

Research Development Fund (RDF) Open Call 2025

Applicants should submit the completed online application form no later than **23:59 on Thursday 24 April 2025**. Please, read the guidance in Sections 1, 2 and 3 of this form carefully before completing it.

* Required

Guidance

The Research Development Fund (RDF) Open Call is available to enable ambitious and strategic research projects led by academic staff and aligning with the new University Research and Innovation Strategy [\[LINK TO STRATEGY HERE\]](#). Funding will be awarded through a competitive process; the University Committee for Research and Innovation (UCRI) will assess applications according to eligibility and criteria set out below.

The call is open to researchers at all career stages. This year, we are specifically inviting applications which align with the following elements of the University Research and Innovation Strategy 2030:

1. Research underpinning efforts to forge bold, strategic research partnerships at national and international levels, supporting ambitious, large scale projects that deliver global impact;
2. Work to expand research commercialisation, translating our discoveries into real-world applications that fuel innovation and economic growth;
3. Ground-breaking research on the protection and restoration of ecosystems, pioneering nature-based solutions that safeguard biodiversity and mitigate climate risks;
4. Research accelerating the responsible use of digital innovation and AI to tackle sustainability challenges;
5. Research which strengthens interdisciplinary working to address the complexity of sustainability challenges, harnessing the agency of the arts, humanities and social sciences in co-creating and implementing solutions.

The purpose of the call is to support ambitious projects that have the potential to lead to larger projects and associated funding bids. The call funds projects of up to a maximum of two financial years (01 August to 31 July), with a range of funding for each project between £10,000 and £50,000. Projects can extend across a maximum of 2 financial years but spend cannot be transferred between financial years. For 2-year projects, a mid term report is required for approval of the second year of funding. All projects must specify anticipated spend in each financial year (01 August to 31 July).

Applicants should demonstrate that funding for the proposed project is not available from other sources, and/or they should specify the match funding from internal or external sources or equivalent in-kind contribution from an external partners/third sector. If such contribution is not available, applicants should explain why.

Applicants should specify any previous RDF (formerly know as RETF) awards (maximum two) held and the resulting outcomes (grant applications, grant awards, published outputs). Previously submitted applications are NOT eligible unless they are substantially different.

Please note that projects in partnership with RBFT are not eligible for this scheme.

Submission deadline is 23:59 on Thursday 24 April 2025 (as published on the staff portal). All applications must be submitted through this online application form. At the closing date outlined above, and prior to scoring, a pre-sift for basic eligibility will be undertaken.

Please note that for support to enable the completion of major outputs (anticipated to be 4* quality), academic staff should apply to the annual competition for Research Fellowships (advertised separately).

Costings

Eligible costs include salaries (and on-costs) for research, technical and professional staff, appropriate public engagement projects and/or teaching replacement as buy-out for academic staff to complete the project. For further information on costings, please contact colleagues in Research, Engagement and Innovation Office (REIO) as follows:

- For H&C and P&R contact Colin Bulpitt at c.d.bulpitt@reading.ac.uk
- For AFH and Environment contact James Church at james.church@reading.ac.uk

All costings included in the application must:

- Have been calculated by colleagues in Research, Engagement and Innovation Office (REIO).
- Link clearly and directly to the activities to be funded by this award as detailed in Q17 (project deliverables) of the application form.

Please note that applicants are expected to adhere to the researcher concordat, particularly with regard to employing PDRAs on short-term contracts.

Additional information on costings is available in the **Open Call FAQs** [\[ADD LINK HERE\]](#).

Eligibility & Criteria

Eligibility

- Proposals can cover a broad range of disciplines and project types. Whilst an indirect outcome, the funding is not intended to support the completion stage of research outputs.
- Projects in partnership with Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust (RBFT) will not be eligible for this call.
- The application is to be led by a Research Division staff member on a permanent academic Research Intensive or Teaching and Research contract.
- Costings have been calculated by a colleague in Research, Engagement and Innovation Office (REIO).
- The application is endorsed by the Head of School and/or Research Division Lead.
- Funding is not available in full from other sources.
- A level of match funding, or in-kind contribution from an external partner/third sector, is expected or a rationale given where this is not the case.

Criteria

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- The extent to which the proposal aligns with one or more of the themes drawn from the new University Research and Innovation Strategy.
- The extent to which the proposal will support research excellence and lead to enhancement of the University reputation.
- The extent to which the proposal will deliver value for money. This may include leveraging external funding; developing partnerships or public engagement; or translating into products or services.
- The feasibility of the delivery of the project in terms of methodology, timeframe, applicant track record and institutional/school support.

FAQs and Assistance

- FAQs can be found here: [LINK TO FAQs]. If you have questions or require assistance, please contact the Executive Governance Office Research at research-ego@reading.ac.uk.

Confirmation

My RDL has reviewed and endorsed this application.

- I define myself as a Researcher on a permanent academic Research Intensive or Teaching and Research Contract.
- I do not currently hold an active RDF (formerly known as RETF) award.
- The project is not in partnership with RBFT.

