

How to Start Your Local Campaign





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Remember: This document may be updated. We will announce it when it does happen, but it may be worth checking the website every now and then to see if there is an updated version with more info!



Food4Thought

Food4Thought is a campaign that aims to see all university campuses transition to being plant-based; whilst originating in the UK, we aim to support local campaigns internationally.

Our Vision

Our current food system is unsustainable. Animal farming and fishing accounts for 86% of all the farmland we use, but only contributes 18% of our global calories. Whilst being an inefficient means of producing 'food', the inclusion of animals in our food system is also extremely environmentally damaging (see '[The Science](#)' section on the [Food4Thought](#) website for more information).

In May 2019, the UK Parliament – and since then many universities – declared a climate emergency. We are facing an unprecedented environmental crisis, and switching to a plant-based food system is likely the largest action we can take to mitigate the worst impacts of it. Universities transitioning to being plant-based is a necessary, but not sufficient, step in fulfilling their responsibility in ensuring their students' safety, and contributing to wider systems sustainability.

Our Principles & Values

These the guidelines under which we act, and under which we ask any local Food4Thought campaigns to act.

1 – We are anti-speciesist!

We recognise that non-human animals deserve justice and we embody that in our actions.

2 – We are nonviolent!

We believe in a nonviolent future and so embody that in our actions as the most effective and just means of bringing about change.

3 – We set our aims on what is necessary!

Universities becoming plant-based is a necessary but not sufficient step in achieving environmental sustainability.

4 – We aim our message at the system!

We are all born into a toxic system, no individual is to blame.

5 – Universities have a responsibility!

Universities provide us with our collective understanding of the climate and ecological crisis which equips us with the power to act. This gives them the profound responsibility to mitigate its worst effects and fulfil their duty of care towards students.

6 – We welcome everyone to our campaign!

We want to see a future where everyone is considered an equal, and so we include everyone equally and with respect.

7 – We are decentralised!

Anyone who follows our principles and values can drive Food4Thought at their university – you do not need permission for any actions you take.



A Note on Non-Violence

Food4Thought acts under a strict principle of non-violence. We must show respect and care to others, recognising that it is the system that conditions us into certain behaviours and that other individuals are not our enemy. Violence, whether verbal or physical, attacks the individual. This may all sound obvious. However, we highly recommend doing further research before taking your campaign forward. It is key to fully understand the potential of nonviolent action in bringing about social change.

To get you started, we can recommend these videos:

- [The Success of Nonviolent Civil Resistance](#) - YouTube - 12 mins

We also strongly recommend that you attend an in-person training if you can, and encourage others at your university to as well. We do not currently have the resources to provide trainings, but there are groups that do. We would suggest Animal Rebellion and Extinction Rebellion, but if you cannot find one in your area then give us a call.

Nonviolence, Mass Participation and Non-human Animals

As part of practicing nonviolence, we exercise nonviolence towards non-human animals. Like humans, they matter morally, and we believe they should not be used by humans in any way. Whilst we welcome everyone to our campaign, we ask that as part of practicing non-violence, local campaigners do not consume or otherwise contribute to the use of animals as part of the Food4Thought campaign.

Our Message and How We Convey It

Food4Thought has a clear demand: for all food sold/provided on university campuses, facilities and property to be plant-based. This means nothing sourced from animals (i.e. meat, dairy, eggs, honey, gelatine etc) on menus, in shops or any other establishment providing food. However, **we do not necessarily include catered halls of residence**, although you are welcome to in your local campaigns. When conveying this message, we maintain a positive framing; for example, we would not use tagline such as 'ban animal products', instead we would use 'plant powered university' or something along these lines...always using the framing of positive plants rather than negative animal products.

We ask that local Food4Thought campaigns maintain the following messaging:

The demand is of the university, not of the individuals in it. For example, we tend not to use the phrase 'go vegan' on leaflets, signs etc as this focuses on individual people, whereas we are trying to change the university. A more accurate message could be 'plant-based university!'.

We want mass engagement in a student-led, grassroots movement. We must accept that no individual is perfect — we are all part of this toxic system. We must accept others into our movement, even if they do not currently live in moral alignment with our values.



Local Campaign: Getting Set Up

You want to start driving your university to become plant-based. What do you do?

First Steps: 1 – 10

1 – Read this guide!

Well done for getting this far!

2 – Check if Food4Thought already exists at your uni!

There might already be a Food4Thought campaign at your university. If you haven't seen them around campus then they've either only just started up or may need some help. Either way, get involved! You can find out where already existing local campaigns are on our website's '[Get Involved](#)' page.

3 – Sign the national petition!

The national team have created a [national petition](#). We have done this so that when local campaigns sit down with their universities (read on for more detail on this) they can show that the support for their campaign within the university (which you'll have because you're awesome!) exists within a national context.

4 – Give us a call!

Give us a call. Our contact details are in the last section 'Relationship With the National Team'. Update us on where you are at, what resources you have, how many people are on board, any ideas you have for building your campaign and any other relevant information. Also be sure to have some ideas on how we can help and support you! We'll give you more information on the call about some of the things in the document that can stand your campaign in good stead.

5 – Set up social media!

We would suggest setting up an Instagram and Facebook. [Here](#) is a guide and resources to help set these up. On Facebook, you can share your posts into any university, society and sports groups which you have access to. Remember to reply to any messages and comments you get on your posts/accounts.

You'll find graphics to use for social media posts in the 'Resources For Your Campaign' section further down.

6 – Start a local petition!

