



# University of Reading Commuter 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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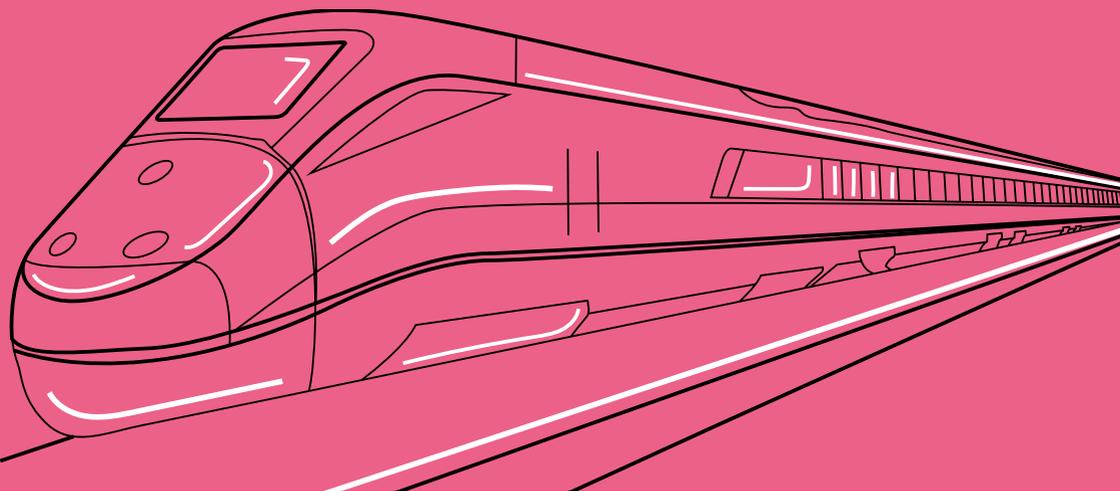
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# Our tips



## 01 First steps

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

## 02 Travelling by car

The University website has lots of information about your options for making your way to campus and parking: [www.reading.ac.uk/estates/campus-services/parking/student-parking](http://www.reading.ac.uk/estates/campus-services/parking/student-parking)

You're encouraged to use sustainable modes of transport, so you will only be eligible for a parking permit if you have a valid reason to obtain one. If you do get one, campus has multiple entrances so you will never be parking too far away from your building. Applications for car parking permits have strict deadlines during the first week of term so make sure you find out the deadline on the website.

## 03 Travelling by train

Give yourself plenty of time in case there are delays. If a train makes you late for class, try not to let this stress you out. Your lecturers understand that train travel can be unpredictable, so if you explain your circumstances to them, you won't be judged for it.

## 04 Travelling by bus

The 21/21a bus leaves from right outside the station and stops throughout the town centre. I recommend downloading the Reading Buses app to find student deals on fares and access the timetables. The buses are less frequent during the holidays so keep an eye out for any changes.

## 05 Making the most of your day

Make sure you have a phone charger and a laptop charger to keep your devices charged. There are plenty of plug sockets around campus and in all the study areas. If you need to heat up food from home, you can use the microwave in the student union building.

You might find yourself with spare time in between contact hours. Try looking up Student Life events, events in your school or societies which are active at times which fit your schedule. You can also relax at the student union, find a quiet space in the library, or go for a walk around the lake.

It can feel isolating when it seems like all the socialising is happening in residential halls, but that isn't true. Be patient, get involved with opportunities and you will find plenty of ways to make friends.

# Frequently asked questions

## How will I fit travel time into my timetable?



Start with researching how long it will take you to get to university to work out what time you need to leave. You can then add this to your personal calendar or your Microsoft Outlook calendar.



