

## Guidelines on programme handbooks and programme handbook template

### Introduction

1. These guidelines and the associated *Programme Handbook Template* relate to the undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes and programme structures being delivered in the Session 2017-18.
2. They have been informed by the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, in particular, *Part C: Information about higher education provision* (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-c>), which was published in March 2012.

### The aim of programme handbooks

3. Programme handbooks are intended to provide specific information on the relevant School and how it supports its degree programmes. The aims of programme handbooks include acting as a guide to the programme, providing students with advice on how to get the best out of their studies and providing information about the programme structure and content. More general information about the University and key academic policies and procedures can be found in Essentials, <http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials> and <http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials/the-important-stuff.aspx>. It is the responsibility of students to familiarise themselves with their programme handbook and Essentials, and to use them as a reference when required.
4. Programme handbooks are intended to complement the formal description of the key components of programmes provided in the relevant Programme Specifications and Further Programme Information (which contains non-contractual information previously included in the Programme Specification). Neither the Programme Handbook nor the Further Programme Information forms part of a student's Terms and Conditions with the University.

### Production and publication of programme handbooks

5. All programme handbooks should be produced to a common format; handbooks will be produced by each School in respect of the programmes for which it is responsible.
6. The responsibility for joint and shared programmes lies with the relevant Board of Studies. Schools may wish to produce a single handbook for such a programme or they may cover the programme in two handbooks relating to the two appropriate subject areas. However, in the latter circumstance, students must receive both subject handbooks and both of the handbooks must include a link to the programme specification website. Please include in the handbook(s) the name of the responsible co-ordinator or co-ordinators.
7. Programme handbooks should be published to students each year either online or in hard copy. When publishing online-only, Schools should bear in mind accessibility issues; for example, in relation to students with disabilities.
8. Schools should maintain an accurate archive of programme handbooks for each cohort of students for seven years post-graduation. Electronic copies should be sent to the Centre for Quality Support and Development ([cqsd-tandl@reading.ac.uk](mailto:cqsd-tandl@reading.ac.uk)) each year.

## The programme handbook template

9. The University Board for Teaching and Learning recommends that undergraduate and taught postgraduate programme handbooks should contain the elements outlined in the *Programme Handbook Template*. Within the common framework, considerable flexibility is possible, to allow for the differing needs of particular subject areas and Schools.
10. However, certain essential items should normally appear in all handbooks, and are indicated as such. In addition, four generic, specially written sections are provided and should appear in all handbooks: (1) the Student Charter; (2) Working with Academic Integrity, (3) an Overview of 'Essentials', (4) Key academic policies and procedures; (5) RUSU information.

## Scope for variation

11. Schools may issue undergraduate programme handbooks at Part 1 that encompass all parts of the degree programme. Some Schools may wish to issue a separate handbook for each Part of the degree programme in order to retain maximum flexibility within the structure of the programme. Schools may therefore opt for:
  - a separate handbook for each Part of the degree programme; or
  - one handbook for Part 1, and another for Parts 2 and 3; or
  - one handbook covering the entire programme.
12. In respect of taught postgraduate programmes, Schools may opt either for:
  - a separate handbook for each taught postgraduate programme they deliver; or
  - a joint handbook which covers a suite of cognate programmes.
13. In addition, some Schools produce a School Handbook comprising all school related information, including programme information, which is updated annually. A general School Handbook comprising School based information, with separate programme handbooks updated annually is also acceptable practice.
14. The important thing is that all relevant information is communicated to students in the most appropriate way. If a handbook covers more than one Part of the programme, annual supplements should be provided to update staff lists, key dates etc. where necessary.

# Programme Handbook

[The University Board for Teaching and Learning recommends that undergraduate and taught postgraduate programme handbooks should contain the elements outlined in this document. The items marked \* should normally appear in all handbooks. Text which appears in bold [...] underneath section headings has been provided as guidance for staff.]

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\* **Version/Date**

[The inclusion of a statement of which year/cohort this account of the programme applies to is mandatory.]

\* **Alternative formats**

[To be included in programme handbooks. The Disability Advisory Service can provide advice to Schools about accessible formats where requested.]

The material in this handbook can be provided in alternative media. Please discuss your requirements with XXX (Tel: XXX or email [XXX@reading.ac.uk](mailto:XXX@reading.ac.uk)).

\* **Aim of Programme Handbooks**

[To be included in programme handbooks]

The aim of this Programme Handbook is to provide specific information on the School of XXX and how it supports its degree programmes as well as other sources of important information.

More general information about the University and key academic policies and procedures can be found in Essentials (<http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials> & <http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials/the-important-stuff.aspx>), further details of which are provided later in this handbook.

It is the responsibility of students to familiarise themselves with the Programme Handbook and with the content of Essentials, and to use them as a reference when required. **It is particularly important that you read (or familiarise yourself with) the key academic policies and procedures listed in the *Overview of 'Essentials' and Key Academic Policies and Procedures* later in this handbook, since they govern important aspects of your programme and may therefore have a significant impact on your studies and the successful completion of your degree.**

\* **Communication**

[The University has agreed that email is the default mode of communication between staff and students. Each School, however, may also decide to use other forms of communication. In addition to the standard information, given below, Schools should include information on the location of pigeon-holes for staff and students, on notice boards, and other forms of communication. Information on how and when to obtain programme timetables should also be provided.]

