



## **GCU Students' Association: Campaigns Toolkit**

**May 2015**



## Campaigns Toolkit

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## Introduction

### **GCU Students' Association – a campaigning organisation**

The Students' Association is a campaigning organisation and our mission is to represent and enable GCU students to enhance all aspects of their student experience. This means that we represent all students studying at GCU to the university, within the local community and nationally to the Scottish and UK governments, through the National Union of Students (NUS). We are a membership-led organisation that works to make the lives of GCU students better.

When our elected Full Time Officers don't directly represent GCU students, we work to support our members to take on representative or campaigning roles to represent other students. We support Liberation and Representation Officers, the GCU London Rep, School Officers, Class Reps and volunteers to improve the GCU student experience. We also want to encourage our individual members to be empowered to make things better and campaign for change within their local communities.

Find out more about our Mission, Vision and Values: [www.GCUstudents.co.uk/aboutus](http://www.GCUstudents.co.uk/aboutus)

### **Ideas**

Many of the campaigns that we run, or that we support students to run, originate from Ideas generated by our members. When you see something that you want to change at GCU then we suggest that you submit an Idea to us at the Students' Association which can be the starting point for the change that you want to see.

Some changes are simple and we can make these happen quickly just by getting in touch with the right person. Other changes may require more work to be done and can be the starting point for a campaign. This is where this Toolkit comes in – to be your guide to running a campaign to make the change that you want to see.

By submitting an Idea, it also makes us aware of what you want to do and so we can offer support and suggest it gets taken forward within the Students' Association where it can be adopted as our official stance.

For more information about Ideas and how to submit them: [www.GCUstudents.co.uk/ideas](http://www.GCUstudents.co.uk/ideas)

### **What is a Campaign?**

Campaigning is the way in which we create change in the world. It is the coordination of people and resources aimed at changing the behaviour of organisations and individuals.

Campaigning can take many forms including petitions, lobbying, demonstrations, letter writing and publicity stunts. What unites these approaches is that they will have the common aim of achieving the desired change and, ultimately, creating an impact on people's lives.



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### **What is NOT a Campaign?**

Campaigns are not simply about raising awareness of an issue, because although greater awareness can lead to change (and is usually part of a campaign) it is not an end in itself. For instance, it is good to make people aware of the benefits of healthy eating but in a campaign what we are trying to achieve is to get people to actually eat healthily.

Therefore simply setting up a petition, creating a group on social media or challenging a decision in a meeting is not campaigning. Campaigning only happens when these actions are designed with a clear aim and are backed up by a campaign plan.

It is great to make people aware of an issue but our aim is to inspire them to take action and help to make change happen.

### **How to make an impact**

The impact of your campaign is the difference it makes in people's lives – the effect of your change on the world. Understanding the impact you are trying to make is essential to running an effective campaign. Continuing from our previous example, if we want more people to eat healthily, we might attempt to reduce the price of healthy food options or provide classes on how to cook healthy meals. Both approaches have the same intended consequence but it is likely that one approach will be more effective than the other. This is why knowing the difference between the ends we are hoping to achieve and the means of doing so is important – the actions we take in our campaign should be those which most effectively achieve our aim.

In order to make sure that our campaign is effective, we make use of the Campaigns Cycle. This approach ensures that our campaign is properly planned and delivered and that it is based on strong evidence. It also makes sure that we take time to evaluate what we are doing at each stage of the campaign. This Toolkit makes use of various tools as you work through the Campaigns Cycle to help you to deliver an effective campaign with maximum impact.

