to different groups like the union, staff, other societies, SU president, Investment Committee.

Step 4: Turn up the Heat

Once you've built up some student support, it's time to turn up the heat!

Deliver your petition

Send this to the Vice-Chancellor in a creative way, host a demonstration outside his or her building, publish an editorial in the campus newspaper pushing for divestment...

Use Alumni

Now is also a great time to bring in alumni to help out. Does your university have any famous graduates you can call on for support? Ask them to write letters to the university, publish ads in the alumni magazine, and support your efforts.

Pass a Student Union motion or call a referendum

One of the most effective ways to get support on campus, and turn up the heat, is to get your Students' Union to support the campaign. Either pass a motion in council or call a referendum to mandate your Union to do this. You can ask your student officers if you need any advice on how to do this.

If passed, the Student Union President who sits on the university's finance committee will have the authority to bring these issues to the next finance meeting and to the Vice-Chancellor's attention.

We've created a draft motion you can base yours on which you can find on our resources page.

<http://peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free/resources>