



University of Reading

First generation student guide

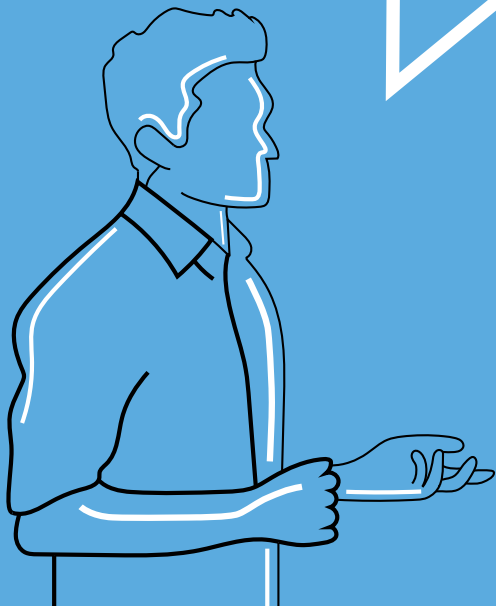
For students, by students

Welcome to the University of Reading!

Welcome to the University of Reading community!

Congratulations on getting into university, which is a huge achievement. Everyone has a different university experience so don't worry if you feel a bit out of the loop at times. Take the first few weeks at your own pace and don't be afraid to ask lots of questions. You have joined a diverse and inclusive community where everyone can belong, including you!

Find everything on our link tree:



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01 Welcome information

Download the UoR Welcome app. It has all the event information that you need for the Welcome period.

02 Getting advice

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Lecturers, Academic Tutors and even friends can help you make improvements to your work, particularly when you don't understand something or need more feedback on an assignment. Academic Liaison Librarians can help you use the library and Study Advice are there for building study skills.

If you don't know what a university term means, it can feel daunting, maybe even embarrassing, but don't be afraid to ask! The chances are your classmates are wondering the same thing.

03 Getting up to speed

Attend as many of the school or department activities as you can, to meet staff and other students. This is a great time to ask any questions you might have.

When going to seminars and lectures, it helps to talk to classmates beforehand and afterwards. It can feel awkward at first but remember everyone is in the same situation.

The campuses are big so you may feel lost at times. The buildings are all on Google Maps. The Carrington building has a reception where you can ask about Student Services and your school's Support Centre is also available. Anyone in the community, including other students, should be happy to help if you are unsure about where something is or how university works.

04 A home away from home

If you are the first to experience university, you might feel homesick. Try to make your accommodation feel homely by adding decorations, photos, and memorabilia from home. It's a small thing that can make a big difference.

05 Finding your belonging

Everybody at university has a different experience so try not to compare yourself to others. Make the most of the first term by discovering what you enjoy.

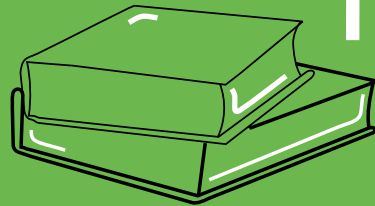
Take your time to explore Reading beyond the university campus. There are plenty of cultural groups and organisations in and around Reading, so go and explore!

Frequently asked questions

How do library loans work?

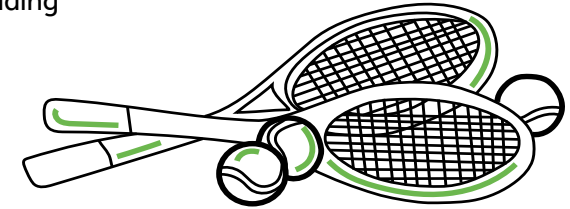
Borrowing books from the library is simple. You can borrow up to 25 books for up to 6 weeks, but you may be asked to return a book sooner than that. Journal articles can be borrowed for up to 7 days. You can also renew standard loans if not wanted by another person. For more information, check out:

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/library/using-the-library/borrowing>



Will I have fun at university?

Try different activities to figure out what you enjoy and put yourself out there to meet new people. Having a good time also means avoiding stress so try to stay organised and get ahead of your studies. Study Advice and the Life Tools programme are good for building skills to manage yourself.



How can I meet other first generation students?

There is a Student Life event for first generation students at the start of term and these carry on throughout the academic year. It's really worth going to the social to meet other students and find out any information you need from staff. The first social usually happens during welcome week.



How do I deal with the pressure, for example living up to my family's expectations?