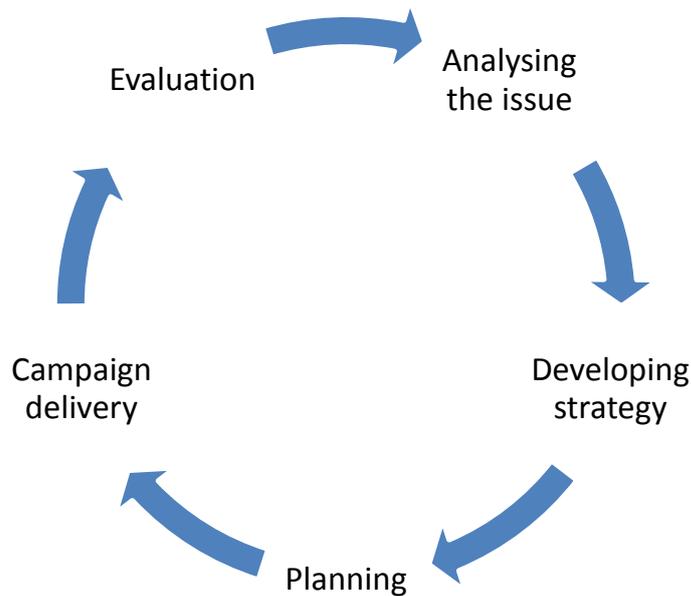
### **The Campaigns Cycle**

The Campaigns Cycle is comprised of five stages which are explored in detail within this Campaigns Toolkit:

- Analysing the issue to find a solution
- Developing strategy – setting an aim and impact
- Planning – mapping routes to influence and selecting tactics
- Campaign delivery and monitoring progress
- Evaluation

Using this approach helps you to plan a campaign in which your planned activities match the aims you have identified and can be supported by your available resources.

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## Analysing the Issue

### Identify the issue

The first step is to identify what you want to change, understanding the issue, and, ensuring you have evidence and people to support your cause.

Your campaign will be seriously undermined from the outset if it is based on incorrect information. No matter how passionate you are and how well you think you know your subject, make sure you can support your position with evidence. Not only will this provide validation for your campaign, it will also:

- save time in the long-run; presenting false facts means starting again
- build trust; people will see that you know what you're doing
- give you a clearer picture of your problem and possible solutions
- help you respond if anyone questions what you are doing or why

If you want people to support you, you need to be able to tell them in simple terms why they should. Research as widely as you can and from a range of perspectives to ensure that you have an objective view.

If your campaign centres on a problem within the university, there's a good chance that students at other universities or students' associations may have campaigned on the same issue in the past. The Students' Association can help research what other campaigners have done and where to get sources of evidence.

## Evidence

Evidence to support your campaign can come in many forms and it doesn't all have to be freshly gathered for your campaign - existing sources of data and reports are often substantial pieces of evidence when starting a campaign.

Various charities and campaigning organisations will produce information and make it freely available for others to use. For example, in 2015 the consumer rights organisation Which? published a list of universities that had unlawfully made changes to students' terms and conditions – this is evidence enough for any students' association to campaign for this practice to end.

The National Union of Students publishes its research online and this can be a great source of evidence for campaigns - <http://www.nus.org.uk/research>.

There are also a number of surveys carried out on an annual basis such as the National Student Survey and International Student Barometer which give insight into students' opinions about their experience at university.

However, in other cases there will be the need to collect new pieces of evidence. There are many different ways in which this can be achieved but some of the most straightforward methods are through surveys (online and/or face to face), going out and talking to people, and, organising small focus groups. Whichever method you employ, make sure to take time to properly write your questions in advance so that the answers you receive are meaningful and helpful to your campaign. For example, finding out that 32% of students are dissatisfied with a university service doesn't help your campaign unless you find out why they are dissatisfied.

## Widely Felt, Deeply Felt and Winnable

Unfortunately, for a campaign to be successful it isn't enough to simply be right even if you are backed up by evidence.

Students are most likely to engage with your campaign if they feel involved and represented by it, so be prepared to explain how your campaign is relevant to them if they aren't already convinced and remember to take on board any feedback you receive; this is another type of evidence.

The best campaigns are those that are easy to understand and that tackle problems faced by many. Before you begin, look at your research and ask yourself:

- Is this widely felt?
  - If your issue isn't widely felt, you may need to put a lot of emphasis on informing people before of what you are doing and why
- Is this deeply felt?
  - If your issue isn't deeply felt, you may need to show people why they SHOULD care you can use the Anger, Hope, Action and Apathy Staircase models covered later in this document
- Is it winnable?

