Campaigns Toolkit

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What is campaigning?

Campaigning can be described as "Organised actions around a specific issue seeking to bring about changes in the policy and behaviours of institutions and/or specific public groups… the mobilising of forces by organisations to influence others in order to effect an identified and desired social, economic, environmental or political change."[1]

Strath Union has a long and colourful campaigning history. Our organisation is led by our student members, for our student members. It is our mission to represent and empower our members on campus, to ensure that the student experience is truly beneficial to all. We strive to make sure that students are represented at all levels of policy-making and in any decision that may affect their experience as a student.

How can you get involved in campaigning?

If you feel passionate about creating your own campaign on campus, there are a number of ways you could make it happen. As a union, we have reps for individual courses, as well as part-time officers who exist to represent the interests of students. As a rep at any level, not only do you represent the students of Strathclyde but you can also advocate and campaign with or for them.

- **Use your Reps:** You can raise issues with class, faculty, part-time or full time reps and take the campaign on from there, we'll discuss more about campaign strategy later on. This is the most effective way of campaigning on course or class specific issues.
- **Student Parliament:** This is the main democratic decision making body of the Union. All students can attend to discuss campaigns, policies and projects that will improve the student experience at Strathclyde. Any student can submit a policy proposal at Student Parliament and, if the parliament passes that motion, it becomes Strath Union policy. It is a great platform for students to get their campaign off the ground - if the parliament passes your motion then you would work with Strath Union staff and officers in achieving your campaign goals.
- **Create a Club or Society:** This is the ideal platform for campaigns that go beyond the University and can be national or international issues. These can also be a great way for an issue to gain traction from the ground up. For example, the Feminist Society campaigns on women's issues.

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[1] *NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations)*

Strath Union has a Campaigns Room on Level 5. This is free for anyone to use – this space can be used to host meetings, plan strategies or create promotional materials (as long as it's booked in advance, **here**!)

Identifying the issue

The first step of any campaign is identifying the issue that you want to campaign on. This is the thing that you want to see changed, this could be anything from a University policy to a social issue at the national level.

How you identify an issue can vary; it may be an issue that directly impacts you, it might be an issue that your fellow students have raised or it could even be an issue raised in a government or academic report.

The issue is the centrepiece of your campaign and it is essential for the

> *Thinking exercise 1: Can you think of any campaigns at Strathclyde Students' Union in the past 5 years? Think about why these campaigns have stood out to you and whether or not they were successful.*

success of the campaign that you not only understand it, but have evidence and support behind the campaign. There are significant benefits of evidence based campaigns:

- Students and the wider community know exactly what the issue is
- Policy/Decision makers will understand what you are trying to change
- It gives you a talking point when you are raising awareness of the campaign

If you are campaigning on issue within the University, it is highly likely that other Student Unions, or the National Union of Students, have campaigned on the same issue and they are always a great source for campaign evidence and advice.

Gathering evidence

The evidence for your campaign can vary; often campaigns use a mixture of evidence bases for their campaigns. This could include government reports, reports from charitable organisations, reports from other campaign groups and academic reports.

You can also conduct your own research and this is often the most successful campaign evidence for issues at the University level. There are two different types of data gathering techniques; quantitative methods and

> *Thinking exercise 2: Let's imagine your campaign issue is around University Mental Health support provision. Think about what kind of evidence already exists, how might it be useful for your campaign?*

qualitative methods. These can be appropriate depending on the type of evidence or data you're trying to gather.

Quantitative methods are statistical in nature and can be used by campaigns to convey support/opposition to a policy. This data is often gathered by conducting surveys or petitions. It is essential that when gathering this type of data that the question you are asking is clear.

Qualitative methods give a more in-depth understanding and often capture the experiences of those you are asking questions. This kind of data will capture why students are opposed or in support of a policy/campaign and offers an in-depth understanding of student experience. You can gather this data through in person interviews, focus groups or open questions. It is worth thinking about the ethical side to this type of research; such as your own relationship to the study, how you phrase and tonally ask questions etc.

A lot of campaigns utilise a combination of both these kinds of research. A mixture of both types of data not only shows how many people support or oppose a policy, but why and how it impacts them.

Case study 1: HaSS Zero Marks campaign.

The HaSS Zero Marks was a campaign launched by HaSS reps in the last few months of 2017. They came together on behalf of students to campaign against the zero mark penalty for late submissions.

They conducted research through the Student Union, using both quantitative and qualitative data they researched how the policy had impacted students and whether or not they supported it. They used this data to create a report which was presented to the HaSS faculty, detailing why this policy does not work for students and why it has to change.