Sometimes the weight of expectation can be difficult. It helps to keep in contact with your support network and to remember that they are there to help you. It's also important to try not to compare yourself to your siblings, friends and classmates, and seek support if you need it. It may seem like your classmates all know exactly what they're doing but trust us, they're feeling unsure too.



How do I manage my money?

Talk to the Student Financial Advisory Team. They have great online resources, and you can book in person appointments to go and see them. There are hardship funds and other bursaries available for eligible students, so check if you can apply for those.



How financially accessible is my course?

The cost of books will vary depending on the course. Second-hand books are a good way to save money. You can look on Amazon, Facebook Marketplace, eBay or Abe Books. You can also see if your department do book swaps between year groups. If the library doesn't have your textbooks or doesn't have enough copies to meet demand, then it's worth asking your Academic Liaison Librarian for help.



Your Union

Reading Students' Union exists to help students individually and collectively as a community. We're here to help make your life as a student, better. Every student's journey looks different, and we have a lot to offer for all students. So, however you connect with us, we hope the students' union will be a place where you will feel at home and where you can find support if you need it.

From clubs and societies to events, leadership opportunities to our free, confidential advice service, we've got something for everyone!

With over 150 sports teams and societies, and plenty of volunteering options, there are lots of opportunities to get involved with at your Students' Union.

➤ readingsu.co.uk/student-opportunities

Leadership roles are a great way to have a voice, make positive change and gain experience to improve your future employment opportunities.

➤ readingsu.co.uk/student-voice

Our free, confidential, independent and non-discriminatory advice service is here for all students. We deal with a wide range of issues such as academic, housing and money advice - if you are unsure, just get in touch.

➤ readingsu.co.uk/advice-&-support



For more information about us, and how you can get involved, head to

➤ readingsu.co.uk



University services

STaR Mentors

STaR (Student Transitions at Reading) mentors are student volunteers who help new students at UoR. They're brilliant at answering questions regarding university life and will give you tips based on their own experience. We highly recommend meeting with your STaR mentor.

➤ reading.ac.uk/star-mentors

Life Tools

Our Life Tools programme has been designed by experts to facilitate your transition into university and enhance your student experience. It helps you take control of your personal development and strengthen your skills to achieve your academic potential and prepare for life beyond university.

➤ reading.ac.uk/life-tools



UoR Student App

The official University of Reading app is free to download and available to all students. The app makes accessing all the essential information you need for student life at Reading as easy as possible. It offers:

- your academic timetable
- a personalised Me@Reading news feed
- notifications for the most important update
- easy access to support information and campus maps.

Find out more and download the app: reading.ac.uk/student-app or search your app Store.

Welfare and wellbeing support

Our Student Welfare Team is here to help you with any personal difficulties you may experience during your time here, including homesickness, family or relationship difficulties, and advice on drug and alcohol issues.

➤ reading.ac.uk/welfare-team

We also have a team of counsellors and mental health professionals to support your emotional and mental health needs, enabling you to engage successfully in your studies.

➤ reading.ac.uk/counselling

☎ 0118 378 4216

Careers advice

The Careers Service supports you in gaining skills, experience and direction for your future career. We can help with part-time jobs, placements, graduate roles and lots more via workshops, events and 1:1 appointments.

➤ reading.ac.uk/careers

☎ 0118 378 8359

➤ **Henley Business School Careers:** henley.ac.uk/careers

Campus Jobs

Campus Jobs is your one stop shop for all paid part-time work at the University, providing one-off work opportunities and regular shift work that is exclusive to Reading students.

➤ reading.ac.uk/campusjobs

☎ 0118 378 4499

Support Centres

The Support Centres (Henley School Office or equivalent) are the first place you should go to for all questions, help or advice throughout your time at the University of Reading. They will provide you with the support you need to be successful in your studies and beyond.

They are staffed by Student Support Coordinators who will advise or point you in the right direction on a range of academic and non-academic issues. You can contact your Student Support Coordinator by logging into RISIS and clicking on 'Ask a Question'. Alternatively you can telephone your Support Centre or visit them in person between 10am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

➤ reading.ac.uk/support-centres to find your Support Centre details.

The Student Financial Support Team

The Student Financial Support Team is here to offer you help, advice and support on a wide range of financial issues. You can access Blackbullion, a platform with courses and tools on things like how to budget, credit scores, hardship and much more.

