Multidisciplinary research with real world impact

Our desire to create knowledge that will benefit society drives our active and diverse research agenda. Our research is focused on issues affecting society both in the present and in the future.

Our research is making a genuine difference to the world. We enjoy great success in bidding for research funding and in the past financial year we won £34 million in new research grants and contracts. In the last Research Assessment Exercise nearly 90% of our research was deemed of international standing.

Our research environment is important to us and we have invested significant amounts in new research centres and technology which keep Reading at the forefront of pioneering science.

Our interdisciplinary research strengths fall into three main interlinking areas of excellence - Climate and environmental sciences, Health, and Food security.

Climate and environmental sciences

The University of Reading has been at the forefront of research into climate and environmental sciences for many decades. Tough limits on global emissions of greenhouse gases could avoid 20% to 65% of the damaging effects of climate change by 2100, according to new research led by the University of Reading’s Walker Institute and published in Nature Climate Change.

The Walker Institute for Climate Systems Research brings together a breadth of climate expertise unrivalled anywhere in the world. At Reading, physical and mathematical scientists work with social scientists, geographers and economists to help solve real world problems such as flooding and climate change.

The Technologies for Sustainable Built Environments Centre is an Industrial Doctorate Centre specialising in the Engineering Doctorate (EngD) programme, with the aim of producing researchers capable of resolving the challenges of sustainable construction in the 21st century.

Health

Chronic diseases are a major and growing societal and financial concern. Our work in this area investigates many aspects of health including how conditions such as heart disease, type II diabetes, gastroenteritis and cancers can be prevented by changes in lifestyle, food production and diet.

Bringing together the Institute of Cardiovascular and Metabolic Research, the Centre for Integrative Neuroscience and Neurodynamics and the Hugh Sinclair Human Nutrition Group, as well as a number of other areas of the University, we are able to integrate research within Molecular Biology, Biomedical Sciences, Diet and Health, Systems Biology, Systems Engineering and Mathematics, as well as facilitating interaction between Consumer Science, Business, Management and Economics.

Food security

Food security is one of the most important challenges facing the world today. It is about society using its resources effectively and efficiently to meet global nutritional needs. This means producing and supplying the food that consumers want and need without imposing excessive burdens on the ecosystems which support our food production. The University’s Centre for Food security is founded upon a 100 year history of research into agriculture at Reading.

It is a world-leader in food security research and training with expertise across the whole food chain, from soil through food production and processing, to dietary health. Research projects in this area collaborate with policymakers, industry and the global research community to help ensure resilient, sustainable and healthy food chains.
A world of research

Reading has an outstanding reputation in a number of more traditional disciplines, notably Psychology, Philosophy, Agriculture and Archaeology.

We excel in our niche subjects such as Real Estate and Planning and Typography & Graphic Communication which has recently won the Queen’s Anniversary Prize.

‘Reading is the first institution to win a Queen’s Anniversary Prize focused on typographic research’

Henley Business School at Reading is one of Europe’s largest full service business schools with a unique blend of strengths in Finance, Management and Real Estate. It is one of only 1% of business schools worldwide to hold triple accreditation.

The University has recently created 50 new academic appointments as part of a £50 million investment programme in our key areas of research excellence. The new posts will help Reading build on its strong base of world-leading research in key areas of global importance.

Much of the science originating from Reading is made accessible to business and industry. We engage and work collaboratively with other organisations and institutions around the world to make a significant contribution to global, social and economic needs, and to national and international policy agendas. Our research provides the basis for government policy in areas such as food and health, climate and weather, and financial markets.

Our research is funded through a variety of routes including research council grants, charities, government agencies, the European Commission and enterprise and industrial partnerships.

Silchester Town Life Project

Our Silchester Town Life Project is an outstanding example of research impact. With a team of 150 students and volunteers, the researchers have been excavating the Iron Age and Roman town for six weeks each summer since 1997. In parallel, a post-excavation and publication programme involving a team of 20 researchers has been developed with the main aim of disseminating the results to the public and to academe using a variety of media.