



## Fossil free Heriot-Watt policy

<b>Policy / idea title</b>	Fossil free Heriot-Watt boycott
<b>Summary of the policy / idea</b>	The Union should undertake actions that lead to a fossil free University / Union
<b>Submitted by (name and role)</b>	Cameron Fields, President of Society for Progressive Students
<b>Seconded by (name and role)</b>	Shana Faraghat, Union Vice President (Community) Nadya Bruce, President of Eco Society
<b>Submitted at (meeting)</b>	Annual General Meeting
<b>Date</b>	February 2022

### Does this policy / idea align with the Union values (brave, empowering, fun, student-led, welcoming)? If yes, how?

By the nature of policies, all policies approved by students at Parliament or our Student Meeting are **student-led**

### Does this policy / idea fall within the remit of the current global priorities? (Relieve financial pressure; Reduce student isolation; Limit student confusion; Increase global connectivity) If yes, how?

n/a

### What is the background of this policy?

1. Fossil fuel companies were responsible for 71% of global carbon emissions between 1988 and 2017.
2. Heriot Watt has £679,835 invested into Fossil fuels. They have divested from coal and tar sands but no other Fossil Fuels.
3. No new fossil fuel infrastructure projects could be built after 2017 to be Paris Compliant, unless others were shut down before the end of their lifetime.
4. Climate change impacts are already being felt by communities across the globe. Since 2010 climate-related disasters across the world have displaced 21.5 million people annually.
5. Frontline and Indigenous communities continue having to resist the destructive business models of fossil fuel companies operating on their lands.
6. Malaysia is a member of the Association of Southeast Nations which are all in the category of being at particular risk to climate change. Malaysia is included in MAPA (Most Affected People and Areas of climate change).

#### Notes

1: New report shows just 100 companies are source of over 70% of emissions - CDP

- 2: <https://peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free-scorecards/32973>  
 3: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0306261916302495>  
 4: <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/11/581f52dc4/frequently-askedquestions-climate-change-disaster-displacement.html>  
 5: <https://www.ienearth.org/indigenous-resistance-against-carbon/>  
 6: [https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/15868-WB\\_Malaysia%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf](https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/15868-WB_Malaysia%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf)

### **Why is this policy / idea important; why should the Union adopt it? What will change for students or the wider community?**

Our universities must be a part of the solution and act against these injustices by severing ties with the fossil fuel industry. Over half of UK universities have made a public commitment to divest from fossil fuels and it's time that our university joined them.

It is time to look at the human and environmental costs of fossil fuel extraction and exploration. Some students who attend Heriot-Watt are from countries most affected by climate change.

We have a responsibility to act on addressing climate change and join the hundreds of universities that have pledged to divest. We, as young students, will live through the consequences of continued fossil fuel support.

Out of all of Scotland's 18 Universities, Heriot-Watt is one of the last 6 universities to divest, and the last in Edinburgh! During COP26, Aberdeen was the 92nd university in the UK to divest. It's time for Heriot Watt to catch up. Some universities such as Edinburgh had £15 million invested and have fully divested as of February this year.

### **What do you believe the Union should do to achieve this policy / idea?**

Publicly support and offer resources to the Divest Heriot-Watt Campaign ran by Society for Progressive Students and other societies.

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.

Lobby and encourage senior staff and committees to start the process of divestment. (e.g., The University Executive, Finance Committee, Donations, and Investments Committee)



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

<b>Outcome</b>	Passed
<b>Proposed owner (FTO)</b>	
<b>Expiration date</b>	February 2026