➤ reading.ac.uk/money

Disability Advisory Service (DAS)

Students with a disability, specific learning differences (SpLD) or medical / mental health condition can contact DAS for confidential information and advice on provisions like extra time or rest breaks, particular adjustments to your course, or particular support to access your studies. Register online through the RISIS portal: risisweb.reading.ac.uk

➤ reading.ac.uk/essentials/Support-And-Wellbeing/Disability

✉ disability@reading.ac.uk

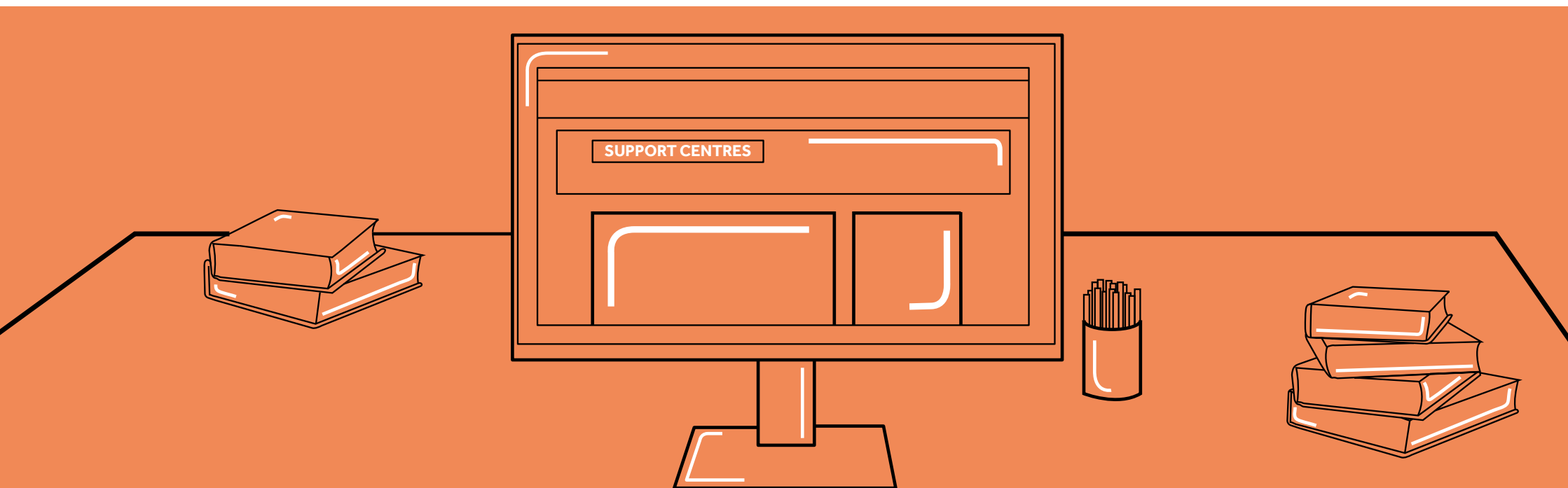
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Halls Welfare Team

The Halls Welfare Team consist of Wardens and Hall Mentors. They are there to support your welfare, manage student conduct and behaviour in University Halls of Residence. They link in with other support services for students such as Student Welfare to provide a holistic support network.

➤ reading.ac.uk/wardens

☎ 0800 029 1984



Glossary

Academic

A general word describing a member of staff who teaches and researches. Sometimes we use the word "lecturer" or "tutor" instead.

Academic Tutor

Every student has an academic tutor – they are one of the teaching staff. Your tutor is your first point of contact for any questions. They're a bit like a school/college form tutor.

Bibliography

Bibliography is a list of ALL the sources you used in preparing the work (not just the ones referred to – that would be a reference list).

Blackboard

The "virtual learning environment" (VLE) where the teaching materials and information are stored.

Essay Questions

A question which requires you to make an argument, backed up by evidence, to answer the question.

Essentials

This is the University of Reading's main webpage for student information and support: www.reading.ac.uk/essentials

Exceptional Circumstances

If you are affected by circumstances outside your control (e.g., you are ill or dealing with a personal crisis) and it affects your studies and your ability to meet a deadline, then the Exceptional Circumstances process is how you let the university know.

Footnotes

Footnotes are at the end of each page with a number & you add the relevant number in your writing.

Formative Assessment

A piece of work that you do to practice your skills and get feedback. It does not count towards your module grade or results. Optional but highly recommended.

Generic Feedback

Information given to all students about a piece of work. It often gathers together common mistakes made by students on the module and gives general guidance on how to improve.

Independent Learning

At university you are expected to plan your own time, around your timetabled classes, and follow the instructions to do reading, prepare for classes and assessments yourself. Please talk to your academic tutor if you are struggling.

Independent Feedback

On your assessed work, the marker will give you personal feedback and how to improve. You can use the office hours to speak to them about it.