Students should note that email is the default means of communication between staff and students. Students must use their official University email address when communicating with the University. Please note the following:

- the University guarantees that your University of Reading email account will be available to you for the entire duration of your studies;
- the University guarantees that suitable, supported email software will be available to you for the entire duration of your studies;
- the University offers an email service to standards of availability, reliability, performance and security which it determines and which are under its own control;

- email sent from non-University mail accounts may be classified as SPAM and hence not read.

Information is also provided electronically using the Blackboard Learn portal ([/www.bb.reading.ac.uk/](http://www.bb.reading.ac.uk/)), where students can find detailed information on modules and school specific information; the RISIS web portal ([www.risisweb.reading.ac.uk/si/sits.urd/run/siw\\_lgn](http://www.risisweb.reading.ac.uk/si/sits.urd/run/siw_lgn)), where students can find personal information; and Essentials (<http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials>).

Teaching staff and students are **expected** to check their University email account, Blackboard Learn portals and other electronic methods of communication on a daily basis, and to respond to messages as appropriate. Students are **required** to check their University email accounts at least once a week.

### **Term time addresses and phone numbers**

All students are required to maintain their student record via the RISISweb Portal ([www.risisweb.reading.ac.uk](http://www.risisweb.reading.ac.uk)). This includes entering an up-to-date local contact address (i.e. your term-time address) and (where possible) mobile phone numbers. It is very important that we have these details in case of an emergency and to send, or forward, correspondence to you if needed.

### **Me@Reading Student portal**

Current students have access to the Me@Reading Student portal which is an all-encompassing web platform, where you can access RISIS, Blackboard, university events, your inbox, tailored content and more.

What the portal does:

- Makes it easier for you to find interesting news, events and articles, relevant to you, from careers events to alumni stories. So you won't miss out on the exciting stuff your department is doing, or the event you wouldn't have known about otherwise.
- Keep everything you need in one place; no more opening multiple tabs for RISIS, Blackboard, or your inbox.

Find more information on the portal at <http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials.aspx>.

### \* **Disclaimer**

**[Given the increased likelihood of disputes about the delivery of programmes in the context of the student fee and student finance arrangements, it is essential that the standard disclaimer is used, and reproduced in full, at the beginning (preferably on the inside front cover). The standard paragraph provided below is a guide for the convenience of students and staff. ]**

Formal Ordinances and Regulations are given in the University Calendar (<http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/Calendar/>), and programme requirements in the Programme Specification (available at [www.reading.ac.uk/progspecs/](http://www.reading.ac.uk/progspecs/)), and in relevant module descriptions ([www.info.reading.ac.uk/module/](http://www.info.reading.ac.uk/module/)); should there be, or appear to be, any conflict between statements in this handbook and the Ordinances, Regulations, Programme Specifications or module descriptions, the latter shall prevail.

Although the information in this Handbook is accurate at the time of publication, aspects of the programme and of School practice may be subject to modification and revision. The University reserves the right to modify the programme in order to reflect best practice and academic developments for the benefit of the students, to improve the programme and your experience of it, to meet the requirements of external or accrediting bodies, as a result of staff changes, or changes to the law. In such circumstances, revised information will be issued. Information provided by the School in the course of the year should therefore be regarded, where appropriate, as superseding the information contained in the handbook.

Please keep this handbook available as you will need to refer to it throughout your programme.

## **\*List of Contents**

[A clear and complete contents page is essential, preferably divided into sections for increased clarity and legibility. If the Handbook is large, subject areas and Schools may wish to consider including an index to the contents.]

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# \*Reading Student Charter

[The Student Charter must appear in full in all programme handbooks.]

## Partners in Learning

Staff and students have worked together to develop this charter that clearly sets out what we all expect of each other. It recognises the importance of an effective partnership commitment, in which the University and its staff have professional obligations but where students are also responsible for themselves as learners and as individuals.

### Students expect the University

- to provide an excellent and varied learning experience;
- to deliver degrees with relevant content informed by the latest research;
- to provide access to learning resources and facilities that allow you to excel;
- to offer opportunities to gain knowledge and skills useful for life beyond University;
- to support students' professional development and access to career information, advice and guidance;
- to provide a broad range of social, cultural, sporting and co-curricular activities;
- to facilitate opportunities to express views which are considered and responded to.

### Students expect staff

- to teach in an engaging and varied manner that inspires learning;
- to give timely and constructive feedback on work;
- to provide effective pastoral and learning support when needed;
- to respond, communicate and consult in a timely and effective manner;
- to recognize the student body to be a diverse collection of adults who are partners with an equally important voice in their learning.

### The University expects students

- to work hard at their studies and to be active partners in shaping their experience of HE;
- to seek out opportunities to enhance their understanding and to develop practical and intellectual skills;
- to take advantage of the wealth of activities (social and developmental) provided by the University and the Students Union;
- to be aware that their conduct affects other students and reflects on the University, and to act accordingly;
- to provide constructive feedback on their time at Reading through the Students Union and directly to the University.

