



PEACE UNIVERSITIES ALLIANCE

A GUIDE TO RESISTING THE DEFENCE UNIVERSITIES ALLIANCE

About Demilitarise Education

Demilitarise Education (dED) is a UK-based organisation founded in 2019 that investigates and challenges the growing entanglement between universities and the arms industry. We combine rigorous, university-by-university research with political education and organising support for staff, students, and trade unions, most notably through building and maintaining the Universities & Arms Database, the world's most detailed public dataset mapping arms investments and academic partnerships across the sector, which has now exposed billions in arms and military partnerships with universities. Our work has helped make hidden ties visible, strengthened campus and union campaigns, and contributed to real policy shifts. We already hold the most comprehensive evidence base, maintain a strong network of organisers across higher education, and produce practical tools that translate research into governance and policy demands.

We are thus uniquely positioned to coordinate a UK-wide coalition to resist the Defence Universities Alliance and defend universities as places of independent inquiry rather than extensions of the war economy.

[Read our latest publications here.](#)

Now launching the Peace Universities Alliance coalition.
Stop the Defence Universities Alliance, Save our Education.

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BECOME A COALITION MEMBER 

£25 A YEAR

Introduction

The rapid acceleration of militarisation means the rapid militarisation of education. The launch of the Defence Universities Alliance makes this shift explicit.

In the words of Labour's Luke Pollard in February,

“The Defence Universities Alliance was announced as part of the Defence Industrial Strategy in September 2025 to create a strategic network of UK universities that are publicly committed to partnering with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the defence industrial sector.

It aims to advance high-quality “defence” research, encourage more skilled graduates to consider careers within the defence sector and **strengthen and promote the partnership between the MOD, academia and defence industry.** We are in the process of establishing the Alliance and will work with its founding members to establish a baseline and measure its success.”

This is not the future of education we want for our children.

This guide will provide university students, staff, NGO’s and concerned individuals with the key information needed to resist the Defence Universities Alliance (DUA). It is a key resource for dED’s newly launched Peace Universities Alliance coalition.

Key Information

What is the Defence Universities Alliance

The Defence Universities Alliance (DUA) is a new Ministry of Defence initiative on the 13th of July published their list of 35 founding university members creating a strategic network between UK higher education institutions and the 'defence' sector. The alliance aims to build a "more strategic relationship between defence and academia" with three core objectives: advancing defence research, promoting defence careers, and fostering industry partnerships.

What the Charter Commitment Means

By signing the DUA charter, universities publicly commit to "actively growing research and development activity and capacity in defence and national security relevant fields and technologies to support defence aims and objectives." This means institutions would dedicate resources, research capacity, and career services to advancing military technology and encouraging students into militarised industries, effectively becoming formal partners in the UK's war machine.

The List of Founding Members

- Durham University
- Newcastle University
- Northumbria University
- Lancaster University
- University of Cumbria
- University of Lancashire
- University of Liverpool
- University of Manchester
- University of Huddersfield
- University of Sheffield
- University of York
- Loughborough University
- University of Lincoln
- University of Nottingham
- Aston University
- University of Birmingham
- University of Warwick
- King's College London
- Kingston University
- Queen Mary University of London
- University College London
- University of Oxford
- University of Portsmouth
- University of Surrey
- University of Bath
- University of Bristol
- University of Exeter
- University of Plymouth
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Glasgow
- University of Strathclyde
- Cardiff University
- Swansea University
- Queens University Belfast
- Cranfield University

**Note: What was set to
be 20 universities is
now 35!**

MoD Official Statement

What the Charter Commitment Means

By signing the [DUA charter](#), universities publicly commit to "actively growing research and development activity and capacity in defence and national security relevant fields and technologies to support defence aims and objectives." [3] This means institutions would dedicate resources, research capacity, and career services to advancing military technology and encouraging students into militarised industries, effectively becoming formal partners in the UK's war machine.