As a result of their campaign, the faculty ended the zero marks policy and consulted with students and reps as to what new the submission policy would be for the year beginning 2018/2019.

This is a prime example of how a collaboration of campaigners came together to change a University policy. Through advocacy, evidence and negotiation they acted on the behalf of students for positive change.

However, campaigns cannot always rely solely on evidence to be successful. Your campaign has to be representative of what students want and how students feel, this is what makes your campaign engaging. It has to be relevant to them and you have to be ready to convince them to support the campaign if they don't already.

The best way to model this is by thinking about how widely an issue is felt and deeply an issue is felt.

- **Is this issue widely felt?** You'll need to consider how many people are aware of the issue. If this is an issue that people are not aware of then your campaign will have to draw attention to the issue, informing people what you're campaigning on and why.
- **Is this issue deeply felt?** This is when you need to consider how deeply this issue affects people, the extent to which they care about it. If people don't feel deeply about the issue then your campaign has to show people why they should care. It might be worth conducting a questionnaire either online or of your classmates to get a general idea of awareness and depth of feeling, which should give you a jumping-off point.

If you map out the issue while thinking about these two things, your campaign should start to take shape. Maybe you have to begin raising awareness of an issue as your first action, or maybe you have to design material to show people why they should be caring about the issue.

After you have completed this step, you can begin to breakdown the issue so that you may think about the causes and consequences of the issue and the outcome of the campaign

To help with this, campaigners should sit down and create **a problem tree**:

1. Draw out a tree and write your issue on the trunk of the tree.
2. At the roots, write down what you think to be the causes of the problem.
3. And in the branches, write down all the consequences of the problem.

It is essential that you do this with a diverse group of people, as different students may have different experiences of the issue and it may affect them in different ways. If a diverse group isn't something immediately available to your campaign, there are a number of societies in the Union, representing a huge diversity of groups, that may be happy to point you in the right direction!

Once you're ready, you can then create **a solution tree**.
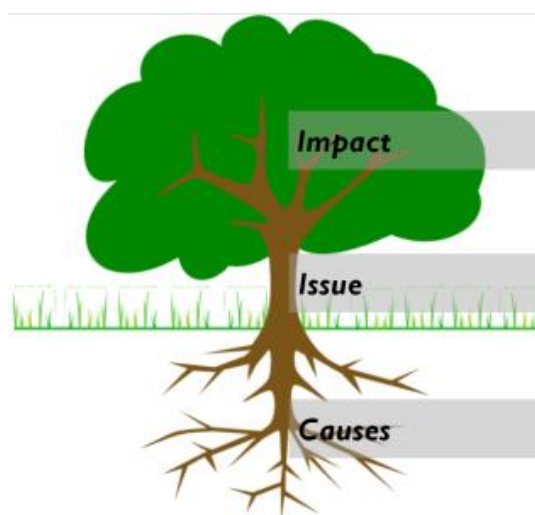
1. At the tree's trunk, write down your campaign's aim.
2. At the roots, write down the campaign's desired solution and ensure that all the different causes have been considered.
3. Then finally in the branches, write down all the positive effects that would come out of a successful campaign.

Impact Measurement

The next part in developing your campaign strategy is to think about the impact your campaign will have. This relates to the desired outcomes of your campaign and it is up to you determine what these look like. Your outcomes should have a meaningful impact on the student experience; students should see how this campaign has benefited them and how it has enabled positive change.

The best way to ensure this is campaign clarity, by mapping out your campaign objectives you can ensure that your desired outcomes remain on track and on target. One method of achieving this is by using the SMART objectives model (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime-bound):

- **Specific:** You should state what you want to achieve in a clear and detailed manner.

- **Measureable:** Your progress in achieving your desired outcome should be measured throughout the campaign. This ensures that you know what to do next and what is yet to be done.

- **Achievable:** Your campaign's desired outcome should be something that is possible within a reasonable timeline – how long is up to you. Just remember that campaigns may sometimes lose momentum and the issue is lost.

- **Realistic:** You have to ensure you have the appropriate resources to achieve the desired outcomes. You may need to build up resources, and make sure campaigners have the personal capacity to achieve these outcomes.

- **Time-bound:** It is important to keep your campaign on track, you should set deadlines and time-based goals so that you do not lose momentum.

When you break down the campaign into aims and objectives, you will begin to formulate the basis of a campaign plan. You should begin to prioritise objectives, giving your campaign focus from the get go.

Putting students at the heart of your campaign

Having developed the objectives, it is now time to think about how you are going to campaign. It is essential that in any campaign, students are placed at the heart, which is known as student centred organising.