### Staff expect students

- to be pro-active in managing their learning and in seeking help when needed;
- to be enquiring in their thinking;
- to manage their time to fulfil academic and other commitments;
- to engage fully with all academic commitments;
- to conduct themselves and to engage in their studies with honesty;
- to keep appointments and to communicate with staff in a timely and courteous manner;

- to take ownership of their own health and well-being.

We all expect each other

- to treat one another with respect, tolerance and courtesy, regardless of identity, background or belief, both in person and online;
- to show responsible stewardship of the university environment, facilities and resources;
- to challenge one another intellectually and to contribute to the advancement of knowledge;
- to work fairly and effectively with one another both inside and outside the academic context;
- to be accountable for our actions and conduct;
- to recognize and value positive contributions from others.

## Programme information

### \*Welcome to the programme(s)

**[In addition to a welcome to the programme, this section may include a statement on how the programme is structurally devised and a rationale for the structure as well as the general approach to the subject (especially where that approach is distinctive).]**

### \*Programme aims

**[The Handbook should include a URL link to the relevant Programme Specification(s) (<http://www.reading.ac.uk/progspeccs/index.aspx>.) which the Handbook covers, and include a URL link to the Further Programme Information web page ([www.reading.ac.uk/internal/fpi](http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/fpi)). Further information on the aims of the programme may be included.]**

### \*How the programme(s) fit(s) together

**[Depending on which Part the programme handbook relates to, Schools are to provide general guidelines on the module selection process which may include:**

- **explaining the School's role in the module selection process, e.g. if presentations/interviews are required**
- **stressing the importance that in order to qualify as full-time, students must be registered for 120 credits at the beginning of the academic year**
- **general guidance on optional modules, highlighting the importance of checking potential constraints such as timetable clashes, pre-requisites etc.**
- **Schools need to emphasise that students will normally only be allowed to change their optional modules until the end of the third week of the Autumn Term.]**

### \*Careers learning, placements and student development

**[Schools should provide detailed information about placement opportunities available as well as specialised careers learning opportunities and how the School fosters student development. Your Careers Consultant can provide assistance and current information – find your Consultant at [Career Consultant School Caseload](#).]**

## \* Career prospects

[Schools should provide information here about career prospects for their graduates. Rather than focussing on DLHE, Schools should aim to provide students with a broad flavour of the types of jobs graduates enter into. It is recognised that this section will be easier to write for vocationally-oriented subjects, and that the information given for many non-vocational subjects is likely to be very similar. Your Careers Consultant can provide assistance and current information – find your Consultant at [Career Consultant School Caseload](#).]

## \*Additional Costs of Studying

[A standard statement has been drafted, which highlights to students the need to budget appropriately for additional costs of studying that are likely to be incurred. In addition, the School should include detailed information on the known additional costs of the programme which should correspond with additional costs specified in the Programme Specification.]

During your time studying at Reading, you may encounter some additional costs, for example field trips, text books, or stationery.

It is prudent to budget appropriately for these costs, and the Advice Service in the Students' Union or at [advice@rusu.co.uk](mailto:advice@rusu.co.uk) can help you personally with this. You can also visit [www.rusu.co.uk/advice/money\\_advice/](http://www.rusu.co.uk/advice/money_advice/) for more generic information. More specific information can be given by your Department or School.

## \*How to get a good degree in this subject

### Reading lists

[Schools should refer students to module reading lists which have been made available via the University's online 'Reading Lists' platform. Lists have a stable URL which means they can be accessed directly or linked to via Blackboard (the recommended option). These URLs can also be embedded within module handbooks. Guidance should be given as to whether readings are "Required for student purchase", "Essential", "Recommended" or "Further".

Information for staff about reading lists, including guidance on creating effective reading lists, is at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/library/contact/info-for/staff/lib-reading-lists.aspx> and support for those creating and managing lists on the 'Reading Lists' system (using Talis Aspire software) can be found in Online reading lists: a guide for academic staff: <http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/reading-lists/staff>. Students can be directed to Online reading lists: a guide for students: <http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/reading-lists/students>.

Please note that Talis Aspire should only be used for modules delivered within the UK, as library availability information and e-Resource licensing restrictions preclude the use of this software for modules taught at our overseas partnership institutions/campuses.]

## \*Working with Academic Integrity

[The Working with Academic Integrity statement must appear in full in all programme handbooks.]

‘Academic integrity’ describes the values held to be essential in university study in the UK. The five core values have been identified as:

- **Accuracy** – making sure that your work is free from errors.
- **Honesty** – being truthful about which ideas are your own and which are derived from others, and about the methods and results of your research.
- **Fairness** – not trying to gain an advantage by unfair means: for instance, by passing off others’ work as your own.
- **Responsibility** – taking an active role in your own learning: for instance, by seeking out the information you need to study effectively.
- **Respect** – for your fellow students, your tutors, and the work of other scholars.

(Adapted from International Center for Academic Integrity (1999), *The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity*, online at <http://www.academicintegrity.org/icaai/assets/FVproject.pdf>, accessed 11 Nov 2016.)

### **What does this mean for my academic writing?**

You practise academic integrity in your academic writing by working with the five values in mind, and particularly by using correct and accurate referencing. This shows that you can: be **accurate** in transcribing details; be **honest** about which ideas were derived from others; act **fairly** by not taking credit for others’ work; take **responsibility** by finding out what is required of you and how you should carry it out; and show **respect** for others by acknowledging the part they have played in building your knowledge and understanding.

