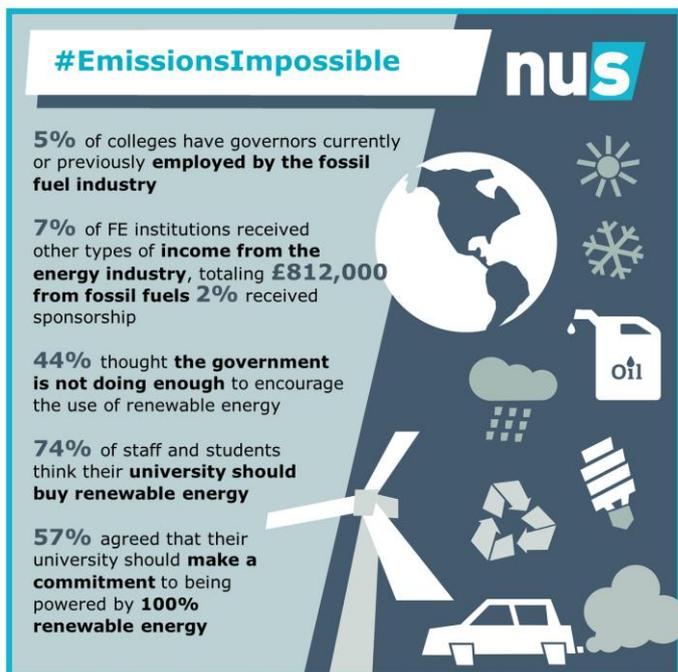


# Emissions Impossible: Divest-Invest for Further Education (FE) organisers



## Background and Context

The global fossil fuel divestment movement challenges the 'social license' of the fossil fuel industry. It does this by pushing institutions to move the money they have invested out of extractor fossil fuel companies and into positive, socially responsible areas, such as community energy projects.

The fossil fuel industry extracts and exploits fossil fuels, like coal and oil, which when burned release a huge amount of carbon into the atmosphere. These carbon emissions are causing our Earth to increase in temperature at an alarming rate. If we continue on our current path, we are going to lock in more than the 1.5-2 degrees Celsius of warming that the international community have identified as a 'red line'. If we cross this red line, failing to limit our emissions sufficiently, then we are headed towards catastrophic climate change, which includes rising sea levels, loss of biodiversity, and mass migration – as parts of the world become uninhabitable.

Indigenous peoples have been demanding that fossil fuels are kept in the ground for decades. From the ongoing fight of Alberta Cree's First Nations against the destructive Canadian tar sands industry, to the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's organising against the Dakota Access Pipeline, we can learn a lot from the diverse range of tactics that have been used as part of these campaigns – including legal challenges and non-violent direct action. By sharing the stories and amplifying the voices of communities on the frontlines of fossil fuel extraction we can act in meaningful solidarity with those most impacted by this destructive industry, whilst simultaneously changing our campuses for the better.

The Fossil Free campaign was launched in the UK by People & Planet in 2013 after a democratic decision by their student network. This built upon the campaign in the US and elsewhere by 350.org, and is in the historical lineage of other student movement divestment campaigns – Apartheid South Africa, tobacco and arms.

NUS were mandated to commit resources to and support this campaign by National Conference in 2015.

## NUS' position

NUS support fossil fuel divestment and the reinvestment of this money into the just transition to a low carbon world.

The campaign consists of 3 asks:

1. £100million to be divest–invested from extractor/producer fossil fuel companies into positive, socially responsible options (our current focus is on developing community energy infrastructure on campuses);

2. Commitment from universities and colleges, regardless of current investments, that new investments be fossil-free;

3. Pledge by universities and colleges to commit to be powered by 100% renewable electricity (bought or generated).

## Emissions Impossible in FE

Over a third of UK universities have now committed to divest from these companies, and FE colleges can play a significant role in developing these successes. Fossil fuel extractor companies, such as Royal Dutch Shell and BP, are those that take fuels such as coal and oil out of the ground. But the fossil fuel industry is wider than those involved in the extraction and production of these resources, as it is upheld by a number of other sectors. These include those who provide technology and infrastructure for resource extraction, such as the building of oil rigs, and those who buy these fuels to burn them for the creation of electricity for consumers, such as E.On and EDF. It is the latter that our third campaign ask is concerned with, and is a way in which FE students' unions and organisers can get involved with the Emission Impossible campaign, given that colleges don't have fossil fuel company endowment investments like universities do:

"Pledge by universities and colleges to commit

to be powered by 100% renewable electricity (bought or generated)."

If we could mobilise on this across all FE colleges in the UK, the push from students to switch from fossil fuel electricity to renewables would be massive. In this way, your FE college could play a fundamental role in the UK education system's transition towards going fully fossil free and cutting all links with this morally bankrupt industry. This would strengthen not only the divestment movement, but also the profile of your college in leading on social justice issues.

## Key staff member

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For further information check out our two reports; one on [investments](#) and the other on [attitudes](#). Infographics with research statistics can be found [here](#). For further support get in touch with either Laura or Robbie, and/or check out our resource for Further Education organising [here](#).

