

Fossil Fuel Divestment Policy Proposal

Contact details

Your name (Proposer of the policy)	Lauren Fidler
The name of a person who supports the policy (Secunder of the policy)	Paul Jane

Student Impact

Have you consulted students about your proposal? Please explain how many students you have engaged with and how.	Yes, we consulted students using our social media presence, as well as event such as freshers fair, open days, and other stalls we have held on campus. We currently have over 450 signatures on our online petition. Which can be seen here: https://campaigns.gofossilfree.org/petitions/divest-plymouth-university-from-fossil-fuels
How does your proposal impact the students at the University of Plymouth, what difference will it make to students?	Our proposal will directly have no effect on the students in terms of what they receive at the university. It will however, give students a sense of sustainability and responsibility as a global student.

Policy Proposal

<p>The Union Notes (Facts) This section should include facts, not reflection or opinions. Please provide references where possible.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Over one-third of UK universities have committed to divest from fossil fuels. 2. Anthropogenic climate change is indisputable, will impact the world's poorest people most and requires immediate action. 3. NUS research found: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. £100 million in university investments in extractor fossil fuel b. companies; c. 14% of university and 5% of Further Education (FE) college d. governors linked to the fossil fuel industry; e. £18.7 million in university fossil fuel research; f. £1,264,051 in university fossil fuel bursaries; g. £288,000 in FE college fossil fuel sponsorship.
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4. These research links and other benefits represent a conflict of interests, causing some institutions to refuse divestment from fossil fuels.
5. CarbonTracker's Unburnable Carbon 2013¹ report which highlights the overvaluation of fossil fuel reserves and the huge financial risks of investing in fossil fuels.
6. That People & Planet, in partnership with 350.org and others, has launched a Fossil Free UK campaign, calling on UK higher education institutions to divest from fossil fuels and sever their links with these companies.²

The Union Believes (Opinions/Beliefs) This section requires reflection on the facts stated in 'The Union Notes'

1. Local and indigenous communities on the front-line of fossil fuel extraction face land grabs, violence and ill health.
2. To act in meaningful solidarity, we must take a lead from and centre the voices of frontline communities in our campaigns.
3. Fossil fuel companies are complicit in climate change and its catastrophic impacts.
4. Conflicts of interest holding institutions back from divestment should be challenged.
5. That we are running out of time to keep global warming below 2C above pre-industrial levels- the limit for ensuring a safe and stable future for the economy, the planet and all people on it, as outlined in the IPCC's 5th Assessment Report.³
6. That 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 complicit in causing climate change and its catastrophic impacts.
7. That we must do everything in our power to rapidly reduce the global use of fossil fuels and expand clean energy alternatives
8. That our university should be a role model in society, acting responsibly and helping create a safe future that is better for everyone.
9. That University of Plymouths refusal to commit to not investing in the fossil fuel

1 'Carbon bubble will plunge world into another financial crisis - report', 19 April 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/apr/19/carbon-bubble-financial-crash-crisis>

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

3 <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/sep/27/ipcc-world-dangerous-climate-change>

industry undermine its commitment to tackling change and our Universities policies such as; Ethical investment policy, Plymouth University Carbon Management Plan 2016-2020 and the Environmental Policy 2015-18

10. That the University of Plymouths commitment to tackling climate change should extend to its investment portfolio, as well as its own operations and research priorities.

The Union Resolves (Actions) Here you will describe the action you want to be taken, be specific.

1. To endorse National Days of Action.
2. To publicise and offer support to student campaigners, such as People and Planet society, so they can participate - mandating the relevant Students' Union officer to actively work with People & Planet groups and other societies involved in divestment and related campaigns.
3. To support the effective communication of student led campaigns and activities, where appropriate and within UPSU guidelines.
4. To allow the <relevant Students Union officer> to support People and Planet society who will run a high-profile Fossil Free campaign around fossil fuel divestment on campus, including the dissemination of information about University of Plymouth investments and the companies it invests in, within NUS campaign lines.
- ~~5. To mandate the relevant Students Union officer to request quarterly updates of the Universities investment portfolio.~~
- ~~6. To support the urging for and securing of student representation on all university investment committees.~~
7. For the <relevant Students Union officer> to support students to lobby the university to end all future investments in fossil fuel companies and to divest from fossil fuel industry companies immediately.
- ~~8. To mandate the <relevant Students Union officer> to lobby the Careers Service to ensure no fossil fuel companies are allowed to recruit potential graduates onto campus, and~~ To mandate the relevant full-time Student Union Officer to collaborate with ~~lobby for the provision by~~ the Careers Service for the provision of ethical careers advice.
- ~~9. To mandate the relevant Students' Union officer to actively work with People & Planet and other external organisations involved in fossil fuel divestment and related campaigns.~~

~~10. To support and encourage other student unions to submit similar policies and launch their own Fossil Free campaigns.~~

Appendices/supporting information Please include any supporting information relevant to your motion, this could include; consideration of how you would achieve any points in 'The Union Resolves', links to news articles or online publications

How to achieve points in 'The Union Resolves':