### **How does this differ from what I did at school/college?**

You may have used a simplified referencing system at school or college, with only direct quotes given citations, or no in-text citations but only a bibliography. At university, you need to give a citation whenever you refer to an idea that you derived from a source. This is the case whether you use a direct quote, a paraphrase, or just a mention. There are many different styles of referencing, and you will need to find out which one is used in your department and how to set out your citations and bibliographies. You will need to learn how to cite a variety of sources correctly, and get into the habit of doing this accurately and with attention to detail.

### **I haven’t studied in the UK before. How might this differ from my previous experience?**

In the UK, critical analysis and building new knowledge are key aims of academic study at university. This means you will be expected to read widely to gather a range of ideas, be critical by questioning everything you read and hear, and draw your own conclusions. You then need to support these in your writing by reference to what you have read, and to acknowledge the sources with correct citations.

## **\*Developing good learning practices**

[Schools should provide students with information on good academic practice that is specific to the subject. This should include advice on avoiding unintentional plagiarism (examples are provided in *Annex 1: General advice on avoiding unintentional plagiarism*) and where to seek further support and advice in this respect, including the Study Advice team ([www.reading.ac.uk/library/study-advice](http://www.reading.ac.uk/library/study-advice)), The Academic Integrity Toolkit (<http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/academicintegrity>) and the Citing References Guide (<http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/citing-references>). General advice should ideally be supplemented with subject-specific examples of good and poor practice in using written text (an example is provided in *Annex 2: Understanding plagiarism: examples of good and poor practice in using written sources*). Schools may wish to include advice on organisation of time, how to get the

most out of tutorials/seminars, and taking notes. Advice on the School's expectations with regard to writing and presentation of essays, dissertations and other written work may be helpful.]

## References and citations

[Guidance on the conventions to be used by students for references and citations including School specific examples. Schools should include a statement at the beginning of this section highlighting its importance to students. For example, "Even if you have experience of referencing and using citations in your previous educational experience, you will still need to read carefully the following advice. Do not assume that your previous experience will be adequate".]

### \*Dissertation/Project advice

[Schools should include relevant information on dissertations and projects including expectations about standards, when topics should be chosen, etc.]

### \*Research Training

[For postgraduate taught programmes only, information on the research training that the programme provides for future higher degree programmes.]

### \*Academic organisation

[Information on the academic organisation of the School which may include information on the membership and terms of reference for the relevant School Board for Teaching and Learning, Board of Studies and Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs), the role of External Examiners etc.]

### \*Student Contribution to the Evaluation of the programme

[Please include a brief paragraph on students' contribution to the evaluation of the programme, including both programme and module evaluation. It should indicate how evaluation of modules is conducted e.g. if a paper-based or an online process is used (or both), if all modules are evaluated every year or on a biennial cycle, etc, and how the outcomes are fed back to students. Similar information should be provided in relation to programme evaluation (see [www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/qualitysupport/studentevaluation.pdf](http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/qualitysupport/studentevaluation.pdf)). For joint honours programmes in more than one School, procedures for both Schools should be described. For consistency, comment by students should be referred to as "evaluation"; comment about students' work should be referred to as "feedback".]

### \*Student Representation

[A brief account of the operation of the SSLC and any other School/programme committees which include student representation. Reference should be made to the procedures for soliciting student evaluation and mechanisms for reporting the outcomes.]

# How we support students

## \*University support for students and their learning

**[The following standard statement should be included. Schools may also wish to include School-specific information including details of induction programmes, handbooks and guides and specialist equipment. Particular attention should be paid to programmes involving a substantial distance learning component and those delivered in collaboration with other institutions, to ensure that details of additional or alternative arrangements for student support are provided. This could include details of online learning resources and support services, access to local library facilities and support services, and any provision made for students to use the University Library.]**

Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Careers Centre, the Academic English Programme, Study Advice, the Mathematics Support Centre and IT Services. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme.

Student guidance and welfare support are provided by Student Support Co-ordinators, Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union Advice Team, the Medical Practice, Counselling and Wellbeing and the Disability Advisory Service. Student and Applicant Services also offer advice and support in a number of areas, including finance and academic issues such as withdrawals and suspensions. For more information, see <http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials>.

## \*Personal Tutors

**[Handbooks should provide information on the role of Personal Tutors and the structure of the Personal Tutorial System; please refer to [www.reading.ac.uk/internal/personaltutor/](http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/personaltutor/) for further information. Students should be referred to (<http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials/study/study-and-support.aspx>) for general information relating to Personal Tutors.]**

## \*Feedback to students

**[A paragraph on the purpose of, and the School's approach to, feedback should be included, explaining how students should engage with feedback and the benefits of doing so. The following standard statement on the 15 day turnaround for feedback should also be included.]**

For all undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, the standard turnaround time for individual feedback and marks on coursework and in-class tests is a maximum of fifteen working days<sup>1</sup> from the deadline for submission/date of the in-class test. The policy applies equally to work from full-time and part-time students.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this policy, a working day is defined as excluding Saturday and Sunday. This definition applies to all students, regardless of location. Public/national holidays in the country where the relevant module is being delivered and University closure days are not normally considered to be working days. When setting deadlines for submission of coursework, module convenors should take into consideration public/national holidays in the country or countries where staff who will be responsible for marking and provision of feedback are located. For UK campuses, the University is normally closed on the 8 Public Holidays for England and Wales (New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, May Bank Holiday, Spring Bank Holiday, Summer Bank Holiday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day). It is also normally closed for a small number of additional days during the year, referred to as 'closure days', usually around the Christmas and Easter public holidays. Further details can be found at: [www.reading.ac.uk/17/study/studytermdates.aspx](http://www.reading.ac.uk/17/study/studytermdates.aspx).