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- If your goal doesn't seem achievable, it might be a good idea to break it down into smaller, more winnable steps.

The answers to all three of these questions does not need to be “yes” right at the start of the campaign – indeed many campaigns do not seem winnable at the start – but you must be prepared for how you will build your campaign depending on these answers. Perhaps your initial campaign action has a greater awareness raising element to it or that you make sure your campaign materials explain why the issue is relevant to your target audience.

Taking time to write down answers to these questions is a useful way to answer these questions and identify the ways in which you should factor their answers into your campaign plan.

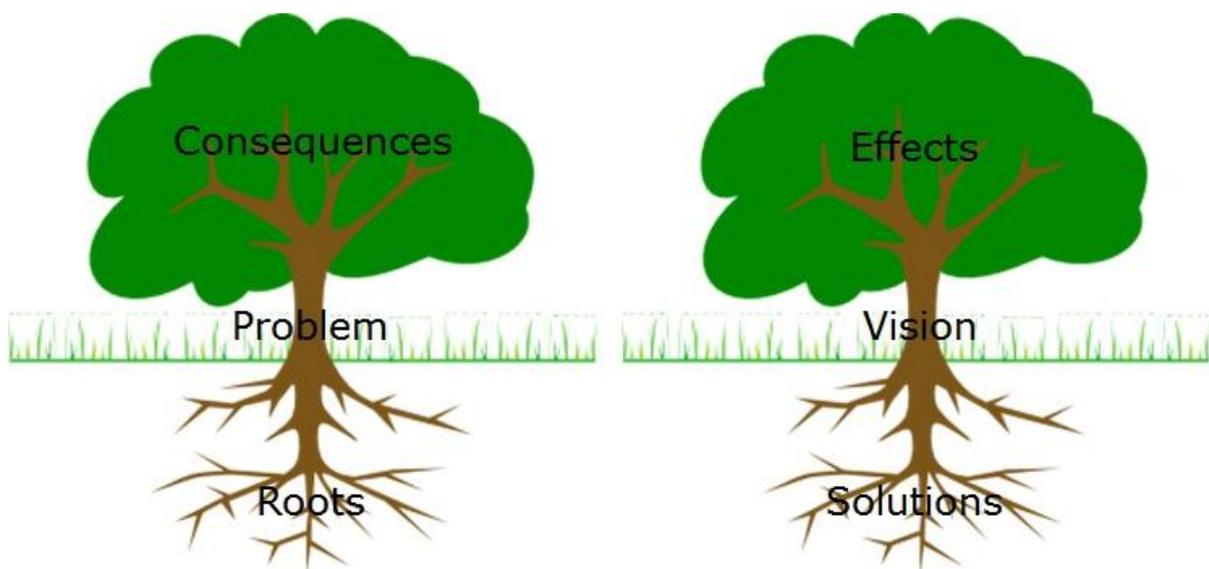
### Problem and Solution Trees

To help you breakdown the issue, think it through and identify solutions use the Problem Tree. Try and involve a number of people to account for multiple viewpoints. You can download a copy of the Problem Tree for use from our website: [www.GCUstudents.co.uk/campaignstoolkit](http://www.GCUstudents.co.uk/campaignstoolkit)

1. Draw a tree and write your problem on the trunk of the tree
2. At the roots, write down the causes of your problem
3. In the branches, write down the consequences of your problem

Now either on the same diagram or by drawing a separate tree you can create a Solution tree to solve your problem and address its consequences.

1. Write down your campaign's aim (your solution on the trunk of the tree)
2. At the roots write down solutions to your problem and try to make sure that all of the causes have been addressed
3. In the branches, write down the effects of you campaign being successful





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Combining the results of these exercises should give you a clear view of what is causing your problem and the effects it is having as well as what you need to do to solve it (addressing the causes) and how people will benefit when you do. This last point will help you to express the impact that your campaign will make.

### Developing Strategy

#### Campaign Aim – the impact of your campaign

The lasting effect of your campaign will be its impact. This is the change that comes from the outcomes of your campaign. Returning to our earlier example of the healthy eating campaign, the outputs from that campaign might have included distributing leaflets, organising cooking classes and meeting with catering outlets about the price of healthier options. If you were successful then your outcomes will include people eating more healthily by cooking healthier food and buying healthier options. These are good outcomes but what is their impact?