Lecture

A large group teaching session led by a lecturer. It can be in a lecture hall or via video/online. A lecture gives you an outline or introduction to a subject area. You are expected to take notes and follow this up with reading.

Marking Rubric

A marking guide showing you what you need to do for a piece of work and which the marker will use when assessing your work.

Moderation

A member of staff marks your work, but it is then “moderated” by other staff to ensure that it has been marked fairly and consistently with other students’ work.

Module

A module is a subject with a set number of credits (usually 20). Your degree is made up of lots of modules.

Module Convenor

The member of teaching staff responsible for each topic (module) you study.

Office/Student Hours

Times that academic teaching staff are available to meet with their students. Sometimes they are bookable, other times they are drop-in times where you just go along and knock on the door to their office

Referencing

Citations or references show where you got your information from or what influenced your thinking. There are different ways to reference your work, but your lecturer will tell you which style they recommend.

RISIS

The University of Reading’s database. It stores your tutor card with all your personal details and results & where you pick modules, update your personal details & seek help. You can use RISIS to contact the Support Centre helpdesk: www.risisweb.reading.ac.uk

Student Support Co-ordinators

These are staff who work in the Support Centres and are always happy to help you.

Summative Assessment

A piece of work that does count towards your module grade. Compulsory – you must do this work.

Support Centre

The Support Centres are another first point of contact for all questions, help or advice throughout your time at the University.

Turnitin

Is software which checks your work against a database for similarities with books, websites, and other university work. The similarity score shows how similar your work is to other people’s.

Plagiarism is using other people’s words or ideas as if they are your own, without referencing. There is lots of advice to avoid plagiarising or cheating (also called academic misconduct): <https://libguides.reading.ac.uk/study-advice-guides/referencing>

It might be tempting to use “A.I.” chat bots in your essays but that could lead to academic misconduct.

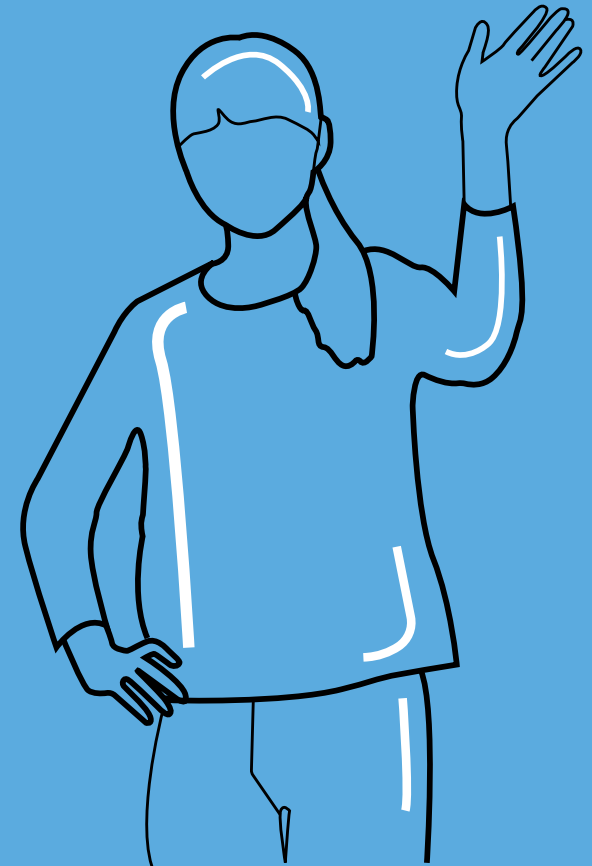
Tutorial / Seminar

A small group teaching session led by a lecturer. This can be in a classroom or online. There will be tasks to prepare and reading to do (look on Blackboard), before the class and we discuss the material in class. You may work in groups in some classes. This is a good place to ask questions to help you understand the subject. It may take time to build confidence speaking up in seminars but you will get there.

Word Limit/Count/ Page Limit/Count

To ensure fairness the length of assignments is limited. This may be a word limit/count which means you should not write more than the set number of words (eg. 1250 words). Sometimes it is a page limit/count which means do not go over the set number of pages of typing (eg. 5 pages). Bibliographies do not count towards word or page limits. Footnotes usually do!

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**Enjoy your time
at Reading!**





Welcome to the University of Reading!

This guide is intended to help students who are the first in their family to go to university transition to the University of Reading and navigate student life. It is written by current “first-generation” students who have drawn on their own experiences to offer tips and advice.