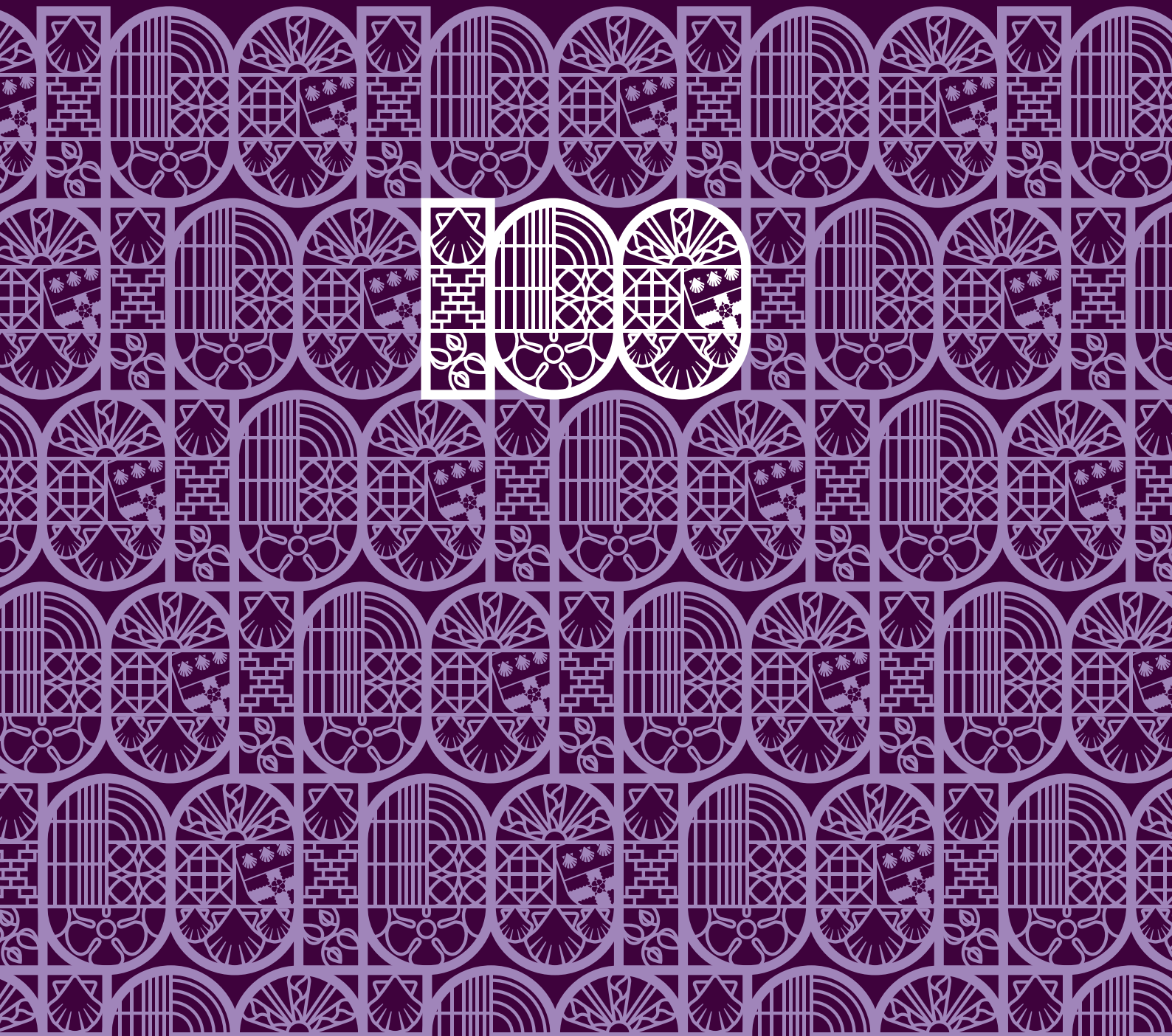


100 YEARS  **1926**
2026
UNIVERSITY OF READING

AT A GLANCE 2026





2026 marks a milestone – one hundred years ago, we were granted our Royal Charter and began the journey that has shaped the institution we are today. Our centenary year invites us to celebrate the achievements of generations before us and also to look ahead with clarity and conviction at the role we must play in a world that faces profound challenges.

Although 2026 marks a century since we became the University of Reading, our story stretches back much further. The foundations laid by our predecessor institutions have helped us to build a rich tradition of learning, research and community engagement. This heritage strengthens our sense of identity and gives depth to our ambitions for the future.

Today, Reading's purpose feels more vital than ever. Our research continues to deepen understanding of the defining issues of our time, including climate systems, food security, health and the economy. Our global partnerships and community of students from around 150 countries, on campuses across continents, demonstrate our commitment to being an international university.