Some assessments may be exempt from the fifteen working day turnaround time feedback requirement. The following assessments are exempt, subject to the proviso that work submitted in the Summer Term of the Final Part should be returned prior to graduation:

- i) Dissertations;
- ii) Final year projects (normally 40 credits in weight);
- iii) Assessments where there is input from a professional external body that might unavoidably delay the marking process;
- iv) Assessments where for logistical reasons there are staggered submission dates (e.g. practicals)

For more information see

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/qualitysupport/feedbackonstudentperformance.pdf>

## Mentoring

**[Handbooks should make reference to mentoring programmes available to students and how they access these.]**

## Peer Assisted Learning

**[Handbooks should make reference to the Peer Assisted Learning scheme in place (if any) within the School.]**

## Alumni relations

**[Handbooks should make reference to how the School interacts with alumni and the benefits this provides for current students.]**

# School and general academic information

## Key dates

**[A link to the University Term dates would be useful (<http://www.reading.ac.uk/17/study/study-termdates.aspx>) with Schools adding details of Week 6 activities, field trips, placements, examination periods, etc. For some Schools a separate paragraph about field courses may be appropriate. Also, it may be helpful if key dates for the session, e.g. term dates, submission deadlines for important pieces of work, are also included in a prominent place such as inside the front cover.]**

## Members of Staff

**[A list of key members of staff, a brief explanation of their role, and contact details can be included here or as an Appendix.]**

## School accommodation and facilities

[Description of the lay-out of the School with an explanation of the room numbering system. If the lay-out is complicated, a plan appropriately customised may be helpful. If teaching for the programme is dispersed across the campus, appropriate plans of the University might be included at the end of the handbook. Information about access for disabled students.]

[Mention should be made of particular local guidance on:

- **Library facilities and services.** Information about confined books, short loans, recall facilities, etc. Specialist library staff identified.
- **Access arrangements for computer facilities, availability of support staff, details of available software.** Facilities for printing and photocopying.
- **Students should be referred to the Study section in Essentials** ([http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials/\\_study.aspx](http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials/_study.aspx)) and to the relevant documents issued by the Library and IT Services for further information.]

## \*Administrative Procedures

[The following standard statement should be included.]

Teaching and Learning support teams/Support Centres are the first port of call for students for anything ranging from a query about campus cards, advice on changing programme or on module selection, submitting extenuating circumstances forms and placements advice, to any other general or programme-specific question. For full information regarding how and when you can access the service and who does what, please visit the [Support Arrangements](#) page.

## Further Information

### \*Safety

[Information about safety procedures and the specific responsibilities of students. Attention should be drawn to the Health and Safety at Work Act, if appropriate.]

## Student Common Room, School Societies

[Information about Student Common Rooms, catering facilities etc. attached to the School; student societies related to the programme/School where applicable.]

## Fitness to Practise

[Schools are responsible for notifying students if they are on a programme which is subject to DBS clearance or fitness to practise requirements; refer to [www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/qualitysupport/FitnesstoPractise.pdf](http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/qualitysupport/FitnesstoPractise.pdf) for further guidance.]

## Students studying part-time

[Where Schools or subject areas give their handbooks to students studying on a part-time basis, they should include a section addressing their situation and highlighting any differences in the organisation and structure of their programme to the full-time equivalent (e.g. progression rules).]

## Professional bodies

[It may be appropriate to include a brief account of any relevant professional bodies, especially where the programme leads to professional membership, together with an explanation of how graduates qualify for membership of the organisation concerned.]

## \*Overview of ‘Essentials’

‘Essentials’ (<http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials>) contains all the essential information that students will need during their time at University. Listed below is what is included in each broad section with a link. Please take time to browse each section to discover the variety of information available to you online.

- [Welcome](#)
- [Campus and local area](#): maps, accommodation, campus card, food and shops, safety and security, Nursery and pre-school, Green issues, booking a university classroom;
- [Opportunities](#): volunteering, student training events, study abroad, learning a language, clubs and societies, sports, music;
- [Money matters](#): tuition fees, advice, funding opportunities, insurance, US loans and Federal Aid;
- [Study](#): library, programmes and modules, study support, IT, Blackboard, Personal Tutor;
- [Exams](#): (see also section on Key Academic Policies and Procedures for links to important information)
- [Support and wellbeing](#): counselling and wellbeing, support arrangements, disability, ‘life tools’ talks, learning support, peer support, religious and spiritual care, medical and general health;
- [‘the important stuff’](#): A to Z of policies and procedures, calculator use in exams, council tax and voting, international students, student contract, student charter, rules and regulations including:
  - changing degree programme;
  - behaviour whilst studying;
  - extenuating circumstances;
  - learner responsibilities;
  - plagiarism – referencing rules;
  - parental responsibilities policy;
  - suspensions;
  - withdrawing from study;
  - absence and attendance.
- [Careers and development](#): Reading Internship Scheme, destinations, jobs, placements, professional skills hub, events, Careers A-Z
- [‘Have your say’](#): student feedback, student representation;
- [Need help?!](#): lost and found, emergency contacts;
- [Graduation](#)
- [International students](#): International advice team, visas and immigration, studying in the UK, living in the UK, suspension, withdrawal and attendance for Tier 4 students, opening a bank account;

It is the responsibility of students to familiarise themselves with the content of Essentials, and to use it as a reference when required.