VISION

The Defence Universities Alliance will be a collaborative, strategic alliance of UK Higher Education institutions publicly committed to partnering with the Ministry of Defence, the UK Armed Forces, the Office of the Chief Scientific Advisor for National Security, and the defence sector to deliver Defence and National Security outcomes.

STRATEGIC AIMS

1. Defence Research

Advancing Defence and National Security research and development within UK institutions, enabling the Higher Education sector to become a global leader in defence research and innovation.

2. Defence Skills and Career Promotion

Ensuring that the Higher Education sector develops and equips graduates, students and other emerging talent with the skills required for careers in defence and national security, while encouraging a greater proportion of skilled graduates to consider pursuing roles in the defence sector.

3. Collaboration

Fostering partnerships between government, academia and industry to ensure a whole of society approach to defence and national security challenges.

Source:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69e2310b2570f65c2716d994/20260413_DUA_Charter.pdf

Why this is Immoral & Threatens Academic Freedom

This alliance threatens academic freedom by:

- Redirecting research priorities away from addressing pressing social, environmental, and humanitarian challenges toward military applications
- Promoting wider MoD efforts as part of the 2025 Defence Industrial Strategy to strengthen military career pathways prioritised through UCAS-linked partnerships and £182 million for Defence Technical Excellence Colleges, creating institutional pressure to align with military priorities
- Creating ethical conflicts for researchers and students whose values oppose war and militarisation
- Compromising institutional independence by making universities dependent on arms/military funding and strategic alignment

At a time when devastating conflicts continue across Congo, Sudan, Ukraine, Palestine and beyond, universities should not deepen their entanglement with industries that profit from violence, displacement, occupation, climate disaster. and overall human suffering. The DUA is being presented as a neutral partnership for innovation and skills development. We reject this framing.

Read the full statement: <https://demilitariseeducation.com/what-we-do/blog/defence-universities-aliance-statement>

Things to know

UKRI (what to know)

- UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) is the UK's main public research funder, distributing government-backed funding through research councils such as the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).
- UKRI is the largest funder of university research and thus promotes government priorities in academic research, shaping what kinds of work get funded and expanded, including research with potential "defence" relevance.

Source: <https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/good-research-resource-hub/responsible-innovation/national-security-and-defence-research/>

Dual-use (what it means + how it's used)

- Dual-use means a technology can have both civilian and military applications.
- "Dual-use " language is used to soften scrutiny, presenting projects as civilian even when they strengthen military capability or are developed within the arms industry supply chain.
- The DUA does not hide behind dual use, it is explicit about "translating cutting-edge research into battlefield advantage"

How dED disputes the dual-use justification (and how the Universities and Arms Database handles it)

- The Universities & Arms Database focuses on what can be proven: it records partnerships when a military or arms entity is explicitly named as a funder or partner.
- As a result, the UAD does not list UKRI/EPSRC projects simply because they are labelled "defence" or appear dual-use unless an arms company or military entity is directly involved.
- In short, if an arms company is involved, despite civilian application, it is supporting the production of war.

Source: <https://demilitariseeducation.com/what-we-do/blog/the-dual-use-issue>

Why Resist

Universities should be spaces for independent inquiry and knowledge that serves humanity. The Defence Universities Alliance (DUA) pulls them in the opposite direction.

Reasons to resist the DUA

1) It militarises education—by design

The DUA accelerates the militarisation of universities, embedding defence priorities into what research gets funded, what careers are promoted, and what knowledge is treated as “valuable.”

2) Government is openly redefining universities as part of the war economy

The 2025 Strategic Industrial Review labels universities part of the “Defence Industrial Base” and advances a “whole of society” approach to defence—drawing in not just government, but industry, finance, communities, and schools and universities.

3) It creates perverse incentives to deepen “defence” dependence

Universities will be scored on “the strength of existing support to defence and national security” and on how they will grow that support through the DUA. That is an incentive structure designed to expand “defence”-linked funding, research, and networks—regardless of ethical or democratic concerns.