At Strath Union we recognise, under our Equal Opportunities Policy, that "Autonomy is crucial to any liberation campaign; autonomy is the idea that oppressed or disempowered groups of people organise for themselves." All campaigns should consider this in their planning and ensure that their campaigns are representative of all students. You should seek to include and empower oppressed students by making your campaign intersectional i.e. considering different backgrounds and attributes and how they interact with one another.

Case Study 2: Fight for the Night Campaign, 2018.

The Fight for the Night campaign is a prime example of students being at the heart of a campaign. This campaign was organised by the Strathclyde Feminist Society and supported by both staff and officers within Strath Union. They organised a march and rally in Glasgow's City Centre and worked with other women's groups, activists and networks.

Once you put students at the heart of the campaign, you will ensure that your campaign is both representative and engaging. One major advantage of this is that students can naturally organise support and grow your campaign at the grass roots.
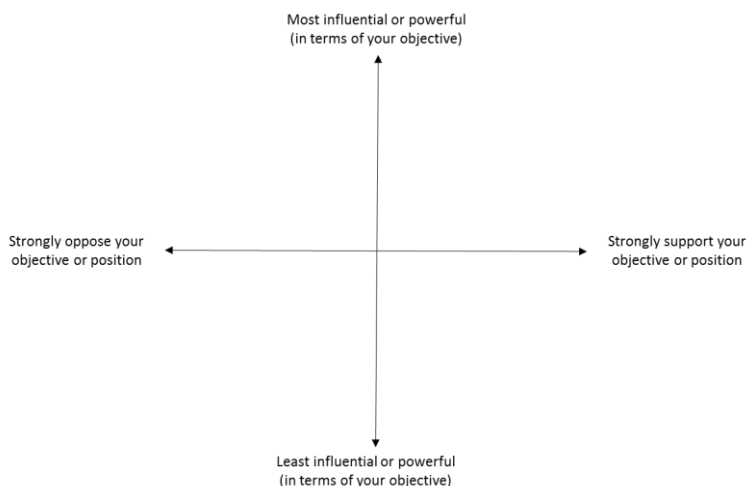
Above is a model in which a student is placed at the heart of a campaign. By exploring their relationships across society and campus you can begin to map support for your campaign.

In this model of campaigning, students identify potential allies and explore this relationship with them to gauge the extent to which they will be beneficial to their campaign. Campaigns

should not be led by one single student, ideally it would be a group of students leading on this campaign.

From there, we then use a Power Map that measures both agreement with the campaign and how influential potential allies would be, see below:

In this scatter graph the X axis measures how influential an ally may be. This is used to determine what steps may be taken to make allies more influential and to identify which allies would apply the most pressure to decision makers/policy makers. If we take the 'mental health provision' example from earlier, these allies might include advocacy groups, charities or union societies.

Most influential or powerful
(in terms of your objective)

Strongly oppose your
objective or position

Strongly support your
objective or position

Least influential or powerful
(in terms of your objective)

The Y axis measures how likely allies are to agree with the campaign or issue. This is done to map out immediate allies and also how to bring other groups on board. For example, if the campaign issue is about microwaves on campus then the opposition may be the estates team. They would be identified as being the most influential while also being the most in disagreement.

Campaign actions

Actions are what your campaign will use to achieve your objectives and raise awareness of your campaign. You always need to be mindful of your resource capacity when planning actions and also how accessible they are for other activists.

When strategizing your actions, you should think about what exactly you are trying to achieve through them. Is it to raise awareness, influence decision makers, or get more people involved? You should consider these when considering what actions to take. Here are some of the different actions that you may want to consider:

Lobbying: This would see you meeting with both decision makers and influential people to convince them to support your campaign or objectives. It is highly beneficial in these meetings to have evidence as to why they should support the campaign/objectives. Having evidence should give you the confidence to persuade others and counter any points raised successfully.

Leaflets, posters and stalls: This method is one of the most fruitful methods to raise awareness. It is important that you are student facing and your material explains to people why they should support the campaign. Be sure to use both factual and emotive information and be ready to answer any questions people may have.

Social Media: Social media has an ever-increasing influence on campaign strategy. It is also very useful for raising awareness to a wide audience. This can be useful for commenting on reports or information in real-time through Twitter, or building a community through Facebook. It has also made it possible for organising meetings or gathering thoughts at short notice through instant messaging services like WhatsApp groups. More generally; through the use of pictures, videos and blogs you can reach people explaining why they should support your campaign. It is important your posts are consistent, engaging and informative.