## \*Key Academic Policies and Procedures

It is important that you read (or familiarise yourself with) the following academic policies and procedures, since they govern important aspects of your programme and may therefore have a significant impact on your studies and the successful completion of your degree.

### **Guide to undergraduate assessment**

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/student/exa-guideUG.aspx>

### **Guide to postgraduate assessment**

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/student/exa-guidePG.aspx>

The Guides to assessment include important information in relation to:

- penalties for late submission of coursework (see also <http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/qualitysupport/penaltiesforlatesubmission.pdf>);
- examination arrangements for students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties (see also <http://www.reading.ac.uk/exams/student/exa-special.aspx>);
- extenuating circumstances (see also <http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/qualitysupport/extencircumstances.pdf>);
- academic misconduct (see also <http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/Policies/exa-misconduct.aspx>);
- feedback to students (see also <http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/qualitysupport/feedbackonstudentperformance.pdf>);
- marking and progression (see also <http://www.reading.ac.uk/exams/Policies/exa-class.aspx>);
- classification of degrees (see also <http://www.reading.ac.uk/exams/Policies/exa-class.aspx>);
- publication of results (see also <http://www.reading.ac.uk/exams/student/exa-publication.aspx>);
- re-examination;
- how to make an appeal (see also <http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/Policies/exa-appeal.aspx>).

### **Policy in relation to students' use of editorial and proof-reading services**

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/Policies/exa-proofreading.aspx>

### **Policy on and procedures for the determination of 'fitness to practise'**

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/qualitysupport/FitnesstoPractise.pdf>

### **Policy on and procedures relating to academic engagement and fitness to study**

[http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/qualitysupport/academicengagement\\_fitnessstudy.pdf](http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/qualitysupport/academicengagement_fitnessstudy.pdf)

### **Student complaints procedure**

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/stdserv/Student-Complaints-Procedure-RV2015.pdf>

## \*Reading University Students' Union

## Reading University Students' Union (RUSU)

RUSU is student-led, and here to support and represent you! We want to make your experience the best it can be whilst you're at University. We run a number of commercial ventures, such as our 3sixty Nightclub, Mojo's bar, Café Mondial, Monterey's Lounge and Campus Central shop. As a charity, any profits raised are used to finance the wider work we do for you; such as running extra-curricular activities and providing an independent advice service. RUSU is an essential voice for students within the University of Reading, and campaigns on your behalf on campus, in the local community and on a national level.

### How is RUSU student-led?

RUSU is led by five full-time Student Officers who are elected in to their roles by the student body. The Student Officers run for election while studying, then take a sabbatical year from study or start after their graduation. The Student Officers listen to the views of the thousands of students on campus; they represent the student voice on campus, locally and nationally. They're accountable to all students and have regular 'Talk To Me' events for students. Your elected full-time Student Officers are:

President – **Tristan Spencer**

Education Officer – **Ed White**

Diversity Officer – **Leen Alnajjab**

Welfare Officer – **Rose Lennon**

Student Activities Officer – **Charlotte O'Leary**

Visit [www.rusu.co.uk/officers](http://www.rusu.co.uk/officers) to find out more about your officers and how to contact them.

### Liberation & Representation

As well as Full Time Officers, there is an elected team of 10 Part-time Officers. The Part-time Officers represent groups of students (or issues) that are less represented in Higher Education.



The Part-time Student Officer positions are:

International Students' Officer	BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) Students' Officer	Environment & Ethics Officer
Mature Students' Officer	Women's Officer	London Road Students' Officer
LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) Students' Officer	Disabled Students' Officer	Postgraduate Research Students' Officer
	Postgraduate Taught Students' Officer	

## Academic Representation



Course Reps and School Reps are an essential part of the student representative structure. Course and School Reps proactively seek out, identify and promote the views of students and represent your views at school level and course level. There is one Course Rep for every Programme at every year, while there is a School Rep for Undergraduates and a School Rep for Postgraduate per School.

- Visit [www.rusu.co.uk/course reps](http://www.rusu.co.uk/course reps) to find out more about Course Reps, and how to get involved.
- Visit [www.rusu.co.uk/school reps](http://www.rusu.co.uk/school reps) to find out more, or to contact your School Reps [Reps](#).

## Get involved in student representation!

This is a great opportunity! You receive training, it is a great way to meet other students and it will look great on your CV as the skills you develop will help you get the job of your dreams! There are a number of representative roles to put yourself forward for whilst at University. If you want to learn more about the different elected roles, or would like to find out how to run in a RUSU election, go to [rusu.co.uk/elections](http://rusu.co.uk/elections)

## What can RUSU do for me?



### Change It!

RUSU organises and supports campaigns that have been put forward by students via [www.rusu.co.uk/changeit](http://www.rusu.co.uk/changeit). Campaigns aim to raise awareness and ultimately make change amongst the student community on issues that affect you on campus, in the community and at a national level.