To answer this question we return to why we would run such a campaign in the first place. The problem to be solved is that people are suffering from poor health due to the food that they eat. The impact we hope to achieve is our solution to this – improve people's health by getting more people to eat more healthily.

Having a clear campaign aim linked to the impact you want to achieve is essential and if it isn't then your campaign plan may not be working towards the correct outcomes.

#### Outcomes

In order to be able to plan your campaign you need to identify what outcomes would be measures of success. Outcomes are different from outputs. Outputs are the actions you take during your campaign; outcomes are what happen as a result of those actions. Each of your outcomes should contribute towards achieving your Campaign Aim (your impact).

Mapping out your desired outcomes as campaign objectives is a useful way to approach campaign planning and it ensures your campaign aim is realistic and achievable. One method of creating objectives is to make them SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic & Time-bound):

- **Specific:** state what is to be achieved in a clear and detailed manner.
- **Measurable:** progress towards the desired outcome can be measured during the campaign and you will know when it is complete.
- **Achievable:** the outcome is something that is possible within the timeframe of your campaign – there are no barriers in place which mean this definitely cannot be achieved.
- **Realistic:** you have the resources available to achieve this outcome – this can take the form of time, money or even the necessary skills to take the campaign forward.

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- **Time-bound:** In order to keep your campaign on track, it is important to set deadlines otherwise the campaign may lose momentum.

Breaking down your campaign aim into objectives will form the basis of a campaign plan. It is useful to prioritise these objectives so that you focus on the most important two or three to allow your campaign to remain focused.

You can download a copy of the SMART objectives grid for use from our website: [www.GCUstudents.co.uk/campaignstoolkit](http://www.GCUstudents.co.uk/campaignstoolkit)

### Influence and Power

Having created objectives for your campaign, it is now important that you identify who you need to speak to in order to achieve them.

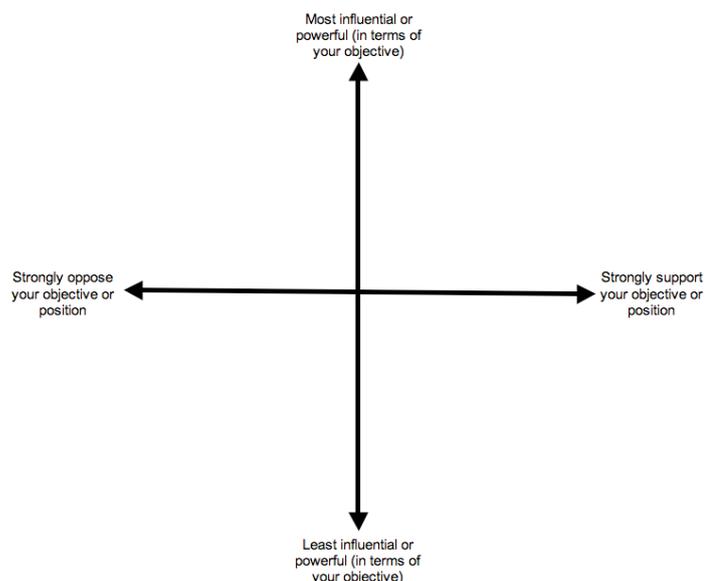
All campaigns are ultimately aimed at getting organisations and/or individuals to agree with your position on an issue. Therefore we begin by identifying the following groups who can affect the decision making process:

- Decision makers – the people or organisations who have the ultimate power to say yes or not to your campaign aim
- Influencers – the people or organisations who can shape the decision makers opinion
- Allies – other people or groups who will benefit from your campaign aim being achieved

In universities, the Principal and the Executive Board are often the decision makers who can make policy changes at institutional level. They are influenced by the people at the university – staff and students – and the organisations that represent them – the trade unions and Students' Association. They are also influence by the government and external bodies such as the Scottish Funding Council and the Quality Assurance Agency.