1. By promoting National Days of Action, which are organised by NUS and People and Planet.
2. By mandating an officer to support student campaigns which relate to divestment and/or fossil fuels.
3. By supporting the effective communication of the campaign and activities through UPSU channels.
4. By mandating the <relevant Students Union officer> to support students in running a high-profile Fossil Free campaign around fossil fuel divestment on campus.
5. By mandating the relevant Students Union officer to request quarterly updates of the Universities investment portfolio.
6. By mandating the Students Union President to lobby for and secure student representation on all university investment committees, if not already.
7. By the <relevant Students Union officer> to lobby the university to end all future investments in fossil fuel companies and to divest from fossil fuel industry companies immediately.
8. By mandating the <relevant Students Union officer> to lobby the Careers Service to ensure no fossil fuel companies are allowed to recruit potential graduates onto campus, and to lobby for the provision by the Careers Service of ethical careers advice.
9. By mandating the relevant Students' Union officer to actively work with People & Planet and other external organisations involved in fossil fuel divestment and related campaigns.
10. By supporting partner colleges and universities in launching their own Fossil Free campaigns.

More information about the Fossil Free campaign:

- <https://peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free>
- <https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/divest-invest/the-campaign>
- <https://gofossilfree.org/uk/>

Some facts to consider:

- An average of 21.5 million people have been forcibly displaced since 2008 due to climate changed-related weather hazards, according to the [United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees](#).
- Concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere reached the milestone of 400 parts per million for the first time in 2015 and surged again to new records in

2016, according to the [World Meteorological Organization's annual Greenhouse Gas Bulletin](#). To see current levels: <https://www.co2.earth/daily-co2>.

- For information on the effects of fossil fuel emissions:
 - <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/oct/23/pollution-toxic-air-london-vehicle-charge-gp>
 - <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/climate-change-global-warming-refugees-migrants-displacement-lancet-study-a8028341.html>
 - <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/ng-interactive/2017/nov/03/three-degree-world-cities-drowned-global-warming>

EXTRACT OF MEETING MINUTES – 30TH NOVEMBER 2017

Fossil Fuel Divestment (see appendix 2)

Lauren Fidler, proposer of the policy gave an overview and explained that this is part of a national campaign calling for universities to divest from fossil fuels. Lauren added that as of today, there are 574 signatures on the petition calling for Plymouth University to divest.

Lauren explained that the university does not currently invest any money in fossil fuel so there will be no cost associated with this. The proposal is calling for the university to make a long-term commitment to not invest in the fossil fuel industry in the future. Lauren added that this does not affect research funding.

Caitlin Brawn arrived

James Lord – Chair of Accountability Board, explained that the Board had met to discuss the motion and did have some concerns regarding the first half of resolves point 8, in terms of it affecting graduate job prospects. The Board proposed that there be further consultation on this and possibly a referendum.

Resolves point 8 reads:

“To mandate the <relevant Students Union officer> to lobby the Careers Service to ensure no fossil fuel companies are allowed to recruit potential graduates onto campus, and to lobby for the provision by the Careers Service of ethical careers advice.”

The proposer of the motion was happy to remove the first part of resolves point 8, therefore the motion was amended.

Lowri Jones – President, explained that both the President and Deputy President are Student Governors and as such sit on the Board of Governors of the university where they get to see the accounts and investments annually. Lowri thought it was unrealistic to ask for quarterly updates.

The Proposer agreed to remove resolves point 5;

“To mandate the relevant Students Union officer to request quarterly updates of the Universities investment portfolio.”

Lowri added that, as per the previous proposal, the UPSU does have representation on the Sustainability Advisory Group. Lowri proposed removing resolves point 6;

“To support the urging for and securing of student representation on all university investment committees”

The Proposer agreed to the amendment

Alex Doyle – VP Activities, explained that all students’ unions need to be led by their own students and whilst UPSU would liaise with other unions if approached, resolves point 10 is not realistic.

Lauren agreed to remove resolves point 10 which read;

“To support and encourage other student unions to submit similar policies and launch their own Fossil Free campaigns.”

James Warren – VP Welfare, suggested that it was not fair to mandate an officer to work with one society in particular. Alex Doyle added that it is the role of VP Activities to support all societies but that does not extend to other, external organisations.

The Proposer agreed to remove resolves point 9 which read;

“To mandate the relevant Students' Union officer to actively work with People & Planet and other external organisations involved in fossil fuel divestment and related campaigns.”

Hadiza Adah – VP International & Outreach asked what the intention of the remainder of point 8 is. Emily Adams – Deputy Part-time Environment & Sustainability Officer explained that it seeks to ensure that alternative, sustainable and ethical options are available.

Charles Markham asked if there is any way of measuring how well they do that already. Charles thought that it would be useful to give clear guidance of what the expectation would be and how that would differ from the current offer. Lauren was unsure how this could be achieved.

Alix Mullally – School of Engineering Rep, thought that if students wanted to find out about careers in the fossil fuel industry or in alternative resources, they would do that anyway.

Maja Smith – VP Education, suggested that the Proposer should speak to the Careers Service before mandating them to do something which they may already do.

Hadiza suggested that the working could be changed from mandate to collaborate, Laruen agreed to the amendment.

For: 21

Against: 3

Abstentions: 3

The proposal regarding university divestment passed

Lauren Fidler left