Throughout this centenary year, our events and activities are bringing our community together. Students, colleagues, alumni, partners, supporters and our local and global communities are celebrating the many ways Reading changes lives, and taking action that will continue to have an impact for years to come.

This report showcases highlights from the past year, guided by the four core principles of our University Strategy. It also looks back at how these achievements and values are echoed through our history.

We are reaching the end of our current Strategy period, and we have achieved much of what we set out to do, despite the world being very different now than it was in 2020. In turn, we are working at pace to deliver a new vision and strategy that will guide us to 2040.

And as we enter our second century, we do so with optimism, determination and a strong sense of responsibility. Together, we will shape a better world for the century ahead.

PROFESSOR ROBERT VAN DE NOORT CBE DL
VICE-CHANCELLOR

March 2026



**In the top 200
world institutions.¹**



**University of
the Year for
Scholarships and
Bursaries 2026.²**



**Top 50 in the world
for action to support
the UN's Sustainable
Development Goals.³**



**Ranked 4th in the UK
for environmental
and ethical
performance.⁴**



**27,330 students
from around 150
countries.⁵**



**93% of graduates
are in work or
further study within
15 months of the end
of their course.⁶**

¹ The University of Reading was ranked =194th out of 1,503 institutions in the QS World University Rankings 2026

² The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2026

³ Ranked =50th, from 2,318 participating institutions, in the Times Higher Education Global Impact Rankings 2025

⁴ People and Planet University League Table 2025/26

⁵ HESA 2024/25 Student Record and Aggregate Offshore Record, figures rounded to the nearest five

⁶ Graduate Outcomes Survey 2021/22



Community

The University is a diverse and inclusive community using its knowledge and skills to solve problems and create opportunities for the benefit of people and the planet.



Commitment to wellbeing

Reading received a University Mental Health Charter Award in 2025, recognising work to support students and staff. As part of our Charter commitments, a Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy has now been launched to enable better coordination and improvement of services and resources for everyone in our community. To help champion mental health and normalise conversations about it, senior leaders last year appeared in a film produced by the Students' Union exploring men's mental health to discuss their own experiences.



Global connections

Social events for international students help them to settle in and meet others from their home countries. As part of our welcome activities, hundreds of students enjoyed free buffets with traditional food from seven different regions of the world, plus games designed to start conversations, build bridges and champion togetherness. Together with Reading Students' Union, student societies and local community groups, we also provided the space for our home and international students to come together at several cultural events, celebrating cultural and religious festivals.



Photo credit: Samar Ihsan

Making memories

People make our University, and it's their stories that are at the heart of our centenary celebrations this year. Memories gathered from staff, students, alumni and our neighbours have been used to create an immersive theatre performance premiering on our campus this year, and a new mural marking our centenary. Our partnership with The Friends of the University was key to ensuring the memories and community we have reconnected are not lost beyond 2026, creating a legacy for the future.

"I will carry every memory from that time in my heart: the view from my window at Bridges Hall, the peaceful lake at Whiteknights Campus with the duck family that lived there, the crisp ice on the grass during cold winter mornings, the colourful autumn trees"

Deena Alomari
Reading graduate



Across all levels of study: 52% of our students are women, 39% of our students are from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background, 18% have declared a disability¹

LOOKING BACK



Over 100 years of international students

We have been welcoming international students for more than 100 years, with the first arriving in 1904. Notable examples include Adalat Kamal, who studied at our School of Art in the 1930s. She was among the first to receive a scholarship from the Egyptian government to study art in the UK, since Egypt had no formal higher art education for women at the time. Reading researchers looking through the University's archives for our centenary have found reference to a Dr Adalat Kamal later founding the Egyptian Association for Folklore with pioneering Egyptian artist Reeya Al-Nimr.



Training clinicians

As well as supporting mental health on campus, the University contributes to addressing challenges in the community through the Charlie Waller Institute. The institute was founded with Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and the Charlie Waller Trust in 2008 and trains clinicians in the latest evidence-based psychological treatments. It has successfully trained more than 2,700 practitioners over the past 15 years.



1,000+ students studying at UoR Malaysia for the first time in 2025/26

Excellence

We transform lives by focusing on excellence and innovation in education and research locally, nationally and globally, creating an environment where our students and staff can excel academically and personally.



AI for the NHS

An AI system developed at Henley Business School is now used by the NHS to predict which patients are most likely to miss hospital appointments. Working with Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, the team created an AI model that identifies individual barriers such as travel difficulties or language needs. Staff can then offer tailored support, helping reduce high-risk missed appointments by 40% and saving an estimated £250,000 in 2023/24.