Public meetings: Public meetings can be useful for having a more informed discussion on your campaign and can be a source of new activists. It also allows you to bring in other organisations or activists as keynote speakers, giving your campaign more attention.

Direct action: This type of action may involve a rally, march, demonstration or even a sit-in protest. This shows the visible presence your campaign has in a very public way. It is both highly engaging and empowering and can galvanise support in new places.

It is important that you strategize these actions in accordance with your campaign's objectives and to time them correctly. This is where you should develop your campaign plan in conjunction with a campaigns team.

Campaigning alone is not advised and it is essential for any campaign to develop a campaigns team before launching into actions. This can be done through the student-centred model that we discussed earlier; you should explore the relationships with potential allies and bring them on board.

You should undertake a mapping exercise to think about potential campaigners and how you could get them on board. Below is an example of a campaign team map:

Potential Campaigner	Why would they be interested?	How can you empower them?	What can they do?	What will they get out of it?

You should always have meaningful engagements with your campaign team, be thankful, respectful and mindful of each other. Remember that all decisions should be made as a team.

It is also important to be mindful that your campaigners are also students, and they should not be expected to give everything to the campaign (and neither should you!). Be mindful of timeframes for campaigns and organisation too, are people feeling pressured or put off by meetings occurring too frequently / infrequently? Finally and most vitally, always be mindful of *yourself* and do not be afraid to take a break.

How to make your campaign engaging?

One tried and tested method is to use the **Anger, Hope, Action model.** This model is useful in building support for your campaign and galvanising new supporters.

- **ANGER**: By 'anger', we mean making people feel an emotional response to an issue. This could be done through a range of the campaign techniques we discussed earlier. Methods of doing this could include talking to people, posting a video on social media or leafleting. It is important to clearly explain what the issue is and why people should be angered by it.
- **HOPE:** You then tell them about the potential for a positive outcome, thus giving them hope for change. Hope is important to ensure support for your campaign, so make sure that your achievement is believable. You would do this through some of the techniques discussed earlier.
- **ACTION**: Finally, get them on board by telling them what action they could take to see that positive change happen. Actions do not always have to be full involvement in the campaign team, it may be as simple as sharing a post on social media. Always be sure to empower people in your actions, no matter how big or how small.

You may not always engage everyone with your campaign, this is normal so do not worry about it! Campaigns will gain more success over time and some people just cannot be won over.

Communication and Progress

By this point in the campaign, you need to ensure that the logistics of the campaigns team is efficient and internally organised. Firstly, you want to double-check that everyone understands their roles within the campaign and that they have the support of one another to carry them out.

Communicate with each other clearly and in a way in which everyone in the team can access it. If you have a team meeting, you should minute it for anyone who didn't make it to know what went on. You could also have people video/voice call in to meetings they cannot make.

If you are going to use social media or other online modes of communication, make sure everyone can access it and is comfortable with it happening. Ensure communication is consistent so that everyone is kept informed.

You should also continuously monitor the campaign's progress, asking yourself if the campaign is keeping up with the campaign's outlined objectives and outcomes. Make sure to keep focused on your progress, across all aspects of the campaign, to ensure that it runs smoothly and preventing any potential barriers. It may be worth asking for feedback from fellow campaigners, or even from someone not involved in the campaign that can look with fresh eyes at how things are going.

Evaluation and what comes next

Evaluating your campaign is always important, you need to determine the extent to which your campaign achieved its objectives and if any further action is required.

You should have been monitoring your campaign throughout its duration, so hopefully there were no shortfalls! If there were any shortfalls, ask yourself and the campaigns team why this might have happened. This is a crucial opportunity to reflect upon the work you've done and to inform any future efforts you might want to make.

Campaigns are always a cycle and even though you might have achieved your initial desired outcome(s), you may not always immediately see the results take shape. That is why it is important to further research the outcomes and determine if your campaign had the desired impact. It may be the case, for example, that the campaign changed policy but the new policy has been poorly designed or implemented. Sometimes, the best outcome of a

campaign can be to encourage others to take the lead on it, so don't worry if you aren't able to see the results immediately. Sowing a seed can often lead to a mighty tree later down the line!

Finally, and maybe most importantly, celebrate your achievements! When the campaign is over, a celebration is a special way of showing thanks to all of those involved in the campaign. Your campaign team should feel appreciated and valued for all of their efforts. These campaigners feeling a strong sense of involvement may be inclined to help out in future too.

Hopefully, you should now have a bit more information about creating and running an effective campaign. Don't forget, the staff and officers at Strath Union are here to provide advice and support. Feel free to pop into Level 7 of Strath Union to discuss your plans, we're happy to help however we can.