

Title: The Union Should Support the Fossils Free Careers Campaign

Policy Zone to be discussed at: Education Zone

1. What would you like the Union to do?

The Union should support the Fossil Free Careers (FFC) campaign in three key ways:

a) Publicly support the FFC campaign:

The Union should leverage its various media platforms to advocate for the FFC campaign and raise awareness about the harmful impact of the fossil fuel industry in accelerating the climate crisis.

b) Lobby UCL Management:

Union Officers should lobby UCL Management and the Careers Department to cease promoting fossil fuel companies to students. This includes stopping invitations to these companies for on-campus Career Fairs or online recruitment events.

c) Collaborate with the Careers Department to Promote Green Job Opportunities:

The Union has consistently championed climate justice initiatives, as demonstrated by the development of a mandatory sustainability course for UCL students and ongoing sustainability-focused events, such as the Sustainability Fair. This commitment to addressing the complexities behind the climate crisis should continue by lobbying the Careers Department to promote more green job opportunities for our student community.

2. Why would you like to do this?

UCL shapes the lives of its students, encouraging them to become responsible, globally-minded citizens who strive to make a positive impact. However, the ongoing promotion of careers in the fossil fuel industry stands in direct contradiction to these values.

The destructive effects of the climate crisis are vast and long-lasting, with the fossil fuel industry playing a significant role in causing immense environmental and social harm. Their activities accelerate the ecological emergency, devastate the climate, pollute ecosystems, and permanently damage landscapes. Moreover, they displace communities, destroy livelihoods, violate indigenous sites, and leave workers and local populations with severe health problems.

While students ultimately choose their own career paths, the UCL Careers Department plays a key role in determining which sectors it actively promotes. By lobbying UCL management and the Careers Department to adopt and implement a Fossil Free Careers (FFC) policy, our Union can help cultivate a more sustainable, ethical workforce—one that supports the transition to a just, equitable energy system and a low-carbon economy.

Our student community has stood for disruptive thinking since 1846. It does not have to defend the status quo, and as evidenced by an NUS study, over 80% of students are dedicated to sustainability and demand the same from their university (UCL, 2023).

3. How will this affect students?

While it is clear that the engineering department and its students may be disproportionately affected if the Careers Department adopts a Fossil Free Careers (FFC) policy—given the demand for engineers in

the fossil fuel industry—it is essential to clarify what the FFC policy entails and how it protects the interests of students who aspire to work in this sector.

Impartial One-to-One Careers Advice:

Under an ethical careers policy, students will still have access to impartial one-on-one careers advice for roles in the fossil fuel industry, should they choose to pursue them. The FFC policy is focused on preventing UCL from acting as a promoter and recruiter for fossil fuel companies, not on restricting individual career choices. This approach does not violate UCL's commitment to the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS). In fact, 20% of UK universities already have industry-wide exclusions based on ethical considerations (People and Planet, 2022).

The Importance of Promoting Green Jobs:

Moreover, the International Energy Agency (IEA) has, for the first time, projected that fossil fuel consumption will peak by 2030 and decline permanently thereafter (Ambrose, 2023). The world is transitioning away from fossil fuels, and this industry is no longer a reliable source of long-term stability or career growth. This trend is already evident, as the number of UK graduates entering the oil industry fell by 61% between 2013 and 2017 (Spence, 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to increase the promotion of green job opportunities, ensuring students are prepared for a more sustainable future.