Teaching that's for everyone

A project challenging orthodoxies in our curriculum has driven meaningful, community led change across Reading, helping staff create more inclusive, representative teaching. Through collaboration with students, the cross-institutional Decolonising the Curriculum team has reshaped practice and strengthened belonging across disciplines. Their impact was recognised by Advance HE with the 2025 Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence.



Smarter ways to make yoghurt

Reading researchers spent two years working with Yeo Valley to make yoghurt that tastes better and creates less waste. The sustainable dairy partnership applied food-science research directly to production, delivering real environmental and financial benefits. It was named Best Knowledge Transfer Partnership at the Innovate UK Awards 2025.



Investing in our students

From our pioneering Global Sustainability Leaders Scholarship programme to our scholarships and bursaries for refugees and other sanctuary seekers, our financial support for capable students is helping them to reach their academic potential. That's why we've been named University of the Year for Scholarships and Bursaries in The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2026.

LOOKING BACK



Healthcare innovation

From pioneering inventions, such as the fibroscope in 1950 which contributed to the development of keyhole surgery, to ground breaking research identifying the health risks of lead in petrol, Reading's research and innovation have positively impacted the health of the nation for the last 100 years.



Churning back time

Reading students have always benefitted from hands-on practical teaching. Our London Road campus was once home to the Department of Dairying, where students could learn manufacturing techniques. One of the cheese presses from the Department can still be seen in the Museum of English Rural Life on the modern-day campus.



Top 200 (194th) in the QS World University Rankings 2026.



=27th in the UK in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2026



Ranked at number 1 in the UK and among the top 20 universities in the world for the study of Agriculture and Forestry¹



98% of our research is of international standing²

1 QS World University Rankings by Subject 2025

2 REF 2021, combining the University's world leading, internationally excellent and internationally recognised submissions

Sustainability

We work together to make the best use of our resources, to ensure financial sustainability and to play a leading part in tackling climate change.



Food for Europe's future

Reading is leading major Europe-wide research projects to build a more sustainable and resilient food system. Our researchers are developing greener ways to produce meat and dairy by testing alternative livestock feeds, while also revealing how shifts in pollinator populations could impact farming, businesses and communities. This work strengthens Europe's ability to produce nutritious food in ways that protect ecosystems and support long-term environmental and economic stability.



Sustainability leadership

The University has taken over as host of the International Universities Climate Alliance secretariat for 2026–2028. This hub enables universities to collaborate and share the latest climate research with the public and is the latest step in Reading showing leadership on the issue of environmental sustainability. It adds to our pioneering Global Sustainability Leader Scholarships launched for 2025/26, efforts to incorporate environmental learning into teaching in all subjects and regular events such as Green Festival that bring information on green careers and climate action onto campus.



Growing minds

To mark our centenary year, we are transforming our historic walled garden into a new Outdoor Learning Garden at our Whiteknights campus. This space will host a sheltered outdoor classroom for all-weather learning, a Perspex-fronted pond and experimental growing plots. As well as a place for our own students to learn, community groups and schools will be invited to connect with the natural world and learn ways to protect our environment. The University is covering core building costs, and support from donors will transform the garden into a truly vibrant, inspiring and unique space for learning and discovery.



Improving how we eat

The popularity of new meal plans that provide students with affordable and quality food have helped more than double sales in our campus eateries over the last five years. The model focuses on nutritious, plant-forward menu options that have increased student satisfaction and support our environmental commitments as well as being more financially robust.

LOOKING BACK



Breaking ground research

In 1946, The Soil Association was co-founded by Reading alumna Lady Eve Balfour, who was one of the first women to study agriculture at an English university. Soil research continues at Reading, with our Soil Research Centre, bringing together researchers to explore the challenges of this key resource.



Inspired by nature

Eliza Chattaway taught primary education in the early 20th Century at the University College of Reading, a precursor to the University. She was an outdoor learning pioneer, drawing inspiration from Reading's green spaces to teach children about the world around them. Miss Chattaway's legacy lives on at Reading, both through the research into outdoor education that continues at the Institute of Education today, and our wider climate and environmental work.



1,000 Climate Ambassadors engaged with more than 1,600 education settings – more than 1 in 15 of all the education settings in England.



Ranked =30th in the world for sustainability¹



University income grew by £9.9m to £363.6m in 2024/25, driven by tuition fees and education contracts

¹ QS Sustainability Rankings 2026

Engaged University

We work with partners in a coordinated way to play a positive role in the life of our local communities and use these local connections to strengthen our work around the world. Public engagement and consultation, including in research, are central to how we live and work.