In a campaign within the university it is most likely that students will be your natural allies although some groups will be more affected than others depending on the issue. However, staff can be allies to as well as other organisations with an interest in what happens at the university such as colleges.

A useful exercise is to use a target diagram and to place all of the different people and organisations on it charting both their position on the issue (support or oppose) and how much influence they have over it



(strong or weak).

Once you have done this it is also helpful to record each person and organisation in a power analysis grid alongside their role, what motivates them and who they are influenced by and have influence over.

You can download a copy of the target diagram and power analysis grid for use from our website: [www.GCUstudents.co.uk/campaignstoolkit](http://www.GCUstudents.co.uk/campaignstoolkit)

By understanding who has influence and power, you can make sure your campaign is aimed at convincing the people who matter the most.

## Planning

### Actions

Now that you have looked at your campaign strategy and decided upon your objectives, you need to turn each objective into a series of actions.

The actions you choose will depend on what resources you have at your disposal as well as on the nature of the objective and required outcome itself.

Whether the desired outcome is to influence specific decision makers, raise awareness of the issue amongst, or change behaviours will dictate what the most effective action will be.

Possible actions can range as far as your imagination (and resources) allow. Methods to consider include:

- Lobby – meeting the decision makers and influencers to convince them to support your campaign aim
- Raise awareness – converting people to your cause through events, stalls and talking to people
- Gather support – show that your campaign is widely supported through a petition or vote in the Students' Association
- Protest – hold a march or a rally to show a visible presence to your campaign and engage your supporters

It is helpful to work out the best order in which to tackle your objectives at this stage too. Which is the most logical to start with? Try to order them so one objective paves the way for the next.

### Campaign Plan

Once you have generated some ideas, debated and decided on the most suitable actions for each of your objectives you are ready to write your Campaign Plan. You can use the Campaign Planning Chart and enter your activities, resources required, a timescale for each objective and who is going to be responsible for it.



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You can download a copy of the Campaign Planning Chart for use from our website: [www.GCUstudents.co.uk/campaignstoolkit](http://www.GCUstudents.co.uk/campaignstoolkit)

### **Campaign Delivery and Monitoring Progress**

#### **Building your campaign team**

As your campaign grows more people will become aware of it and the potential for your campaign to grow increases. However, before starting out it is useful to make sure you have a large enough campaign team to begin with.

One person is unlikely to succeed by themselves and with a group you gain the benefit of a wider range of skills and ideas. With more people it is also possible to get more done and when setbacks occur there is less chance of losing motivation.

In order to build your campaign it is helpful to start off by identifying the groups or people who may be interested and thinking about how you could get them involved, what they can do to help and what they would get out of it. It may be helpful to fill in the campaign team grid to map out who you might want to approach.

You can download a copy of the campaign team grid for use from our website: [www.GCUstudents.co.uk/campaignstoolkit](http://www.GCUstudents.co.uk/campaignstoolkit)

Once you have completed the grid you will know who to approach and how you will attempt to recruit them to your campaign.

After recruiting a campaign, it is important that you engage with them meaningfully – they are not there to do whatever you ask of them. Make it clear from the beginning of what you are hoping to achieve and find out what their motivations are as well. Involve other members of the team in the decision making process and always make sure to keep everyone up to date.

Where possible it is valuable to show campaigners the effect they are having and in any event, make sure to thank them for what they are doing.

#### **Engaging people - Anger, Hope, Action and Apathy Staircase models**

##### **Anger, Hope, Action**

One method of engaging people with your campaign is through the Anger, Hope, Action model of engagement. As the name suggested this begins with making people angry about an issue, showing them that there is hope for a solution and the inviting them to get involved by taking action.

- Anger - Make someone angry about the issue. Explain to them why it is unfair or unjust. Some students may feel like 'anger' is a negative way of doing this but explain that campaigning always takes place in response to the feeling of something being unjust and that anger is the emotion that makes this happen.

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- Hope - Don't just leave someone angry about the issue. Give them hope that it can change. Identify why there is hope at this particular moment? Why is it the right time for this campaign? Is there a real chance of success?
- Action - The most important part of the conversation is asking someone to take an action and sometimes this can be the easiest bit to forget. Always have a clear action you'd like people to take and ask them to commit to it.

