



University of
Reading

AT A GLANCE
2025



As we approach our centenary in 2026, work is progressing apace on a programme of celebration and reflection. We are proud to reach our hundredth year, but it is not grounds to be backward looking. Indeed, we must always look ahead to the advancements that will help our University thrive in difficult times.

The same is most certainly true when tackling the climate crisis. Hot on the heels of news that 2024 was the hottest year on record, Reading research has found that the rate of ocean warming has quadrupled over the past four decades.

That's why we have launched our boldest initiative ever – the UK's largest sustainability-focused undergraduate scholarship programme. With 400 undergraduate scholarships offered each year, we will support the brightest minds who share our passion for the planet to spearhead the next generation of environmental leadership. The new Global Sustainability Leaders programme offers not just generous financial support but also a distinctive range of learning, networking and career-building opportunities.

This ambitious programme is a natural progression for the UK's Sustainable University of the Year, and reflects our continuing commitment to tackling the defining challenge of our time.

This new programme comes as research shows that sustainability increasingly influences students' university preferences more than rankings.

In this way, we offer an alternative view of a next generation university – one where values and real-world impact form the basis of the kind of innovation that will reshape the higher education landscape. It is with this bold vision for the future that we approach our hundredth year.

PROFESSOR ROBERT VAN DE NOORT CBE
VICE-CHANCELLOR

March 2025



£1bn

contributor to the
UK economy¹



5th

in the UK for
supporting
UN global goals⁴



Sustainable University of the year²



89.8%

of graduates in full-time
work are in **professional
or managerial roles**
15 months after graduation⁵



In the top 20%

of world institutions
for more than five
years in a row³



26,240

students from around
160 countries⁶

¹ The Economic Impact of the University of Reading, Hatch Urban Solutions, commissioned by the University of Reading.

² Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2025.

³ The University of Reading was ranked equal 172nd out of 1,503 institutions in the QS World University Rankings 2025. We have been ranked in the top 20% in the 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 rankings.

⁴ THE Global Impact Rankings 2024.

⁵ Graduate Outcomes Survey 2020/21, based on first degree/other undergraduate, postgraduate (taught), and postgraduate (research) responders. Defined as Standard Occupation Classification groups 1, 2 and 3.

⁶ HESA 2023/24 Student Record and Aggregate Offshore Record, figures rounded to the nearest five.

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.

A place to be together

In turbulent times, it's more important than ever for the University to be a beacon of hope for our community. The University's Peace and Unity programme was developed in 2024 to bolster our collective resilience and commitment to peace during global conflicts.

We created spaces for dialogue and understanding. Support services were strengthened and made more accessible, enabling students and staff to find help when needed. Cultural celebrations, including Christmas Carol services, Lunar New Year gatherings and Winter celebrations, served as bridges between communities.

It's good to talk

Weekly English Conversation Cafés bring together students and staff for an informal and friendly chat over lunch in our Global Study Lounge. The sessions not only help boost students' confidence in conversational English but develop a sense of belonging and friendships too. Online sessions have been added to the rota to give students in Malaysia and China the same opportunity to hone their skills and meet people across borders.



These cross-campus efforts ensured events that can highlight differences were instead opportunities for togetherness and mutual understanding.



This initiative is an example of our renewed vision to be a truly global university, with work taking place at our international campuses to strengthen our presence and influence in these regions.

Meanwhile, the student-led British Sign Language Club is taking language learning beyond the classroom, with get-togethers that give learners the chance to practise signing and film screenings exploring Deaf culture, supporting our inclusive values as a University.



Supporting our diverse community

Our Diversity Fund has enabled projects including enhanced staff training on supporting students with specific learning needs, improving accessibility to sport, and holding a wellbeing week on campus.

We have also signed up to Level 2 of the Government's Disability Confident Scheme, which aims to break down barriers in recruitment and career progression, fulfilling a key target in our Disability and Neurodiversity Review.

Rewarding our staff

Our first ever Professional Services Awards launched last year. Eleven people were shortlisted for prizes across four categories. Community volunteers, climate educators and mentors were all recognised at the awards, which helped bring recognition for support and professional teams in line with University awards for teaching and research.



3,900 members of staff.