Charity of the Year

In March 2024, the University launched a Charity of the Year scheme. Led by a team of volunteers working across the University, the scheme allows a charity partner to engage with and be supported by the University in a variety of ways across an academic year. Daisy's Dream was chosen to be our second charity partner for 2025/26. The charity provides vital support to children, young people and their families in Berkshire who have experienced bereavement or are preparing for loss.



Research powered by communities

We're helping local people explore the questions that matter most to them through research. Working with the British Science Association, our Community Led Research Pilot supported community organisations in Reading and Slough to design and run their own research on issues such as environmental action, identity and wellbeing. Through close collaboration with groups often under-represented in research, the pilot showed how local knowledge can shape more relevant, accessible and impactful science.



Hello neighbour

Our annual Hello Neighbour campaign supports students living in the community, providing them with advice to live positively off campus and be a good neighbour while making residents aware of our activity and how to get in touch with the University. This year we hit the streets over six days, delivering over 1,600 leaflets to students and postcards to local residents.



8,000 visitors to our 2025 Community Festival



200+ hours of free room booking space provided to local charities and community groups



415 students volunteered their time to community projects through the University's Reading Experience and Development (RED) Award

LOOKING BACK



Raising and giving

For more than 50 years, until around the late 1990s, students took to the streets of Reading with costumes, stunts, and festivities in RAG Parades to raise money for charity – creating unforgettable memories and a real buzz in the town. Reading Students' Union is reviving this much-loved tradition for our Community Festival weekend in May 2026.



Built on philanthropy

The University was founded on the generosity of George W. Palmer and Lady Wantage, leading local figures who in 1904 donated £200,000 to our endowment fund which laid the groundwork for Reading becoming a university. Over the last 100 years, the University has given back and invested in our community, now contributing approximately £1bn to the UK economy annually, with half that figure retained locally.



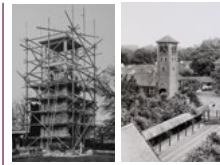
1860
The School of Art is established.



1900
Edith Mary Sutton establishes the first scholarship at Reading, worth £20 a year.



1908
Edith Morley is appointed as Professor of English Language, making her the first female professor in England.



1924
The memorial clock tower is dedicated to the men and women of the University who fell during the First World War



1934
The Shell student newspaper is launched, renamed The Spark in 1988.



1945
The Administrative Staff College, later Henley Management College, opens at Greenlands and merges with the University in 2008 to form Henley Business School.

1892
University College Reading is created from the merger of the former Schools of Art and Science to provide higher education for the town's people.

1905
The Great Hall is built on the new London Road campus.



1912
The Research Institute in Dairying is established at University College Reading by the Board of Agriculture.

1926
We receive our Royal Charter, and the University of Reading is created.



1939
On the eve of the Second World War, Reading's first Vice-Chancellor W.M. Childs attends the unveiling of his portrait at Wantage Hall.



1947
The 320 acre historic Whiteknights Park estate is purchased.

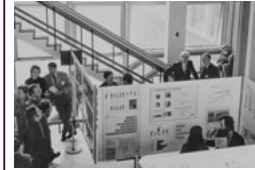
1950
Professor Harold Hopkins invents the fibroscope, a technical innovation that contributed to the development of keyhole surgery.

1957
Her Majesty The Queen, Elizabeth II, pays her first visit to the University to open the Faculty of Letters (now known as the Edith Morley building).

1967
Rock band Pink Floyd play the Great Hall (apparently to boos). This does not stop them from returning in 1969 – twice.



1975
The Department of Typography is opened.



1989
We are the first university to win the Queen's Award for Export Achievement.

1951
Mary Kirkus, the University Librarian, is one of the first to respond to Hiroshima University's plea for books to help rebuild its library.



In 2011, tiles from buildings destroyed in the blast, were sent to Reading in recognition of our help.

1965
The University merges with the National College of Food Technology to form a Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences.



1973
Whiteknights House is occupied by student protesters angry at the erosion of student grants by inflation and increased fees.



1985
The International Cocoa Quarantine is founded at Reading, beginning our journey as the protectors of chocolate.

1991
Our Students in Schools programme is launched, helping raise children's aspirations and encourage them to continue into higher education.

2007
Reading alumnus Michael Rosen is made Children's Laureate.



2012
Fine Art alumnus David Watkins designs medals for the 2012 Olympic Games.

2019
£40m refurbishment of the Library is completed.



2024
EarthCARE satellite is launched. This will revolutionise our understanding of the role that clouds and aerosol particles play in climate change.

2008
The Charlie Waller Institute is launched to train clinicians in evidence-based psychological practice.

2016
The Museum of English Rural Life, founded in 1951, re-opens after a major refurbishment.



2016
Official launch of the University of Reading Malaysia.



2023
University of Reading achieves University of Sanctuary status.

2026
We celebrate our centenary of creating possibilities for tomorrow.