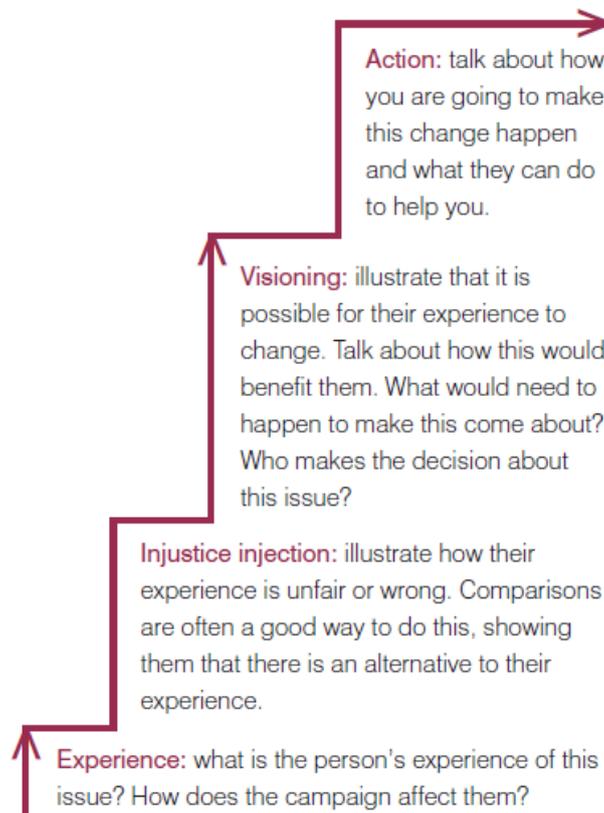
The Action can be anything that meaningfully takes the campaign forward, from coming along to the next meeting of the campaign team to sending an email to their local MP.

### Apathy Staircase

Although your campaign will be very important to you and you will know the value of it, not everyone will immediately share your enthusiasm.

Encountering apathy is often a problem for campaigners but there are ways to overcome this. Quite often apathy is not deliberate; rather it can be down to a lack of information or having different priorities to those running the campaign.

To gain support you need to get people engaged. Go and out and show them how your campaign is relevant to them or people they care about. Using the apathy staircase can help – start from the bottom and work your way up:





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### **Organisation and communication**

Having a Campaign Plan in which all actions are clearly set is an important part of the organisation of any campaign. If everyone knows what has to be done and what their own responsibilities are it greatly increases the likelihood of the actions being delivered successfully. Therefore, make sure that once the plan has been agreed upon that it is shared with all of the campaign team.

The campaigns team need to stay in communication in order to be effective and so it is worth considering holding regular meetings or online discussions to make sure everyone is up to date on the latest developments.

It is also useful to have someone responsible for keeping track of what everyone has done so that the Campaign Plan can be updated and it is possible to review how well it is progressing.

### **Monitoring Progress**

Throughout your campaign it is important to take time to monitor your progress and compare it to the Campaign Plan. Doing so allows you to check if your campaign is on track and to change your plans if your actions have gone better or worse than anticipated. For example, if you have failed to reach the target number of signatures for your petition, are you going to present it anyway, look for more signatures or not present it at all? Or in another example, if your campaign resources end up being cheaper than anticipated, what are you going to spend the leftover money on?

Even when actions are successfully carried out, sometimes the outcomes are not those which you have predicted and so this too is something to consider when monitoring progress.

If something hasn't gone to plan then it is important to find out why this is the case as failing to understand this could prevent the campaign from being successful.

### **Evaluation**

#### **Evaluating the Campaign**

Evaluating your campaign, assessing to what extent you achieved your objectives and whether these have brought about your overall campaign aim (or desired impact) is a crucial part of the campaigning process. You need to know what changes you've brought about through your campaign in order to communicate to your supporters and members what you've achieved.

If you've followed this toolkit then you'll have been measuring your progress towards your objectives as the campaign progressed so you will know which of these you have achieved.