4) It locks universities into institutional vulnerability

Tying “success” to “defence” relationships makes universities less able to diversify ethically, and more exposed to arms-industry agendas—an unstable foundation for a sector already in crisis towards militarisation.

5) The spending trajectory is escalating

The MoD is using this agenda to justify “wartime pace” innovation and increasing military spending to 2.6% of GDP by 2027—normalising a long-term national pivot towards militarisation.

6) The premise is false

The UK is not under military attack. Education is. This shift is not a neutral “partnership”—it is a political project to reorient public institutions towards “defence” outcomes.

What’s at stake

Education is being treated not as a public good, but as infrastructure for warfare and arms exports—putting academic freedom, transparency, and democratic accountability at risk.

BECOME A COALITION MEMBER 

£25 A YEAR

Take Action

Step 1 - Email your university leaders

Instructions

1. Find the email address of your university's Vice-Chancellor (VC) or Principal. This is usually listed on the university's senior leadership or governance page. If you're unsure, check the university's contact directory or reach out to your student union or staff association for guidance.
2. Copy and paste the email template which can be found on the next page and paste it as a new email, in your inbox of choice.
3. Personalise the email: Replace [Name] with the VC's/ Principal or relevant name. Add your name, role, and contact details at the bottom. If relevant, mention your connection to the university (e.g., student, staff member, alumni).
4. If your university has a public engagement or governance email address, consider copying them in.
5. Send the email to the VC or Principal.
6. **Follow up with dED** after sending the email, forward your sent message to dED (hiya@ded1.co) with a brief note. dED will track all emails sent via our university specific Campaign Trackers.

Email Template - Universities on the list

Subject: Urgent: Withdraw from the Defence Universities Alliance

Hello **[Name]**,

I am writing to formally object to **[University Name]**'s inclusion in the newly announced Ministry of Defence's Defence Universities Alliance (DUA).

The MoD has now published the list of 35 founding members, confirming that our university has chosen to align itself with a strategy explicitly designed to translate academic research into "battlefield advantage." This is not a vague partnership; it is a direct integration of our institution into the UK's military-industrial complex, backed by a £298 billion defence investment plan.

True security does not come from building weapons or enhancing battlefield capabilities. It comes from addressing the root causes of instability: climate breakdown, poverty, inequality, and systemic injustice. By joining the DUA, **[University Name]** is prioritising profit and political alignment over its ethical duty to serve the public good.

We demand that the University immediately withdraw its application and renounce any association with the DUA.

Specifically, we request clarity on the following:

1. What specific benefits did the University seek in joining this alliance?
2. Was there a transparent democratic process involving staff, students, and local communities before this decision was made?
3. Will the University commit to withdrawing from the DUA upon request?

We expect a written response by **[insert date, e.g., Friday, July 25th]**. If you are unable to provide a commitment to withdrawal, we will escalate this matter through public campaigning, union channels, and local media.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

[Your name]

Email Template - Universities not on the list

Subject: Inquiry: **Did [University Name]** apply to the Defence Universities Alliance?

Hello **[Name]**,

I am writing to inquire about **[University Name]**'s stance on the Ministry of Defence's new Defence Universities Alliance (DUA).

The MoD has recently announced the 35 founding members of this alliance, which aims to integrate higher education into the national defence industrial base. The government statement noted that nearly 100 universities submitted applications.

Given the scale of interest, we are concerned that many institutions—including ours—may have applied in secret, without consulting the student body, staff, or wider community.

Could you please confirm:

1. Did **[University Name]** submit an application to join the DUA?
2. If so, why was the application unsuccessful, and will the University attempt to join in future cohorts?
3. If not, can you provide a formal statement committing the University to never join the DUA or similar militarised initiatives?