1. Can you confirm the above statement? *

Yes - I can confirm the above statement

Application details

2. Applicant name *

3. Applicant employee number *

4. Applicant Department/School *

5. Applicant Research Division *

6. Project Title *

7. Do you currently hold any active RDF (formerly known as REFT) awards: *

Yes

No

8. Previous RDF Funding

If you have previously held RDF (formerly RETF) funding, please provide up to two examples. For these, please include information on the award (scheme, project dates etc), and on resulting outcomes (for example, grant applications, grant awards or published outputs).

9. Is the project in partnership with RBFT (if the answer is yes then unfortunately the project is not eligible for this call): *

Yes, unfortunately the project is not eligible for this call

No, please continue to the next question

10. Total RDF Funding requested *

This is the amount being requested from RDF to complete the project

The value must be a number

11. The costs in this form should be directly aligned with the planned activity in Q17. Please confirm that the costs included in this form are those calculated by Research, Engagement and Innovation Office (REIO) *

Yes

12. Please select the name of the Research, Engagement and Innovation Office (REIO) colleague who produced the costings *

Colin Bulpitt

James Church

13. Total cost of the project *

This is the total cost of the project, including RDF and any other secured funding from other sources (i.e. school/department, external, etc.)

The value must be a number

14. Project start date *

15. Project end date *

Project Description

16. Please briefly describe this project proposal - Max 500 words *

Project deliverables

17. Give an outline of the planned activities and how they meet the criteria; please list the deliverables and outcomes of the project (for instance, research grant applications, impact development, relationship building, etc.) Max 500 words. *

18. Are there IP implications as a result of this project? If so, how will these be managed? *

Project Risks

19. What are the risks associated with the project and how will these be mitigated? (Describe any factors that might inhibit the successful achievement of the project as described above) *

Project Finances

20. Principal Funding Objective *

Please select the funding objective most appropriate for your project (one selection only). This question is for monitoring purposes only.

- Strategic Projects and partnerships
- Growing research income
- Strengthening quality of research outputs
- Impact
- Innovation
- International partnerships
- Building research profile and reputation

21. Have you secured funding or in-kind contribution from other sources? *

Other sources might include school/department funding, external partners, etc. In-kind contributions could include staff time/equipment/intellectual contribution.

- Yes
- No, please give reason at Q22 below

22. If you have not secured funding or in-kind contribution from other sources please explain the reasons below. *

Funded Activities

For each activity detailed in section 6 project deliverables, please provide detail of each related cost as calculated by Research, Engagement and Innovation Office (REIO). For staff time/posts, please ensure that, in addition to the activity supported, you include FTE, Grade and named individual (or new post where this is the case). For infrastructure, software, travel etc, please ensure that relevant UoR staff are named in the activity description. Where costs are shared with other organisations, please include in the description the proportion being paid by UoR and the proportion being paid by other organisations. Please note that only costs calculated by Research, Engagement and Innovation Office (REIO) should be included here. For further assistance with costings please contact REIO:

- For H&C and P&R contact Colin Bulpitt on c.d.bulpitt@reading.ac.uk
- For AFH and Environment contact James Church on james.church@reading.ac.uk

23. Additional source of funding or in-kind contribution 1 *

Yes

No

24. Additional source of funding or in-kind contribution 1 *

Please provide details of this source of funding or in-kind contribution

25. Additional source of funding 1 - Amount Y1 *

Please provide the amount secured from this source of funding. Please put N/A if not applicable.

26. Additional source of funding 1 - Amount Y2 *

Please provide the amount secured from this source of funding. Please put N/A if not applicable.

27. Do you have a further source of funding or in-kind contribution? *

Yes

No

28. Additional source of funding or in-kind contribution 2 *

Please provide details of this source of funding or in-kind contribution.

29. Additional source of funding 2 - Amount Y1 *

Please provide the amount secured from this source of funding. Please put N/A if not applicable.

30. Additional source of funding 2 - Amount Y2 *

Please provide the amount secured from this source of funding. Please put N/A if not applicable.

31. Do you have another source of funding or in-kind contribution? *

Yes

No

32. Additional source of funding or in-kind contribution 3 *

Please provide details of this source of funding or in-kind contribution.

33. Additional source of funding 3 - Amount Y1 *

Please provide the amount secured from this source of funding. Please put N/A if not applicable.

34. Additional source of funding 3 - Amount Y2 *

Please provide the amount secured from this source of funding. Please put N/A if not applicable.

35. Do you have another source of funding or in-kind contribution? *

Yes

No

36. Additional source of funding or in-kind contribution 4 *

Please provide details of this source of funding or in-kind contribution.

37. Additional source of funding 4 - Amount Y1 *

Please provide the amount secured from this source of funding. Please put N/A if not applicable.

38. Additional source of funding 4 - Amount Y2 *

Please provide the amount secured from this source of funding. Please put N/A if not applicable.

