

CHALK ACTION

HOW-TO GUIDE

people & planet

Chalk actions are a great visual way to draw attention to your campaign and your demands. They can also be used as a more disruptive form of action by chalking outside of a venue where an event is being held or during an open day. Here are some tips for a successful chalk action...



STEP 1: SCOUT OUT THE LOCATION

Be sure to choose a location where your chalk will be seen and have the most impact. Get a few people to check out the location in advance to plan any logistics and decide where you will chalk. Here are a few ideas:

- Chalking on the ground outside the entrance to an event where fossil fuel companies will be present. This will get a high footfall and ensure people will see your chalk, but remember that this is likely to be cleaned up pretty quickly by the university.
- Writing chalk messages around campus during an open day. This is a great way to get the

university to pay attention to your demands as they will be keen to look their best and gloss over any fossil fuel links on open days.

- Write your demands on the ground outside the VC's office where they will have to take notice.
- Chalk in an area with high footfall to draw attention to your campaign to get attention from the university and passers-by.
- Look for somewhere well lit and visible from a good vantage point e.g. a library balcony for good photos and social media opportunities

STEP 2: MAKE A PLAN

Remember to use clear and simple messaging so people know straight away that this action is part of your Fossil Free Careers campaign. You will need to write big enough for people to be able to read it, so it's best to keep your message short. You might want to write a slogan, write your demands, or draw attention to a particular company on campus.

- It's best to use bigger sticks of chalk so that you can write with bold letters, and remember to use a colour that can be read easily on the surface where you plan to chalk. Bring more chalk than you think you will need as chalk sticks wear down pretty quickly on concrete and are also easy to break.
- **Roles** - To make sure that the work to plan the action is shared out, we recommend starting by splitting into roles, so that different people take responsibility for different sections. You can have more than one person per role! Some key roles/teams are: Welfare, Logistics, Outreach + Recruitment, Art + Materials, Press, Photographer, Social Media. And of course, people need to volunteer to take part in the action!
- **Photos** - Assign someone to take photos of your chalk action. This is a really essential role, and doesn't need a fancy camera. A phone camera works well!
- **Follow up emails** - Before your action, make sure to draft an email to your University management and careers service, reaching out to discuss your demands. You can then send this as soon as you've done your action and build up the pressure for them to commit to an Ethical Careers Policy.
- **Press** - You should be putting out a press release, or at least a public statement, for every action that you do. It's one of the keys ways to make sure your action is impactful. It's always best to

have this drafted before the day of your action so that it's ready to be sent out straight away. Newspapers will want to publish a story as close to the event as possible before it becomes old news. Remember to also make a list of journalists to email your press release to. This could be local newspapers, student press or online blogs.

- **Social media** - You'll also want to draft your social media posts in advance, so that they will be ready to post straight away once you've taken photos of your action on the day. Remember to tag your university and careers service so they know the action has happened. It's also good to reach out to other groups on campus and ask them to share. You can also invite People & Planet as a collaborator on Instagram or tag us in any posts so we can share them. It's important to consider security when posting photos of actions on social media, such as covering or blurring faces so people taking action can't be easily identified.
- **Welfare** - Actions can be draining and intense! Make a plan of how you're going to look out for each other both during and after your action. A great way of doing this is by having a buddy system where everyone is paired with a buddy who they stay with throughout the action. Make sure that you know where your buddy is at all times and if there is any particular support your buddy might need when taking part in the action. It's also important to schedule a debrief for after your action has taken place. This is both a space for people to discuss how the action went as well as a space for people to share how they are feeling and check in with each other.
- **Know your rights** - Before any action it's super important to make sure that you know your rights and are aware of any risks you might be taking. Remember that different people may face different levels of risk and this may impact how they choose to take part in an action. Take some time to check out these resources for more information:
 - [Rights when protesting at universities in the UK](#)
 - [Green and Black Cross legal advice for protests](#)
 - [Legal advice for protesting in Scotland \(SCALP\)](#)

STEP 3: TAKE ACTION

Agree on a meeting point in advance and make sure you know who is bringing the chalk!

- Think about the best timing for your chalk action - you might want to chalk just before the start of an event or open day tour so you have chance to write your message before security try to stop you. But remember that chalking too early in advance will give the university time to wash off

your message.

- Remember to take a photo of your chalk for social media or a press release. Your chalk might not last long if it rains or if the university cleans it away! Make sure that your whole message is clearly visible in the photos.
- Anticipate security presence - There is often a security presence at University events or walking around campus, so think about how you will prepare for this. Make sure you are all agreed on what to do if security tries to stop your action or tries to get you to leave

STEP 4: FOLLOW UP

Following up from your action will help make sure that your campaign gets noticed, even if the chalk message doesn't last for very long.

Your follow up tasks can include:

- A social media statement explaining what your action was and what your campaign demands are. Make sure to include a good photo and a link to any petitions for people to sign. You can also tag your university and careers service to make sure they got the message!
- An article for student press about your campaign and how people can get involved. Photos from actions are great for press articles!
- A letter to university management and the careers service, asking to meet with them to discuss your campaign demands.

Don't forget to send any photos to us at fossilfreecareers@peopleandplanet.org! We love seeing incredible actions to kick fossil fuels off campus and we can share these for you on our social media.

STEP 5: DEBRIEF

Well done! You've pulled off your action, and everyone is now safely at your agreed meeting place. Now it's time to debrief.

It's super important to set some time aside after an action for a debrief with your group. This is a chance to check in on how everyone is doing after what can often be an intense and tiring situation. It's also a really great opportunity to reflect on your successes and any learnings for future actions.

Things to discuss in your debrief could include:

- How is everyone feeling now? Is there anything in particular that people need from this space?
- How do people feel that the action went on the day?
- What are some successes to celebrate?
- Was there anything that didn't go to plan? Was there a way that this could have been made better or could have been anticipated in advance?
- What are the key learnings from this action that you will take forward when planning actions in the future?

Remember that taking part in actions can be tiring, so make sure to have some more relaxed social activities in between more intense actions. Once you've had your debrief why not have a group social or film night?

RESOURCES

Here are some links to more resources to help you when planning an action!

You can also drop us an email at fossilfreecareers@peopleandplanet.org to book a workshop or some training on direct action or action planning.

[**Guide to Action Planning from Seeds for Change**](#)

[**Direct Action Handbook**](#)