

# INVEST FOR CHANGE



## AGM action: Template email to university

### All shareholder resolutions

[Click here for simple word doc to download and edit](#)

Lots of universities hold investments in companies, known as shares. Anyone who invests in a company, has a say over how the company is run. **We're calling on universities to use their say by voting at AGMs.**

### What is an AGM?

An AGM (Annual General Meeting) is a gathering of a company's shareholders which happens every year. Shareholders can raise issues and have a say on how the company is run.

### What can universities do?

#### Vote!

Universities may be shareholders of companies and therefore have a vote at the AGM, for example, on [shareholder resolutions](#). This can be directly or via asset managers.

#### Ask questions

As shareholders, universities can ask questions at AGMs. This brings issues directly to the board, and other shareholders, whose interests the board are legally bound to represent.

#### Speak out

Finally, universities can use their voice to publicly support and raise awareness of AGMs and specific resolutions, encouraging shareholders to vote.

### What can you do?

#### Send this email!

1. **Copy and paste** the text below into an email
2. **Review** the **red text** to personalise and remove the grey information text
3. **Address the email to:**
  - Vice Chancellor - or equivalent.
  - **Copy in (Cc):**
    - Finance Director (or equivalent);
    - Chair of the Finance or Investment Committee;
    - Relevant SU officer.

**TIP:** Email addresses can be found on your university's webpage, look at Governance pages or in staff directories. If you're struggling, ask your SU!

## Template email:

<b>To:</b>	<i>Insert email of Vice Chancellor (or equivalent)</i>
<b>Cc:</b>	<i>Insert email of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Finance Director (or equivalent);</i></li> <li>- <i>Chair of Finance or Investment Committee;</i></li> <li>- <i>Relevant SU officer.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Subject:</b>	AGM action: Will <i>&lt;insert University name&gt;</i> vote to make change?

Dear *<insert name of Vice Chancellor (or equivalent)>*,

I am *<insert name (and role if appropriate)>* and I am writing on behalf of the *<insert students group/Students' Union/national Invest for Change campaign>* to ask *<insert University name>* to commit to responsible investment and practice **active shareholder engagement**.

Specifically, we ask that the University publicly support shareholder resolutions at upcoming AGMs, or call on their asset managers to.

We are pleased to see that the University has committed to *<insert relevant University commitments\*>*. However, there is still work to do and we hope this email highlights some steps the University can take.

*\*Use our online policy library (see [www.investforchange.uk/policy-library](http://www.investforchange.uk/policy-library)) to look at your university's responsible investment policy and what it commits to. You can also use a carbon target commitment (see [www.carbontargets.uk](http://www.carbontargets.uk)) or divestment commitment (see [www.peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free](http://www.peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free)).*

Annual General Meetings (AGMs) provide significant opportunity for shareholders, like universities or their asset managers, to actively engage with investments, showing serious commitment to environmental and social justice. ShareAction have published a list of [Resolutions to Watch](#), which can help the University identify relevant shareholder resolutions to publicly support and vote on.

**We ask that *<insert University name>*:**

- 1) Use its influence as an investor to **publicly commit to vote in favour of shareholder resolutions**, taking a 'comply or explain' approach. If the University does not hold direct investments in companies, it can either:
  - a) **Call on its asset manager(s)** to publicly commit to vote in favour of resolutions, taking a 'comply or explain' approach; or
  - b) **Make a public statement** supporting shareholder resolutions and call on shareholders, including other universities, to publicly commit to vote in favour of them.
- 2) **Adopt a comprehensive responsible investment policy**, which clearly outlines minimum standards of engagement, including voting at AGMs, and escalation policies for the University and its asset manager(s).

*\*A 'comply or explain' approach means the organisation may either comply with the policy (i.e. to vote in favour), or if they do not comply, explain publicly why they do not.*

Finally, we would like to point you towards some [resources](#) from the national [Invest for Change](#) campaign. Specifically the [universities guide](#), responsible investment policy [library](#) and [policy asks](#) may be useful. Finally, the [COP26 declaration](#): asset owner climate expectations of asset managers, as an opportunity for the university to take further action on responsible investment.

Escalating environmental and social injustice requires leading institutions like *<insert University name>* to set an example and act with purpose and courage to call for an end to damaging practices. **We look forward to hearing from you and would greatly appreciate the opportunity to arrange a meeting to discuss this further.**

Sincerely,

*<insert name/signature>*

### Top tips:

**Personalise the message:** Try and include why this is important to you, your group or students more generally.

**Know anything about the person you're writing to?** Add in or edit any arguments to appeal directly to them and their values.

**Want to generate more traction?** Make it an open letter (using a shared online document) and get fellow students, academics and alumni to sign too.

**Once you've sent the email, keep the pressure up by posting on social media!**  
Here's a template post:

I've called on **@University @VC** to take #AGMaction and support shareholder resolutions at AGMs to push companies to change - will you?

Use this template letter > <https://bit.ly/AGMaction>