An effective and easy way to demonstrate to your university that your campaign has support is to start a local petition just for your university. Of course get as many people as possible to sign it (ideas for generating support in 'Building Campaign Support' section), but it is best to focus efforts on gaining student and staff signatures. It could be worth directing family and members of the public to the national petition.

To set up your local petition, we suggest using [www.change.org](#) to host your petition. [Here](#) is a template for the information you'll need for your local petition.

7 – Find other people!



Find people to campaign with you. This can be anyone and everyone: people on your course, the football team captain, the cleaners, professors, technicians, the fetish society regulars, anyone who wants to push for a plant-based university!

One way to do this is in person, just people you know, but you can also post on Facebook groups and other social medias relevant to your uni (i.e. society group pages, general university groups etc). A good place to start might be environmental and vegan societies, but expand beyond this – post in any group you can. [Here](#) is a template post if you need inspiration.

8 – Have your first campaign meeting!

Have an initial meeting with everyone who is already involved to bring everyone up to speed and begin to structure your campaign team. [Here](#) is a template for what you could discuss.

Hint: A good way to get people engaged is to ‘give’ them a responsibility. In other words, try and ensure that at the end of the meeting, everyone has some form of action point that they can work on before the next meeting. It is even better if you can get people into roles, rather than giving them tasks. Team members can own a role autonomously, and carry it out however they want (provided it abides by our principles and values).

Feel free to give us another call/send us a message after your meeting if you feel you need clarity/help/advice for anything!

9 – Prepare to declare!

At this stage, you want to be focusing on whether you have everything in place to declare the campaign. It could be smart to have a meeting at this point. In this meeting you should discuss the different aspects of the campaign that need to be in place before you can (or at least it would be wise to) publicly declare it. [Here](#) is a template for what you could discuss.

By the end of the meeting, you should be deciding whether you feel you are in a position to declare the campaign (if so, great, set a date or do it now), or whether you need a bit more time to iron things out.

For details on what the declaration could involve, see the next step ‘Declare the campaign!’.

Again, feel free to give us another call/send us a message after your meeting if you feel you need clarity/help/advice for anything!

10 – Declare your campaign!

Once you’re happy you are in a good place to officially launch your campaign, then it’s time to declare it!

Our vision of the declaration (although feel free to come up with your own way) involves 3 different aspects:

- **Official Declaration** - Send an email declaration to the Vice Chancellor and the Catering Operations Manager (template email linked [here](#)).
- **Social Media Announcement** - Send out a post announcing the campaign on any local campaign social medias, but also on anyone’s private social media if they agree.



- **Public Declaration** - Have some form of physical declaration. This could be anything from postering and flying around the university, to a speech on a megaphone in a busy area of the university.

The main function of the declaration is to begin to generate support and increase awareness among uni students and staff, but is mainly to begin the dialogue between the campaign and the university management. Therefore, probably the most crucial part of the declaration is the email/letter to the Vice Chancellor. This email/letter has 3 functions:

- **It declares the campaign** - essentially, we are here, this is why, and we aren't going away until you do this.
- **It prepares the university management for what to expect** - outlines the profound responsibility of universities in pioneering system change. It also outlines that the campaign will build momentum and support through grassroots organising to continually increase pressure on the university to change.
- **It asks for a meeting to open a dialogue** - an offer to open up a dialogue before taking any public-facing action or building up pressure. If you get the university management to agree to a meeting, book in with the engagement team and we will brief you on our suggested negotiation strategy.

Local Campaign: Longer Term Strategy

So, at this point you should be waiting to hear back from the Vice Chancellor as to whether they'll meet with you. If you do get a meeting, [here](#) are some tips for going into it.

Now, you want to lay out your longer term strategy. How this will work depends entirely on the level of cooperation of the university. [Here](#) is a guide on how to build your strategy. Don't be scared, **think big!**

[Here](#) is a document with ideas of galvanising support and gaining petition signatures that most people will be comfortable getting involved in, but please, come up with whatever wild and wacky events and actions you want to do!

Of course, it goes without saying: drop us a line if you need support in planning your longer term strategy. Also, **if you want to discuss stronger forms of action to take in pushing your campaign forward then give us a call!**

Resources For Your Campaign

These will be updated so check them regularly for new stuff:

Resources: [click me!](#)

Graphics and tiles you can use for social media posting and other campaign uses. Also, there are designs you can print off for leaflets, posters and stickers! If you wish to have these personalised to your university campaign, then get in touch.



The End Goal

The end goal of the campaign is plant-based university campuses. However, we need to remember to treat smaller achievements as victories and use them as ways to build momentum for more change. For example, if your university agrees to have one plant-based option every day, this build towards your goal. We should treat this victory not as a reason to slow down, but as a platform upon which we can build more momentum and create further change.

Relationship With the National Team

Our engagement team, made up of national team members Lauren and Lawrence, will be your first point of contact throughout your campaigning.

What if we hit a road block? What if there is a tension in the campaign team? What if a food outlet on campus is privately owned and the university doesn't have control?

We want local campaigners to feel as supported as possible. We will be here to answer any questions about strategy, resources etc and provide help on an as-needed basis. Come to us with any queries about your campaign or otherwise — we want to build healthy communities. No question is too silly and everything is worth asking. We are creating unprecedented change so the answers aren't always clear!

Ways to give us a shout:

Instagram - @food4thoughtuni [Facebook](#) Twitter - @food4thoughtuni

E-mail: food4thoughtcampaign@protonmail.com

If you reach out to us on any of these platforms, we'll put you in more direct contact with our engagement team.