You can submit an idea for change at any time on [www.rusu.co.uk/changeit](http://www.rusu.co.uk/changeit) and view current campaigns at [www.rusu.co.uk/campaigns](http://www.rusu.co.uk/campaigns)

If you want to get involved in campaigns email [changeit@rusu.co.uk](mailto:changeit@rusu.co.uk) or visit the ARC Centre (Advice & Representation Centre) and ask to speak to the Campaigns Coordinator.

Using Change It is a great way to direct your Students' Union so get involved!

## How does RUSU support students?

### RUSU Advice Service

Need some housing, money or academic advice? The RUSU advice team offer free, impartial and expert advice helping students with a wide range of issues, from financial, to academic.

The advice team are based in the ARC in the RUSU building or go to [www.rusu.co.uk/advice](http://www.rusu.co.uk/advice) to find out how to get in touch.



### RUSU Nursery Service

There are many student parents with young children. RUSU provides an excellent nursery facility, Little Learners Nursery, for children aged 3 months to school age. If you're a parent and have your children here at Reading, you can apply for a place by visiting [www.rusu.co.uk/nursery](http://www.rusu.co.uk/nursery) for more information.

## How can RUSU enhance your student experience?



### Societies

RUSU offers students the opportunity to become a member of a society; with over 100 there is plenty to choose from. If there isn't one for you, you can set one up! Joining a society can be a great way to develop your interests and hobbies. You can find out about RUSU societies by going to [www.rusu.co.uk/activities](http://www.rusu.co.uk/activities).

## Sports

RUSU also supports the running of student sports clubs on campus. Many of our sports clubs compete on a national level in the BUCS League, but all clubs offer opportunities for those from all levels of experience. There are over 50 different sports to choose from. Many sports clubs even take part in Varsity, an all-sport event which runs every year competing against Oxford Brookes.

Go to [www.rusu.co.uk/activities/sportandleisure](http://www.rusu.co.uk/activities/sportandleisure) for a full list of teams and groups and find out how to get involved.



**KNIGHTS**



## Volunteering

Volunteering is a fantastic way to not only give back to the community, but develop your skills, meet new people and improve your career prospects! You can find out more about the huge range of volunteering opportunities by visiting [www.rusu.co.uk/volunteering](http://www.rusu.co.uk/volunteering).

## For more information...

Visit our website at [www.rusu.co.uk](http://www.rusu.co.uk) or follow us on Twitter @RUSUtweets and Facebook /RUSUnews You can also drop by and visit us in the RUSU building located on Whiteknights Campus.

## Annex 1: Avoiding unintentional plagiarism

(Extract from the Academic Integrity Toolkit <http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/academicintegrity> )

**Plagiarism** is when someone else's work is passed off as your own. It may include:

- Using someone else's words directly without accurately acknowledging their authorship (whether this is from a published source or another student)
- Using ideas from someone else's work without accurately acknowledging their source
- Colluding with another student to produce the same or similar work
- Passing off someone else's original work (e.g. a commissioned essay) as your own

Although you may be thinking that you would never be so dishonest, it is possible to commit plagiarism unintentionally. Unintentional plagiarism can happen if:

- You are not careful about recording details or note-making
- You do not learn how to cite references to comply with university standards
- You do not fully understand the role that references play in your academic writing

These errors also put you at risk of committing **poor academic practice**. This is the term used when you produce work which may be fully referenced, but (for instance) relies too heavily on only one or two sources, or is generally too derivative (includes too many words quoted from other people and not enough of your own analysis and exposition), or is inadequately paraphrased (too close to the original).

Both plagiarism and poor academic practice leave you liable to penalties which may be determined at a School, Faculty or University level. These can range from a substantial reduction in your marks (or even a mark of zero) which can affect your final degree classification, to a formal misconduct hearing which may result in your being asked to leave the University.

### Things you can do to avoid unintentional plagiarism

- ✓ **Read your feedback carefully** – if your referencing has been criticised, find out what you are doing wrong and put it right before your next submission. A 'second offence' may be treated much more seriously, even if it is for another marker.
- ✓ **Develop good note-making and record keeping practices** – be thorough and accurate, avoid doing 'cut and paste' research, read a paragraph then write in your own words what you have understood and how it relates to your assignment brief.
- ✓ **Find out when you need to use a citation** – acknowledge every idea you get from your research – not just direct quotes.
- ✓ **Understand how to use references to support your discussion** – referring to other people's work and showing how it helped to build your own ideas is a way of sharing your research journey and situating your work in the body of work in your discipline.

## **Joint or Group Work**

The University encourages you to learn from each other, so when working together it is important to work with academic integrity. In group work assessments it is likely you will be asked to submit a joint assignment that will be clearly acknowledged as being produced by the whole group. Part of the assessment will involve how you manage the group process and divide tasks between the group members. People do not need to do the same amounts of work, but the group does need to take collective responsibility for being honest, fair, and for showing respect to each member of the group.