Funded activities (to be covered by RDF Open Call funding)

Please provide details of those activities outlined in section 6 project deliverables to be covered by the RDF Open Call funding. Please note the allowed costs as detailed in the guidance, namely salaries (and on-costs) for research, technical and professional staff, appropriate public engagement projects and/or teaching replacement as buy-out for academic staff to complete the project. For further assistance with costings please contact Research, Engagement and Innovation Office (REIO):

- For H&C and P&R contact Colin Bulpitt on c.d.bulpitt@reading.ac.uk
- For AFH and Environment contact James Church on james.church@reading.ac.uk

39. Activity 1 - Description *

40. Activity 1 Category *

- Buy-out staff time
- Salary support
- Academic posts (e.g. PDRA)
- Non-academic posts
- Equipment and infrastructure
- Software
- Travel
- Events
- Training
- Other

41. Activity 1 - Amount FY1 *

The value must be a number

42. Activity 1 - Amount FY2 *

The value must be a number

43. Is there another activity to be funded from RDF? *

- Yes
- No

44. Activity 2 - Description *

45. Activity 2 Category *

- Buy-out staff time
- Salary support
- Academic posts (e.g. PDRA)
- Non-academic posts
- Equipment and infrastructure
- Software
- Travel
- Events
- Training
- Other

46. Activity 2 - Amount FY1 *

The value must be a number

47. Activity 2 - Amount FY2 *

The value must be a number

48. Is there another activity to be funded from RDF? *

- Yes
- No

49. Activity 3 - Description *

50. Activity 3 - Category *

- Buy-out staff time
- Salary support
- Academic posts (e.g. PDRA)
- Non-academic posts
- Equipment and infrastructure
- Software
- Travel
- Events
- Training
- Other

51. Activity 3 - Amount FY1 *

The value must be a number

52. Activity 3 - Amount FY2 *

The value must be a number

53. Is there another activity to be funded from RDF? *

- Yes
- No

54. Activity 4 - Description *

55. Activity 4 - Category *

- Buy-out staff time
- Salary support
- Academic posts (e.g. PDRA)
- Non-academic posts
- Equipment and infrastructure
- Software
- Travel
- Events
- Training
- Other

56. Activity 4 - Amount FY1 *

The value must be a number

57. Activity 4 - Amount FY2 *

The value must be a number

58. Is there another activity to be funded from RDF? *

- Yes
- No

59. Activity 5 - Description *

60. Activity 5 - Category *

- Buy-out staff time
- Salary support
- Academic posts (e.g. PDRA)
- Non-academic posts
- Equipment and infrastructure
- Software
- Travel
- Events
- Training
- Other

61. Activity 5 - Amount FY1 *

The value must be a number

62. Activity 5 - Amount FY2 *

The value must be a number

63. Is there another activity to be funded from RDF? *

- Yes
- No

64. Activity 6 - Description *

65. Activity 6 - Category *

- Buy-out staff time
- Salary support
- Academic posts (e.g. PDRA)
- Non-academic posts
- Equipment and infrastructure
- Software
- Travel
- Events
- Training
- Other

66. Activity 6 - Amount FY1 *

The value must be a number

67. Activity 6 - Amount FY2 *

The value must be a number

68. Is there another activity to be funded from RDF? *

- Yes
- No

69. Activity 7 - Description *

70. Activity 7 - Category *

- Buy-out staff time
- Salary support
- Academic posts (e.g. PDRA)
- Non-academic posts
- Equipment and infrastructure
- Software
- Travel
- Events
- Training
- Other

71. Activity 7 - Amount FY1 *

The value must be a number

72. Activity 7 - Amount FY2 *

The value must be a number

73. Is there another activity to be funded from RDF? *

- Yes
- No

74. Activity 8 - Description *

75. Activity 8 - Category *

- Buy-out staff time
- Salary support
- Academic posts (e.g. PDRA)
- Non-academic posts
- Equipment and infrastructure
- Software
- Travel
- Events
- Training
- Other

76. Activity 8 - Amount FY1 *

The value must be a number

77. Activity 8 - Amount FY2 *

The value must be a number

78. Is there another activity to be funded from RDF? *

- Yes
- No

79. Activity 9 - Description *

80. Activity 9 - Category *

- Buy-out staff time
- Salary support
- Academic posts (e.g. PDRA)
- Non-academic posts
- Equipment and infrastructure
- Software
- Travel
- Events
- Training
- Other

81. Activity 9 - Amount FY1 *

The value must be a number

82. Activity 9 - Amount FY2 *

The value must be a number

83. Is there another activity to be funded from RDF? *

- Yes
- No

84. Activity 10 - Category *

- Buy-out staff time
- Salary support
- Academic posts (e.g. PDRA)
- Non-academic posts
- Equipment and infrastructure
- Software
- Travel
- Events
- Training
- Other

85. Activity 10 - Description *

86. Activity 10 - Amount FY1 *

The value must be a number

87. Activity 10 - Amount FY2 *

The value must be a number

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