

# Common FAQs

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## What are you asking universities to do?

We are asking university careers services to put in place an Ethical Careers Policy that excludes oil, gas, and mining companies from recruitment activities. This would mean that the fossil fuel industry would no longer be invited to careers fairs, and wouldn't be able to advertise to students. It wouldn't affect the impartial advice given to students by careers advisors.

## Is this actually something that could happen at my university?

Yes, this is possible at every UK university! In fact, over 20% of UK universities **already** have a similar exclusion in place for other industries, like the tobacco industry, the adult/sex industry, or the gambling industry. If so many universities can put in place a policy for those industries, then we can make them do it for the fossil fuel industry too. Find out whether your university already has an exclusion at: <https://peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free-scorecards>.

In 2022, as a result of student campaigning, UK universities started to exclude the extractive industries as well. You can see the full up-to-date list of universities that have now done that at <https://peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free-careers/victories>.

## What impact will this have on students' career choices?

This campaign won't impact on the impartial one-to-one careers advice that students receive from their career service. It is about which companies the careers service chooses to actively promote and advertise to students. So if a student is interested in hearing about working for a fossil fuel company, they will still be able to talk that through with a careers advisor and go on to

work in the industry.

### **What will you replace these jobs with?**

It is not the place of this campaign to demand specific replacements. We have one very specific demand: that universities end all recruitment relationships with the very worst industries that are responsible for pushing us further into the climate emergency. What comes next will be decided by careers professionals at the university - but with an ethical careers policy in place, they will have a responsibility to ensure these are good, sustainable jobs.

### **Will this actually make any difference?**

Yes! Recruitment is already a massive problem for the fossil fuel industry. Fossil fuel companies need a stream of graduate employees, but young people blame the industry for the climate and ecological crisis and are turning away from jobs in the industry.

This means that it is a place where these companies are already vulnerable, so we can have a big impact. They rely on their cosy relationships with UK universities to keep their businesses alive. If we can close off those recruitment pipelines, then we can really weaken the power of the industry.

### **Aren't fossil fuel companies becoming more sustainable?**

No. The companies we are talking about here are investing tiny amounts in renewable technologies whilst actually **expanding** oil and gas production.

Even the most conservative modelling shows that there can be no new coal, oil, or gas projects from 2021 for us to have an even chance of keeping global average temperature rises below 1.5C ([Source](#)). But none of the oil giants have pledged to stop exploring for new projects ([Source](#)). The scientific evidence is clear that we need to close down existing mines/drilling sites before the end of their usual life, but instead of doing that the oil giants are trying to build new ones that will be pumping out fossil fuels for decades.

### **Don't we need students in these industries to try and make change from the inside?**

No amount of well-meaning graduates going into these jobs would have the power to make

meaningful change happen in the time necessary. These are companies which are all totally dedicated to continued extraction of fossil fuels.

Take Shell, a typical example which can be found at university careers fairs across the UK. Between 2010 and 2018, Shell dedicated just 1% of its long-term investments to sources of low-carbon energy. ([Source](#)). It is planning to continue exploring, approving new extraction projects, and even **increase** oil and gas production by 2030 ([source](#)).

We don't have time to wait around for individual graduates to try and slowly change these companies from the inside. But luckily, we have much more powerful tools to use when we come together and act collectively. We can campaign, together, for universities to end the recruitment pipeline into the fossil fuel industry. We can make the change happen ourselves.

### **Does this affect the free speech of these companies/representatives?**

Not at all. Careers Services already make active choices about which companies and industries are selected for careers fairs, and which they hold relationships with. Lots already exclude particular industries on ethical grounds.

No company has an automatic right to be one of the privileged few advertised to students. Free speech has nothing to do with it.

### **Don't we need mining companies for the transition away from fossil fuels?**

We urgently need to transition away from an energy system that runs on fossil fuels to one that runs on renewable energy. But the mining industry is trying to use this real need to try and justify a massive expansion in their socially and environmentally damaging mining projects.

They want us to continue with business-as-usual, but just to swap out coal for lithium, nickel and cobalt (the materials needed for solar panels, batteries etc). This would cause further devastation to marginalised communities on the frontline of the climate and ecological crisis. We cannot let this happen. We must reject the racist notion that some populations are disposable, and fight for a world where everyone can live and breathe freely. The whole system needs to change.

[Read more on this issue](#)