

Universities: cut research links with fossil-fuel companies

[Yannai Kashtan](#), [Jayson Toweh](#) & [Thomas J. P. Hersbach](#) 



Many scientists choose to involve fossil-fuel companies in academic research, assuming that those companies approach the climate crisis in good faith. But that assumption is tenuous (see, for example, [D. Almond *et al.* *Nature Clim. Change* **12**, 1122–1128; 2022](#)). We urge academic institutions to re-evaluate their fossil-fuel connections.

A study last year of 52 global oil and gas companies revealed that only one had policies aligned with the target to limit global warming to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels ([S. Dietz *et al.* *Science* **374**, 405–408; 2021](#)). Furthermore, companies with vested interests could distort policy advice, for example by apparently amplifying pro-fossil-fuel voices ([B. Franta *Environ. Polit.* **31**, 555–575; 2021](#)). Or they could skew research agendas, for instance if they prioritize funding for fossil-fuel technologies over zero-carbon alternatives ([P. D. Thacker *BMJ* **378**, o2095; 2022](#)).

Any manipulation of research agendas and outcomes is unacceptable. To avoid impeding climate action and to produce reliable climate research, universities should consider more neutral sources of research funding.

Nature **612**, 404 (2022)

doi: <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-022-04404-x>

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors are members of the Coalition for a True School of Sustainability: a student/staff/faculty group that speaks out against fossil fuel research funding at Stanford University's Doerr School of Sustainability.