Academic freedom and ethical integrity must remain paramount. Aligning with an initiative focused on “battlefield advantage” contradicts the core values of critical inquiry and social responsibility. We urge the University to be transparent about its intentions and to publicly reject this path towards the militarisation of education.

We look forward to your response by **[insert date, e.g., end of next week]**.

Best regards,

[Your name]

Step 2- Follow up

It is important to follow up on your request, tracking all correspondence. At dED, we will collate this information to keep a record that can inform the next steps of our campaign.

Follow these steps:

- 1.Track responses: Keep a record of any replies from your university. If you don't hear back within a week, send a polite follow-up email.
- 2.Share any responses with dED so they can help coordinate broader action.

Email Template - Send to dED

Subject: Follow-up: Email sent to **[University Name]** VC about DUA

Body: Hi, dED team, I've sent the attached email to our VC regarding the Defence Universities Alliance. Please let me know if you'd like any additional information or support.

***Attach/forward all correspondence**

Step 3 - Pass a motion against the DUA

Campaigning to pass a union and/or SU motion condemning the DUA is an important next step. Please feel free to use the Demilitarise Education motion templates linked below:

Motion Templates

Key aspects of the motion:

- Demand Transparency
- Build Inclusion
- Exclude arms/military partnerships in policy
- Grow respect for human rights and international law
- Exit the DUA
- Do not join the DUA
- Support dED's coalition and campaign

Step 4 - Become a member

Join the Peace Universities Alliance coalition to resist the Ministry of Defence's 'Defence Universities Alliance' (DUA) with an annual membership fee of £25. Open to individual campaigners, groups, societies and organisations.

Your membership builds the resistance across the UK with:

- A Direct Say: Influence the campaign strategy and help shape the resistance.
- Exclusive Updates: Quarterly briefings on DUA developments and campaign progress.
- Resistance Toolkit: Access to templates, resources, and organising tools for your local context.
- 1-1 Support: Dedicated calls with the dED team to support your local campaign efforts.
- Community Connection: Link with fellow resistance members across the sector.

The coalition will directly:

- Build critical awareness about the DUA locally and nationally
- Provide crucial information and resources to campaigners organising against it
- Empower and organise campaign actions to resist it
- Build student and staff capacity to resist it on the ground

Link to join now: <https://actionnetwork.org/fundraising/defence-universities-alliance-resistance-membership/>

By joining you will be added to an email group for updates and organising. **Fee is encouraged but not compulsory.**

Step 5 - Recruit new Members

We're facing a huge and fast-moving tide of militarism, and universities are now a central target. If we don't organise collectively, the Defence Universities Alliance will normalise military influence over research, funding, and graduate pathways, quietly reshaping higher education in the interests of the arms industry. Membership is a simple, practical way to build the national coordination, shared intelligence, and local support we need to resist this effectively.

On the next page, you will find an email template you can use to invite new members. Send this to everyone you can.

Also, follow @dED_UCATION across social media. This will give you the opportunity to view and share information regarding the DUA. This level of advocacy is key to our mobilisation efforts.

[Instagram](#)

[YouTube](#)

[TikTok](#)

[Mailing List](#)

[Join the Demilitarise Education Whatsapp group for updates and discussion.](#)

Email this appeal to potential members:

Hi **[Name/Group]**,

The Ministry of Defence is actively trying to turn our universities into part of the "Defence Industrial Base." Through the Defence Universities Alliance (DUA), they want to entrench military partnerships, redirect research toward war technology, and recruit graduates into the arms industry.

I have recently joined the Peace Universities Alliance coalition, launched by Demilitarise Education, to build a UK-wide campaign around resisting the MoD's takeover of our education system.

It is only £25 a year membership fee to join other individual campaigners, groups and organisations in this resistance. All fighting together to protect our education.

As a member, you get:

- A Direct Say: Help shape our national campaign strategy.
- Exclusive Intel: Quarterly updates on DUA developments and government moves.
- Real Support: 1-1 calls with dED organisers to help you run local campaigns. Tools:
- Access to our full resistance toolkit (templates, flyers, talking points).
- Community: Connect with fellow resisters across the UK through a chat group and regular meetings.

