

NUS Research: Students and divestment

Divestment is the act of removing money from a particular fund or asset; essentially it is the opposite of investment. Across the world, campaigns have been set up by students to encourage their institutions to remove their investments from fossil fuels. In March 2015, NUS ran a short survey with 1637 students from further and higher education across the UK. Here's what they told us about divestment...

Should universities and colleges divest from fossil fuels?

- Around half of respondents agreed to some extent that their university or college should divest from fossil fuel companies, rather than continuing to hold shares there (48%, n=798).
- A similar proportion (47%, n=765) agreed that research which contributes to the continued use of fossil fuels should be phased out by their institutions.
- 44% (n=730) agreed that their institution should stop partnering with fossil fuel companies.
- Across all three questions, around a third of respondents were uncertain of the action they wanted to see on divestment from fossil fuels by their institution. Elsewhere in the survey, respondents provided feedback that they weren't aware of where their institution currently held its investments.
- Less than 10% (9.2%, n=152) disagreed to some extent that their university or college should divest their shares held in fossil fuel companies.

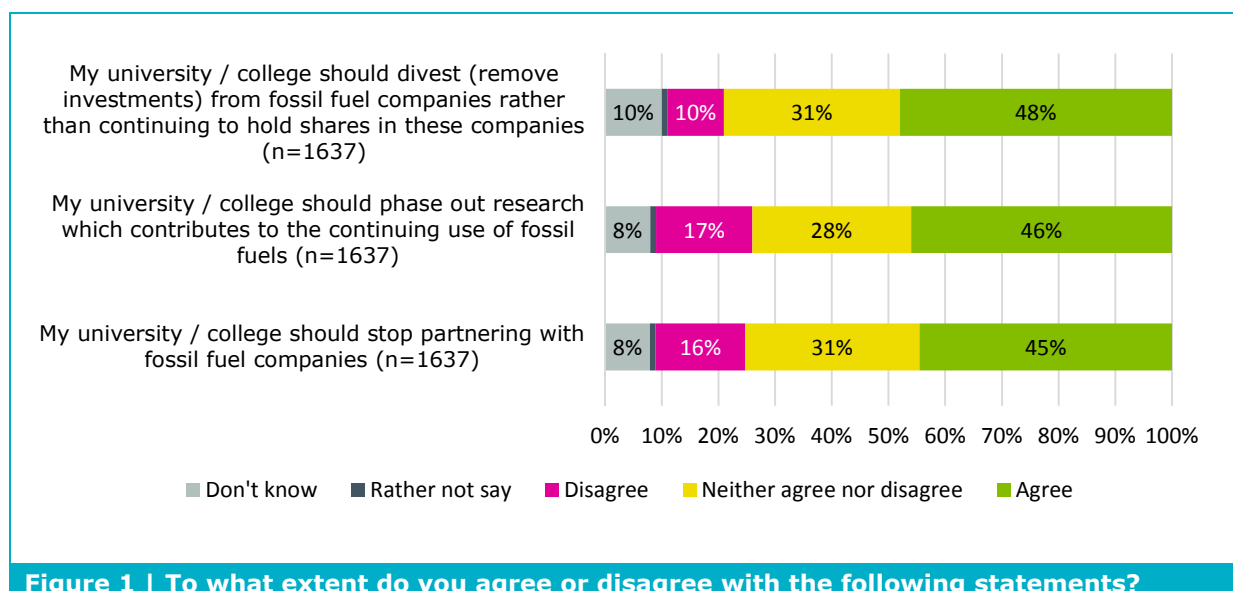


Figure 1 | To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

What other investments concern students?

Beyond a widespread desire to see their institutions taking account of the overall ethical performance of organisations before making investments, specific respondents said they would like to see their institutions divest from included:

- Organisations involved in animal testing
- Weapons and arms manufacturing
- Companies associated with Israel
- Supporting political parties
- The tobacco industry

"Animal experimentation, arms and weaponry"
Male, 3rd/4th/final year university

"Non Fairtrade companies. Companies supporting animal testing/cruelty"
Female, 1st year university

"Companies that use child labour or exploit foreign workers"
Female, 2nd year college/sixth form

"Political parties"
Male, 3rd/4th/final year university

"Israeli goods and services"
Female, Postgraduate

"Tobacco companies!"
Male, Other

For more information on what you can do at your university or college, please take a look at People & Planet's Fossil Free campaign resources:

<https://peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free>

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