Of these, **60%** identify as female and **23%** are from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds.¹



Across all levels of study **53%** of our students are women, **38%** are from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds and **16%** have declared a disability.²

¹ 2023/24 HESA staff records.

² HESA 2023/24 Student Record and Aggregate Offshore Record, figures rounded to the nearest five.

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.

Investment in world-class research

Our long-term commitment to building and strengthening research excellence is a core part of our mission. The actions we take now will ensure that we're well positioned to deliver the knowledge and solutions required to address the challenges of the future.

By extending the University's farming resources and launching our Agrifood Futures Strategy, we are enabling our researchers to drive change

in the way we produce, consume and think about food. Similarly, the construction of the new European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts headquarters, due to open on our Whiteknights campus in 2027, will further strengthen our expertise in weather and climate change.

We continue to work with our partners, including the National History Museum, Kew Gardens, the British



Museum and Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, to deliver study and research opportunities to students, academics and local people. These collaborations extend the impact of our research and create unique opportunities for innovation that benefit communities here in Reading and across the world.



Sustainable cocoa farming

Greener cocoa farming is now possible in Ghana thanks to research co-developed by Reading crop and soil scientists. Together with Ghanaian partners, they worked to promote sustainable soil management, resulting in improved soil health, greater cocoa yields and private sector interest.

Reducing food poverty

Reading researchers are involved in a project to address food poverty in culturally diverse disadvantaged communities across the UK. Through close work and co-creation with local people, the project is improving access to healthy, sustainable food and empowering communities to have agency over their diets.



Tackling global challenges

Reading rose to joint 28th in the world and 5th in the UK in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024 – our highest ever position. The rankings score universities for their work supporting the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which each focus on a different global issue.

Standout scores were achieved for work supporting sustainable production and consumption, life on land and climate action. This recognised our innovative and environmentally friendly menus in campus eateries and work by our grounds team to preserve biodiversity on our campuses.



TEF Silver Award for teaching excellence¹



Ranked at **35** out of 157 UK institutions by **research power**²



Joint 24th in the UK³



98% of our research is of **international standing**⁴



¹ Teaching Excellence Framework 2023.

² REF 2021 analysis of the quality and quantity of research by Times Higher Education.

³ Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2025.

⁴ 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 our part in tackling climate change.

A year of awards and recognition

For years, Reading has been at the forefront of environmental efforts, achieving some truly impressive milestones. And we can rightfully claim to be a leader in sustainability, after a year that saw multiple accolades for all aspects of our environmental sustainability work.

We were named the inaugural Sustainable University of the Year award in The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide. Citing our reduction of carbon emissions by almost 60 per cent since 2009 and waste by 35 per cent, the Guide the University had "made an impressive headway towards its ambition of being one of the greenest universities in the world".

This latest title joins multiple other awards in 2024, including winner of the London Higher Award for Outstanding Contribution to Sustainability Leadership, fourth place in the People and Planet League 2024/25 and a Green Flag award for our stunning Whiteknights campus – home to 2,217 different wild species – for an incredible 14th year running!



New scholarship to support future green leaders

The University is proud to launch the pioneering Global Sustainability Leaders programme. This exciting new undergraduate scholarship scheme is focused on creating a community of global sustainability leaders of the future. We will be offering up to 400 scholarships a year for high-achieving students from the UK and overseas. Open to every subject and discipline, each scholar will receive £6,000 a year plus access to opportunities including developing knowledge and leadership skills relevant to addressing climate and nature issues, building networks and dedicated careers support.



Global Sustainability Leaders Scholarships

Find out more at rdg.ac/gsl-scholarship

First anniversary for Climate Ambassadors

Our groundbreaking Climate Ambassadors scheme marked one-year since the granting of £2 million of government funding to make the programme available across every education setting in England. Launched in 2022, over 800 ambassadors have brought their expertise, knowledge and enthusiasm to almost 1,200 settings.



“They were engaged throughout and were very excited about all the possible actions we could take and what we had already achieved as a school.”

Tracey Willer (Sustainability Lead)
Roydon Primary

CLIMATE AMBASSADORS



99% of waste diverted from landfill, with a 62% recycling rate¹



Ranked 3rd worldwide for responsible consumption and production²



Awarded Fairtrade University Two-Star status³

1 University Sustainability Report 2023/24.
2 THE Global Impact Rankings 2024.
3 University Sustainability Report 2023/24.

