

WELLBEING GUIDE

to taking a break or leaving university



Leaving university

Withdrawing or transferring from the University of Reading

There are various ways (and reasons) to exit or pause a course of study. In this leaflet we aim to support your decisions and enable a better experience for you.

University is not for everyone; in fact, many people have not attended university and gone on to different ventures. Sometimes it just doesn't work out, so you start thinking about other options. If you are thinking about leaving – either temporarily or permanently – before completing your studies, support is available to help you plan what is right for you. There could be many reasons for wanting to leave your programme early, but before you do, we advise you to talk with your personal tutor, supervisor or your support centre. They may be able to offer help and advice to allow you to carry on with your studies.

If you still feel leaving is the right decision, you will need to notify the University officially and stop any loans you have (your support centre coordinator can help with this) and think about your accommodation. It's important whether you're in Halls or renting privately.

Once you leave you might need time to adjust. Think about how you will spend your time, where you will live and if you are opting for transfer, it is a good idea to assess the new place you intend on moving to. These are all things that can impact how you feel about yourself, so it is important to get emotional support at home.

Planning time away

If you are deciding on taking a break you should consider the following:

- ✓ What is the reason for your break?
 - ✓ Have you spoken to your tutor or Support Centre?
 - ✓ Does your tutor or Wellbeing team think this is a good idea? If so, how can they help you adjust?
 - ✓ Do you need any documentation for the change?
 - ✓ Have you considered your accommodation, finance and visa (if applicable)?
 - ✓ Would a different course be better?
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Your studies

As you prepare to suspend your studies, take time to review your experiences, acknowledge your achievements, and give yourself credit for your efforts. We all need to make changes to our lives and sometimes this means taking time out of normal activities to focus on ourselves.

Sometimes suspensions are needed – not wanted – and when this happens it is particularly important to seek advice and reflect on feedback about best next steps.

Returning after a period of absence or taking a study break?

If you are planning on a year abroad (i.e. Placement), or you are returning after a period of absence, it is best to prepare in advance. Planning your return can help to manage the transition and making a list of your practical needs and things to consider is a good start.

Think about who you need to talk to before your return:

- ✓ The Support Centre
- ✓ Academic Tutor
- ✓ Disability Advisory Service

These teams are there for you and are specifically focused on making your return to study easier. You may need to complete some paperwork before your return and this may need input from medical practitioners external to the university; make sure you arrange this in good time.

Finishing your degree

HOW WILL YOU DO? – are you expecting the same grade you were hoping for? Keep positive while being realistic. Discuss your expected result with those at home so everyone's expectations are similar. If you don't think you're reaching your full potential, take time to review what you want and discuss it with your academic tutor as soon as possible.

CONSIDER YOUR NEXT STEPS AFTER UNIVERSITY – do you want to study further? Do you want to work? Are you hoping to travel? Do you want to move home or get a place of your own? Sometimes what you want and what you can do are not the same, so be realistic and honest with yourself. Sign up to Careers for guidance and to Alumni and other post-student forums to stay in touch with others.

LEAVING UNIVERSITY CAN BE EXCITING – but it is also common to find it tricky to adjust to finishing your studies. The change of structure and routine can be unnerving and leave you feeling overwhelmed, apprehensive and lost. Start to prepare for the exit early, this will help you identify what you need in time for the end of your course.

Remember to engage in healthy activities –
keep maintaining a good work/life balance.

Support System

Leaving university does not mean you will leave all of your friendships or relationships, it just means they will change. It's helpful to talk through what future friendships will look like. Reach out to friends, family or peers for support and advice if you feel you are struggling.

You may be returning home to live with family which, after enjoying your independence, will probably be an adjustment. It's a good idea to talk to family members about your expectations and responsibilities.

Most importantly, if you notice that how you are feeling is negatively impacting your mental health or affecting your ability to engage with things, seek help from your GP or a Mental Health Professional. Remember that the University Wellbeing Services are open year-round to current students.

International Students

If you are an international student, leaving university may mean leaving the UK. If you need advice about your visa, contact the International Student Advisory Team. You can also find lots of useful information at UK Council for International Student Affairs.

Visit ukcisa.org.uk

Finances

You may have some concerns about your finances once you leave university or be unsure of what your options are. Reading Students' Union have lots of useful advice for finalists on how to manage their finances and entitlements. Visit rusu.co.uk/advice/money

Further help and support

Additional resources **BEFORE** you leave university:

- **Counselling and Wellbeing**
 - reading.ac.uk/well-being
- **Student Welfare Team**
 - reading.ac.uk/welfare-team
- **International Students**
 - reading.ac.uk/essentials/international
- **Financial Advice**
 - blackbullion.com
- **Student Support Coordinators**
 - reading.ac.uk/essentials/support-and-wellbeing/support-arrangements/student-support

Additional resources **AFTER** you leave university:

- **Student Minds**
 - studentminds.org.uk
- **Graduate Recruitment Bureau**
 - grb.uk.com