Learning collaboratively and sharing ideas can be extremely effective. However, you need to be honest and fair. For individual assignments, such as essays or reports, whether undertaken as part of group work or otherwise, discussing the general topics together is fine, but the assignment itself should be planned and written up separately and individually. For mathematical and computing problems, or data analysis, discussing the best approach to the problem can lead to you selecting the same methods as your peers, and your work can naturally end up looking quite similar. However, you should complete the stages of the method and any working out yourself. It is not acceptable for one person to do the calculations and for the rest of the group to simply copy them.

If you are in any doubt about what is acceptable when working together, you should ask your lecturers.

## Annex 2: Understanding plagiarism: examples of good and poor practice in using written sources

### Introduction

It is important that you understand how to use and acknowledge written sources in your work. The following examples are designed to illustrate and explain the differences between unacceptable practice, poor practice, good practice and better practice.

### Original text:

‘There is no convincing reason to suppose that the remains buried in the Folly Lane enclosure were not that of one, adult, individual; in view of the nature of the pyre goods this was probably a man.’

R. Niblett (1999) *The Excavation of a Ceremonial site at Folly Lane, Verulamium*, London: Britannia Monograph 14, p.412.

### Unacceptable practice

(1) ‘Prototypical’ plagiarism: lifting a section of text from another source without any indication of the source, and is unacceptable:

Unlike the ‘family’ burial enclosures at King Harry Lane, there is no convincing reason to suppose that the remains buried in the Folly Lane enclosure were not that of one adult individual, in view of the nature of the pyre goods this was probably a man. This difference suggests...

(2) Changing the order of a few words does not constitute acceptable paraphrasing:

Unlike the ‘family’ burial enclosures at King Harry Lane, there is no clear reason to suppose that the remains buried in the Folly Lane enclosure were anything other than that of one adult individual, in view of the nature of the pyre goods the gender was probably a male. This difference suggests...

(3) It is best not to use even relatively short phrases without marking them as quotations. While one might pass un-noticed, this can become a matter of habit, so is best avoided in the first place. Again the failure to acknowledge the source is a problem:

Family burial enclosures have been found at King Harry Lane. But at Folly Lane there is no convincing reason to suppose that the burial is of anything other than one individual. Probably a man in view of the nature of the pyre goods. This difference suggests...

### Further advice on how to paraphrase can be found in the References section

<http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/academicintegrity/writing-references> of the Academic Integrity Toolkit (<http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/academicintegrity>).

### Poor practice

(4) Mentioning the author’s name, but not marking quotations is still barely acceptable, as is still representing other’s words as your own. At least you have said where the idea/material comes from, though not using a proper referencing system:

Unlike the ‘family’ burial enclosures at King Harry Lane, there is no clear reason to suppose that the remains buried in the Folly Lane enclosure were anything other than that of one adult individual, in view of the nature of the pyre goods the gender was probably a male, in the view of Niblett. This difference suggests...

(5) Better would be at least providing a complete reference, though this still does not make unmarked quotations or slight re-phrasings acceptable:

Unlike the ‘family’ burial enclosures at King Harry Lane, there is no clear reason to suppose that the remains buried in the Folly Lane enclosure were anything other than that of one adult individual, in view of the nature of the pyre goods the gender was probably a male (Niblett 1999: 412). This difference suggests...

### **Acceptable practice**

(6) Below the quotation has been clearly acknowledged and referenced. This is good. However, this is not to say that an essay significantly made up of quotations is acceptable, since we are looking for your voice, your ideas, and your interpretations. Quotations should ideally be used sparingly, only where they really succinctly sum up an argument, or where they are vital for the development of an argument:

Unlike the ‘family’ burial enclosures at King Harry Lane, ‘there is no convincing reason to suppose that the remains buried in the Folly Lane enclosure were not that of one adult individual, in view of the nature of the pyre goods this was probably a man’ (Niblett 1999: 412). This difference suggests...

### **Further information on the use of citations can be found in the Citation section**

<http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/academicintegrity/citations> of the Academic Integrity Toolkit (<http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/academicintegrity>).

### **Better practice**

(7) Paraphrasing other people’s ideas is better, it demonstrates you have read their ideas; your mind has worked through them and encapsulated them into words of your own:

Unlike the ‘family’ burial enclosures at King Harry Lane (Stead & Rigby 1989), the burial at Folly Lane was probably that of a single male adult, or so the excavator argued from the pyre remains (Niblett 1999: 412). This difference suggests...

### **Best practice**

(8) However an essay that just comprises paraphrasing of other people’s views can still result in a fairly derivative essay. The best practice overall is where you take other people’s ideas and you intermesh them, rather than sequentially paraphrasing them. This demonstrates your ability to think comparatively, to be able to directly compare and contrast the work of different academics, and to be able to vocalize your own point of view:

Stead and Niblett came to very different interpretations of their own cemetery excavations at Verulamium. Stead’s excavation at King Harry Lane exemplified the group homogenizing aspect of burial of one tier of society, whereas Niblett’s Folly Lane enclosure evoked separate treatment and disposal of one individual male. Both argued this from the remains of the funerary pyre goods found buried with the cremated remains (Stead & Rigby 1989, Niblett 1999).

**Further advice on how to build references into your writing can be found in the References section** <http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/academicintegrity/writing-references> of the Academic Integrity toolkit (<http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/academicintegrity>).