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.

Participatory Action Research

A collaboration between the University, Scottish Community Development Centre, Institute for Voluntary Action Research and the NHS is having a significant impact on addressing health inequalities in the region. Community Participatory Action Research (CPAR) delivers training and mentoring to community researchers for voluntary sector organisations. Since 2020, CPAR has focused on the health impacts of COVID in Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, the cost-of-living crisis and health inequalities.

This programme equips organisations to undertake research in and with their own communities, giving more control to those that are living and experiencing these health inequalities. It also provides evidence which helps local health and care services to know how best to design, deliver and improve services.



So far, just under 100 community researchers, mainly across the South-East England, have been trained through the CPAR programme.

Dr Esther Oenga, the University's CPAR Training Lead, says: "Communities are experts of their problems and solutions. Their voices are central and no longer be missed throughout the research process. Community researchers are a great asset, and their skills are extremely valuable to community-centred research."

Outdoor classrooms to inspire

New outdoor classrooms at two Shinfield primary schools opened in November 2024, coinciding with Outdoor Classroom Day. The University worked with the schools, and particularly the school children to develop the sites and best meet their needs.

The new habitat spaces will inspire younger generations to help nurture and protect our environment, regular access to nature and the chance to learn through play will allow them to connect with it in a new way.



Museums for the next generation

Young people in Reading are helping to transform our museums. The Youth Panel at the Museum of English Rural Life, made up of young people aged 14–18, works on a variety of exciting projects that influence Reading's culture and heritage sector.

The opportunity helps to build their transferable skills and gain behind-the-scenes museum experience working with museum professionals – as well as challenging us to deliver a museum experience that can captivate visitors of all generations.

Meanwhile, over 18,000 visitors explored a major exhibition of art and artefacts on monsters and myths, co-curated by Reading professors and held in Reading Museum. The exhibition aimed to engage young people in museum experiences, using ancient mythology and modern reinterpretations to challenge perceptions of difference.



1,571 students developing their extracurricular skills by taking part in the **Reading Experience and Development (RED) award**¹



Over 4,000 visitors to our 2024 **Community Festival**²



Over 150 Thrive Mentors supporting our students³

¹ Based on internal data.

² Based on internal data.

³ Based on internal data.

An exceptional learning experience

We continue to innovate to ensure that every Reading student can access world class teaching and excellent facilities that inspire and prepare our graduates for a changing world.



Bringing historic printing to life

A new workshop means that Reading's distinctive collection of printing presses can be used for student learning and research, bringing the history of printing to life. The workshop includes reconstructions of 15th century presses, hand presses from the 19th century and wooden and metal type in various languages and even ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. Students can operate some of the presses themselves or see them in action, with some modules designed to encourage this and take advantage of this unique collection.

Quality education, student approved

Students feel heard at Reading and think that the University acts on what they tell us. That was the resounding feedback from the most recent National Student Survey of final year undergraduates, as we improved our scores on student voice measures. In fact, we improved our scores on six of the seven key survey themes and maintained last year's score on the seventh. Students were happy with the quality of their course too, with 80% responding positively.



Shaping the future University of Reading graduate

Working with students, we are reviewing and refreshing our graduate attributes guidance, expressing the knowledge, skills and qualities that we as a university community collectively agree students should gain by the time they graduate, whatever their chosen course of study. Students understand better what's expected of them, improving outcomes. Employers know the skills and knowledge they can expect from a Reading graduate too.

Preparing students for an AI-enhanced future

AI is present in our lives like never before. Its potential is clear, and so too are the possible threats to academic integrity. Support for students in using generative AI tools effectively and appropriately is emerging at Reading. We are empowering staff to navigate its evolving impact on teaching, learning, and assessment. This ensures they can confidently guide students on how to use AI in a way that's appropriate and enhances their learning, without misusing the available technology. The discussion is ongoing, as GenAI is reshaping learning, redefining teachers' roles, and raising questions about assessment and independent learning.



THE QUEEN'S
ANNIVERSARY PRIZES
FOR HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION
2021