

FOSSIL FREE STUDENT UNION MOTION

This Union notes that:

1. Fossil fuel companies were responsible for 71% of global carbon emissions between 1988 and 2017.
2. No new fossil fuel infrastructure projects can be built to stay within internationally agreed upon parameters of global heating – 1.5 degrees.
3. Frontline and Indigenous communities continue having to resist the destructive business models of fossil fuel companies operating on their lands.
4. Between 1990 and 2015 the wealthiest 1% of the global population contributed twice as much carbon dioxide as the poorest 50%. The same 50% live overwhelmingly in countries most vulnerable to the impacts of the climate crisis, meaning they are harmed first and worst by a crisis not of their making.
5. In 2022 only 5% of overall capital expenditure by top fossil fuel companies was directed at low-carbon/renewable projects.
6. The People & Planet student-led network have made Fossil Free mainstream: two-thirds of UK universities have announced divestment from fossil fuels.

This Union believes that:

1. The fossil fuel industry, by extracting, processing, promoting, and facilitating the use of, selling, and profiting from fossil fuels, as well as by having a major influence on government policy, is driving the climate crisis and its catastrophic impacts.
2. We should support the struggle of frontline and Indigenous communities in their resistance against fossil fuel extractors.
3. That we are running out of time to keep global warming below 1.5-2C above pre-industrial levels - the limit for ensuring a safe and stable future for the planet and all people on it.
4. That university commitments to tackling climate change - such as carbon neutral / net zero strategies - should extend to their investment portfolios and policies.

5. That our university must be a part of the solution and act against these injustices by publicly severing ties with the fossil fuel industry.

This Union resolves to:

1. Depending on whether the University invests in fossil industries, the Union will

a). if the university has investments - adopt the People & Planet Fossil Free campaign and demand that our university:

1. exclude the fossil fuel industry from their investment portfolio;

2. introduce a publicly accessible ethical investment. policy excluding the fossil fuel industry;

3. commit to, and fully divest from all fossil fuels within 3 years.

OR

b). if the university does not have investments - adopt the People & Planet Fossil Free campaign and demand that our university:

1. sign the Fossil Free Declaration to publicly affirm that they do not hold investments in fossil fuel companies, as well as committing to never invest in them in the future;

2. introduce a publicly accessible ethical investment policy excluding the fossil fuel industry.

2. Mandate the relevant full-time officer(s) to support students to lead, and put resources towards, a high-profile divestment campaign on campus, including - where relevant – the dissemination of information about the university’s investment practises.

3. Mandate the relevant full-time officer(s) to request quarterly updates of the university’s investment portfolio.

4. Mandate the relevant full-time officer(s) to lobby for and secure student representation on all university investment-related committees.

5. Mandate the relevant full-time officer(s) to lobby the university to end all future investments in fossil fuel companies and to divest from fossil fuel industry companies immediately.

6. Mandate the relevant full-time officer(s) to actively work with climate justice groups and other grassroots groups involved in fossil fuel divestment and related campaigns to ensure that Union work is linked up with grassroots campaigners.

7. Link up with other campaigns taking place on campus to support one another and to create a

movement aimed at social justice with solidarity at its core.

Background Briefing

- Notes 1: Just 100 companies are source of over 70% of emissions - CDP
- Notes 2: [2023 Intergovernmental Report on Climate Change](#)
- Notes 3: Indigenous Resistance Against Carbon report | Indigenous Environmental Network (iearth.org)

Frontlines of the Climate Crisis: Fossil Fuel Resistance – YouTube

- Notes 4: Oxfam and Stockholm Environment Institute report
- Notes 5: Fossil fuel company expenditure in 2022
- Notes 6: People & Planet's Fossil Free campaign | People & Planet (peopleandplanet.org)

Fossil Free Victories | People & Planet (peopleandplanet.org)

- Resolves 1: Fossil Free Declaration | People & Planet (peopleandplanet.org)

Helpful notes for proposing this template student union motion:

1. This is a template commonly used in universities. Different Student Unions/Councils might have different styles. Make sure to check the style used in recent successful motions, and to make edits where required to ensure the motion is tailored to your university context. If you need help, please feel free to email fossilfree@peopleandplanet.org
2. A lot of Student Unions/Councils will have a chair/secretary who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings. Try to speak to them beforehand for more specific advice on how meetings work.
3. Note that motions will likely need to be sponsored by a number of Student Union/Council members, or a (larger) number of students in order to be brought for debate. Think about which of these options is better for you.
4. Whichever option you choose, it's a good idea to reach out to Student Officers/Councillors beforehand. Think about which ones you have relationships with, and whose remit might cover what the motion is talking about. Welcome input from them about how to get it passed.
5. Whichever option you choose, it's also a good idea to show that there's a broad coalition of groups behind you where possible, and that you have deep and diverse support.
6. It's a good idea to prepare properly. Have a think about who is going to say what when you're debating it, and think about any questions that might come up and how you will respond.
7. It's probably a good idea to tip off the student press and your allied societies that you're trying to pass the motion.
8. If the motion does get passed, this means you have a commitment on paper from your Student Union/Council to support you. Make sure you follow through on it! Start looping relevant officers into your campaign, and make sure you make full use of their support and institutional access. Alert the student press to build momentum from this win.
9. If the motion doesn't pass, don't be disheartened. You can still work with the Union/Council to amend the motion into something that will pass. Make a note of any Officers who were supportive of the motion, and reach out to them to start involving them in the campaign.

With thanks to the Fossil Free Careers Team @ People & Planet.