[Link: [Join the Coalition for £25](#)]

We cannot let our universities become corporate and military arms. Please consider joining me/us.

In solidarity,

[Your Name/Group Name]

[Link to dED Website/Socials]

Step 6 - Fundraise for the Campaign

Organising this coalition costs money. For us to sustain a successful campaign, we need members to help raise funds.

Send this email to alumni networks, big private donors, individuals and groups.

Subject: Our Universities Are Becoming Part of the War Machine. Help Us Stop It.

Hi **[Name]**,

Did you know the UK government is actively redefining universities as part of the "Defence Industrial Base"?

The Ministry of Defence has launched the Defence Universities Alliance (DUA), an initiative seeking to integrate higher education into the national security apparatus. They are not just asking for partnerships; they are demanding integration. Universities will be scored on their support for defence aims, incentivising them to redirect research away from humanitarian crises and toward military applications.

This is a fundamental shift in the purpose of our universities.

At a time when devastating conflicts continue across Congo, Sudan, Ukraine, and Palestine, our institutions should be spaces for independent inquiry that serve humanity, not tools for sustaining warfare.

Demilitarise Education (dED) is leading the resistance.

We are working to:

- Expose the DUA and its implications for academic freedom.
- Support student and staff organising efforts across the UK.
- Develop resources and toolkits for local resistance.
- Build a broad coalition of peace universities.
- But we need your support.

Your donation helps us maintain the pressure, produce critical research, and provide the tools needed for grassroots organisers to succeed. Without this work, higher education risks becoming nothing but a corporate and military arm.

How Dare They Use Public Infrastructure to Perpetuate War?

How dare they use great minds to perpetuate the things currently destroying livelihoods and our planet.

Please donate today to help us stop the DUA and save our education.

[Donate Now] [<https://demilitariseeducation.com/donate>]

In solidarity,

[Your Name/Group Name]

Other Fundraising Ideas

- Host a bake sale
- Share dED's shop [We Build Peace](#)
- Host a ticketed event
- Ask your union to donate
- Run a raffle

Other ideas are welcome. Please share successes with the coalition via WhatsApp.



Tips for Members Using These Resources

- Personalise the "Why": When recruiting, encourage members to add a sentence about why they care. "As a physics PhD student, I see my department being pressured to pivot to defence research. I joined dED to fight that."
- Use the "How Dare They" Hook: This phrase from dEDs co-founder is powerful. We encourage members to use it in subject lines or opening sentences to grab attention.
- Highlight the £25 Value: For membership recruitment, emphasise that £25 is less than a coffee a month for direct influence and support. It's an investment in their own campaign capacity.
- Link Clearly: Always ensure the links to the membership page and donation page are prominent and easy to click.
- Share Successes: When possible, share small wins (e.g., "Our member at University X successfully got the student union to pass a motion against DUA"). This proves the coalition works and encourages others to join/fund.

“How dare they use public infrastructure and great minds to perpetuate all the things currently destroying livelihood and our planet.

This is happening while students and staff across the country are calling for divestment. King's College, Cambridge, the first Oxbridge university to commit to divesting from the arms trade. With the “defence” sector starting to avoid careers fairs at university, Glasgow even led a survey asking how students felt about the “defence” sector's presence. Then, we also have the national education union forming Disarm Education to widen the reach of our efforts to stop the manipulation of education in favour of war. Across the entire higher education sector, people and groups are speaking out.

I cannot stress enough the urgency and importance of this coalition, a resistance necessary to ensure peace stands a chance. Without it, higher education will become nothing but a corporate and military arm. Academic freedom will be long lost, and hope harnessed in the pursuit of intellectual enquiry will fall with it.”

Jinsella, Co-Founder & Executive Director of Demilitarise Education