If any of your objectives weren't achieved, what were the reasons for this? Were the plans realistic? Did the actions match up with what you were trying to achieve? Was this due to mistakes in planning or external factors that could not have been anticipated? How would you prevent this happening next time?



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Make sure you spend some time analysing any “failures” and share what you’ve learned. This is how our campaigning as an organisation will develop and grow and how we can avoid repeating the same mistakes.

Measuring whether you have achieved your overall campaign aim is less straightforward. You can’t just assume that if you achieved all of your objectives then your campaign aim has also been achieved. It’s important to try to measure what impact the changes you’ve brought about have had in reality. It may take time to really be able to see this so consider following up your campaign in a few months’ time by holding focus groups or running an online survey to get an idea of whether your campaign really has achieved its desired impact.

At this stage you can assess what else still needs to be achieved or if other issues have arisen and feed that back into the beginning of the next campaigns cycle.

#### **Celebration and saying thank you**

When your campaign is complete it is important to celebrate what you have achieved even if you didn’t fully meet your campaign aim.

Celebrating your success makes people aware of what has happened which is often an important part of the campaign aim. For instance, if you had successfully campaigned for extended opening hours at the library then you want students to know about the times they can now access the building.

It is also important as it shows your campaign team to be successful which helps recruit people to your cause for future campaigns and maintain momentum if there are further related issues on which to campaign.

Finally, it makes the people who took part in the campaign feel valued, that their efforts did not go to waste. Even if the campaign wasn’t successful you can still celebrate how much the campaign did. Also take care to thank the people involved for what they did – it is the least they deserve and it also makes it more likely that they will continue to campaign in the future.

#### **What’s next?**

The campaigning process is a cycle. Sometimes there is another obvious issue to campaign on next or a piece of unfinished work from the last campaign. When there isn’t, the cycle doesn’t end – you can take what you have learned with you into any future campaign. The approaches which did and didn’t work, use of the tools in this Toolkit, the alliances and campaign teams that you have built – these can all be used again in the future.

Taking time to reflect on your campaign is important to achieving success in the future. Sharing what you have learned with the Students’ Association is also incredibly useful as it helps us to shape we provide students with future campaigns. Completing a campaign reflective log is a good way to capture these thoughts.



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You can download a copy of the campaign reflective log form for use from our website:  
[www.GCUstudents.co.uk/campaignstoolkit](http://www.GCUstudents.co.uk/campaignstoolkit)

## Resources

### Funding

Funding for campaigns is available from the Students' Association and can be applied for at any time during the year. In order to apply for funds you will need to complete a funding application form which outlines your campaign aim, the funding you require and how you intend to spend it.

Funding applications should be made at least two weeks in advance of when the funds are required. If the issue on which you wish to campaign on has arisen suddenly then this timescale can be accelerated at the discretion of the Executive Committee. They can be made retrospectively but there is no guarantee that you will be awarded funding for money which has already been spent.

You can download a copy of the campaign funding application form for use from our website:  
[www.GCUstudents.co.uk/campaignstoolkit](http://www.GCUstudents.co.uk/campaignstoolkit)

Funding may also be available through affiliation as a Students' Association society if you are forming an interest group which will be running your campaigns. More information about setting up a society can be found online at [www.GCUstudents.co.uk/societies](http://www.GCUstudents.co.uk/societies).

Please note that funds granted by the Students' Association may only be spent on campaigning activities related to the student experience and under no circumstances can funds be donated to political parties, charities, trade unions or other external groups.

### Support

#### Communications

The Students' Association is able to help support you with the communications for your campaign. We can put out messages through our Twitter and Facebook pages as well as in our all student email. Depending on the campaign we can also post information on plasma screens and display poster in official Students' Association notice boards.

You can request messages to be shared by the Students' Association at  
[www.GCUstudents.co.uk/communications](http://www.GCUstudents.co.uk/communications)

#### Room bookings

The Students' Association can help facilitate the booking of rooms or stalls in the Students' Association or in the University through our volunteer resources page -  
<http://www.gcustudents.co.uk/volunteerresources>