

Sustainability Research Volunteer

People & Planet is looking for volunteers to assist with compiling its 2025/26 People & Planet University League; the only higher education ranking that classifies based on ethics and climate justice criteria.

Universities impart skills and knowledge, form life-long beliefs and behaviours, act as centres of communities, employ, house and feed large numbers of people and promote the creation and sharing of knowledge. We believe this makes them uniquely placed to lead on environmental and ethical issues. For this reason the People & Planet University League has been running since 2007 and has been published by high-profile media partners such as The Guardian ([2021](#), [2022](#), [2023](#), [2024](#)) and whose data is used in the [Sunday Time Good University Guide](#).

Volunteers will research publicly available university documents and assess universities against our marking criteria, which cover a wide range of climate and social justice issues including decarbonisation, fossil fuel divestment, ethical banking, workers' rights and environmental management among others. This work will help to incentivise the university sector towards taking immediate and appropriate action on the climate crisis and upholding the rights and wellbeing of all people internationally.

The role will develop and improve the following areas:

- Qualitative research skills
- Attention to detail
- Use of data collection software
- Time management and keeping to deadlines
- Working independently and remotely
- Communication skills
- Knowledge of environmental management processes and sustainability reporting.

Training is provided for the role. We believe the skills and experience gained could be valuable for a number of career paths, including working in NGOs, corporate sustainability, estates management, higher education policy making, research and campaigning among many others.

People & Planet would like to support volunteers in their future careers, so will give all volunteers an official reference letter on successful completion of their placement and will act as a referee for future positions for which you may apply. From last year's cohort, 100% said they would recommend this position to someone who wanted to add experience to their CV.

Feedback from previous volunteers

'I think as someone looking for relevant experience to bolster a CV, this is a helpful and not-too-time-consuming position. It had exactly the kind of flexibility that I required at this point in time.'
'It's a really great opportunity to hone one's research skills, learn more about what our universities can do to improve their impact on the planet, and make a small but real difference.'

Person Specification -the following are essential:

- Access to a computer or laptop and internet connection.
- Familiarity with desk-based research.
- Ability to work accurately and efficiently to agreed standards.
- Reliability and commitment to completing work to deadlines.

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- Able to communicate needs with staff at People & Planet and if needed, ask for appropriate support to complete tasks in time.
- Ability to search policy documents for specific information in English.
- Ability to assess information against standardised frameworks.
- Ability to work remotely and independently

The following are desirable:

- Awareness of current issues in sustainability and ethics.
- Experience of research and data collection.
- An interest in higher education policy.

You will need to commit to

- Two 25 hour weeks of remote work in July and August.
- 5 hours work per day for the two week period. Volunteers can manage their own time flexibly and will receive support from People & Planet, but must meet task deadlines on a weekly basis and attend a short daily meeting.
- One half day of remote training and induction the week prior to your 2 week engagement.
- Attending a brief meeting in the morning or afternoon each day and one individual check-in meeting in week 1.

Summer timetable

June 30th-July 11th Ethical Investment and Banking, Ethical Careers and Recruitment, Education for Sustainable Development. **Training and induction w/c 23rd June**

July 21st-1st August Sustainable Food, Staff & HR, Environmental Policy and Strategy
Training and induction w/c 14th July

August 11th-August 22nd Managing Carbon, Workers' Rights, Staff and Student Engagement, Environmental Management and Auditing. **Training and induction w/c August 4th**

How to Apply

[Fill in this form](#) and attach a C.V that has your **full name in the filename**.

Applications will be processed on a rolling basis until positions are filled, so please apply early to avoid disappointment. The deadline for applications is Friday June the 6th 2025

Candidates will need to attend a non-competitive group recruitment session and complete an online self-access task before being invited to volunteer with us.

Please let us know if you have specific access needs and what we can do to make the interview, training and volunteer experience more accessible to you, including organising a one-on-one interview. We welcome people with hearing loss, deaf and or disabled people to apply for this

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volunteer opportunity -unfortunately we don't use BSL so would need to make alternative support provisions for the training, unless a BSL interpreter can join you. If you have specific needs where we might support you by making this volunteering opportunity more accessible, please contact us by emailing universityleague@peopleandplanet.org

People & Planet welcome applications from BAME folks and people of colour, from disabled people, from LGBTQI*people, from people who speak English as a second language, from people who identify as non-binary gender, from women, from people of different ages, from people with caring responsibilities and from people with irregular migration status, people seeking asylum in the UK or with a migrant background, folks with a working class background, and everyone else.