

Dear Professor Lisa Roberts, The Climate Emergency Team, and The University of Exeter decision-makers.

We are writing to you because Be the Change and other students at the University of Exeter see action taken by this University as insufficient at tackling the climate crisis with the appropriate urgency, transparency and fairness required.

It has been three years since the University of Exeter declared an Environment and Climate Emergency. It has been four months since the world came to Glasgow for the COP26 Conference on Climate Change, where the University was proudly a prominent voice. Whilst these moments of commitment and high publicity are good, they also pass, and they do not create the long-term systemic changes we need. We cannot afford for the climate crisis to slip off the agenda.

The aim of this action is to reduce the disconnect and discontent between University decisions and students, and centre Be the Change's core values of accessibility, student-led change, and serious action in fighting the climate crisis. Below are 5 demands we and other students believe must be met in order for students to be satisfied that the University is working urgently towards a just, accessible and carbon neutral campus.

Following the initial success of our open letter in gaining traction with many students, but a disappointing lack of response from the institution, the Students' Guild wanted to work with us to slightly update our 5 demands and address the University again. **Be the Change, with the Students' Guild, will be sending this to the university on Thursday 3 March and request a response and open dialogue at the [panel event](#) concluding [Go Green Week](#) on Friday 4 March.**

We know that no single alteration and no single person can bring about the scale of change our planet needs. That is why we need to work together as a university community – across campuses, disciplines, and communities – to make personal, local, and far-reaching impacts.

*The climate crisis concerns all of us and therefore should involve all of us. **We are expecting a response.***

Demand 1 – Accelerate Exeter's Net Zero Target to 2030

The [2019 White Paper](#) pledged for the University of Exeter to achieve Net Zero by 2050. This is now out of date. As a world leading university in climate science, the University of Exeter must revise its Net Zero target to 2030, in line with the MET Office target.

Demand 2 – Give us a Decolonised and Transparent Climate Education

- (1) By September 2023 – every undergraduate and postgraduate taught student in every year of study should have the option of doing a module which includes content on climate education.
- (2) By September 2025 – every undergraduate and postgraduate taught degree programme should have at least one compulsory module which includes climate education.
- (3) When completing both (1) and (2) there must be a continued commitment to decolonise the curriculum and honour the importance of the indigenous and minority group voices within the climate justice movement.
 - a. Each University department must publish a report by the end of the academic year of their progress in decolonising the curriculum. This should be advertised and accessible to the students of that discipline.

- b. Each college must ask students to give feedback on the content of all modules in the context of recent decolonisation debates. This feedback should be published and accessible to all present and future students, with further remarks from the colleges on action taken in light of feedback.
- c. Decolonise the library and its content. Actions such as student book suggestions (the process of which should be clearly advertised); showcasing indigenous and minority works as well as non-traditional academic works at the front of the library; and the clear recognition of authors that are widely seen as pro-colonisation, xenophobic and/or racist next to their texts should be considered.

Demand 3 – Actively encourage sustainable food systems in outlets and catered accommodation

- (1) Reduce meat and dairy on campus in line with the 2019 White paper – any meat on campus should be sustainably and ethically sourced.
- (2) Subsidise plant based and sustainable options on campus and increase the number and quality of options. Support this with clear and prominent advertising.
- (3) Introduce traffic light system for the carbon emissions of food sold in all university-owned outlets, allowing people to make informed decisions about their consumption.
- (4) Prioritise local and sustainable catering companies to have access to our campus on open days and events like freshers’ week. We urge for new links and partnerships with local firms. Improving sustainability of products and support of our local economy.
- (5) Investment in a marketing campaign to highlight the above changes and stimulate conversations about this necessary dietary shift on campus. Ensure this conversation is student-centred, well-advertised and therefore accessible.

Demand 4 – Remove pollution from campus

- (1) By September 2025 - Ban single use plastic in campus outlets. Start to phase out single use plastic immediately. Ensure that EDI considerations are made during this process (i.e. the need of straws for some people with disabilities).
- (2) By September 2022 – install at least one set of recycling bins for food, paper and plastic in every building. Improve labelling around these bins with information on how to correctly recycle (to avoid contamination).
- (3) By September 2022 – increase glass recycling facilities in self-catered accommodation.
- (4) By September 2022 – install ashtrays outside every accommodation building.
- (5) By September 2022 – begin to improve the publicity of public transport options for students in Exeter.

Demand 5 – Empower student voices through representation in decision making forums and creating a physical space for organising and community building

- (1) A member of University Executive Board and the Environment and Climate Emergency team commit to meeting the Students Sustainability Alliance (SSA) at least once a term.
- (2) Invite a member of the SSA (or other student rep) to sit in and engage with forums where climate change work decisions are made – from college level through to Executive Board level.
- (3) Support students through the Guild’s full-time staff team and embedding sustainability in the long-term strategic goals of the Students’ Guild.
- (4) Create a physical space on campus (free from commercial outlets or pressure to study) for community building, organising and campaigning – it must be accessible, democratic, inclusive and permanent.

As a note, in the original version of this letter demand 5 included the demand for the Students' Guild to 'Employ a Vice President Sustainability at the Guild from September 2022, to raise the profile of the climate movement on campus'. After meetings between the Students' Guild and Be the Change it was agreed that replacing this demand with the new demand is a more effective way to fight for climate justice.

Thank you for taking the time to read our letter. We are really excited to hear the response from the University on Friday the 3 March, and to subsequently enter into an open and collaborative dialogue about our demands that will assist the University in becoming true leaders in climate justice. We hope that this can be the first step in a future of collaborative and effective partnership between the student body and the University.

Signed by,

Be the Change Society, University of Exeter Students' Guild and all the students and staff that have signed their [names here](#).