## How am I going to meet people if I am not living on campus?

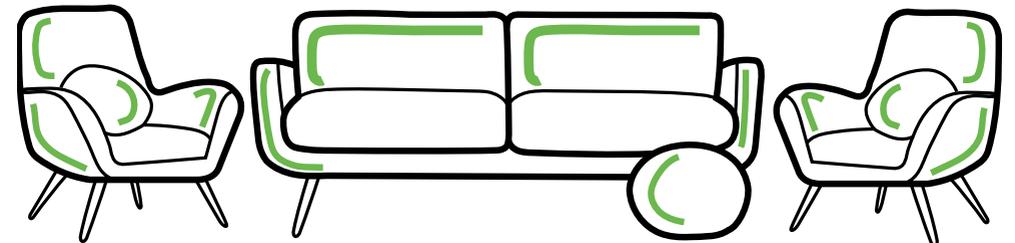


The best way to meet people when not living in student accommodation is to chat to students on your course, volunteer or join societies. If you're interested in a society, you can go to the free taster sessions at the start of term. All society information can be found on the student union website:

[readingsu.co.uk](http://readingsu.co.uk)

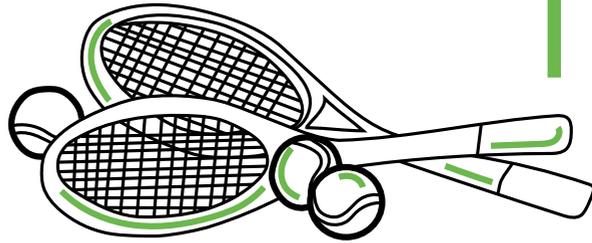
## What campus spaces are there for me if I don't have a room in halls?

The library has huge study space available and there are also some school specific study spaces. There's plenty of social space in the student union building, as well as cafes and eateries on campus.



## Will I miss out by not living on or near campus?

It can be quite easy to experience FOMO (fear of missing out) when not living on or near campus, but it depends on the activities you enjoy doing. There are plenty of activities to do but it's best to look for these in the daytime or early evening so you can return home in good time.



## How will I pay for travel?

How you pay for your travel will be down to you and your financial circumstances. As a commuter student, you may be able to access the maintenance loan from Student Finance England to help cover your costs.



If you find yourself struggling with your finances, then it's worth getting in contact with the Student Financial Advisory Team, as you may be eligible for a bursary: <https://www.reading.ac.uk/ready-to-study/study/fees-and-funding/financial-advice-and-support>

## Are there remote teaching options?

Generally, teaching takes place in-person although there are elements that take place online. It depends on your course and the teaching staff. Try your best to come in but if you can't make it to campus, it's worth asking your lecturer if they have any online catch up options available.



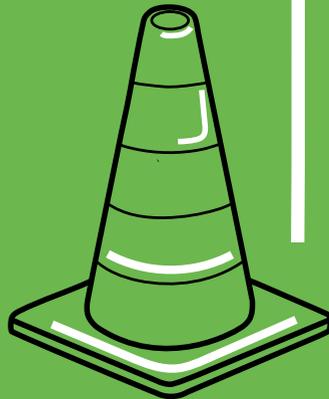
## Is there a start of term social for commuter students?

Yes, there is a commuter social at the start of term and these carry on throughout the academic year. It's worth going to the social to meet other commuter students and find out any information you need from staff. The first social usually happens during welcome week.



## How do I deal with disruption to my route?

It's always best to have a back-up plan but disruption will be different for everyone. Just be sure to let your lecturer know by email if you'll be late or cannot attend. It's easier to plan for expected disruptions but it will be harder to plan for unexpected disruption and staff will understand this.



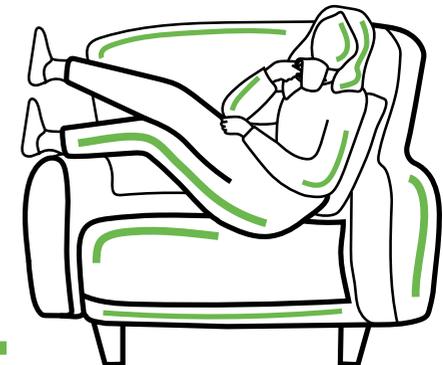
## Will I be penalised for being late if it's not my fault?

There aren't penalties but you need to email lecturers as soon as you can. Attendance is important and you want to catch up on important information, so be proactive if you need to catch up or explain your circumstances.



## How do I deal with the personal impacts of commuting?

Commuting can be tiring. Make time for yourself to relax and get plenty of good sleep. The Life Tools Programme equips students with these skills, by the way. Remember that if you are concerned about your wellbeing, there are friendly staff in Welfare and Wellbeing Services who can offer support.



# 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](https://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](https://readingsu.co.uk/student-voice)

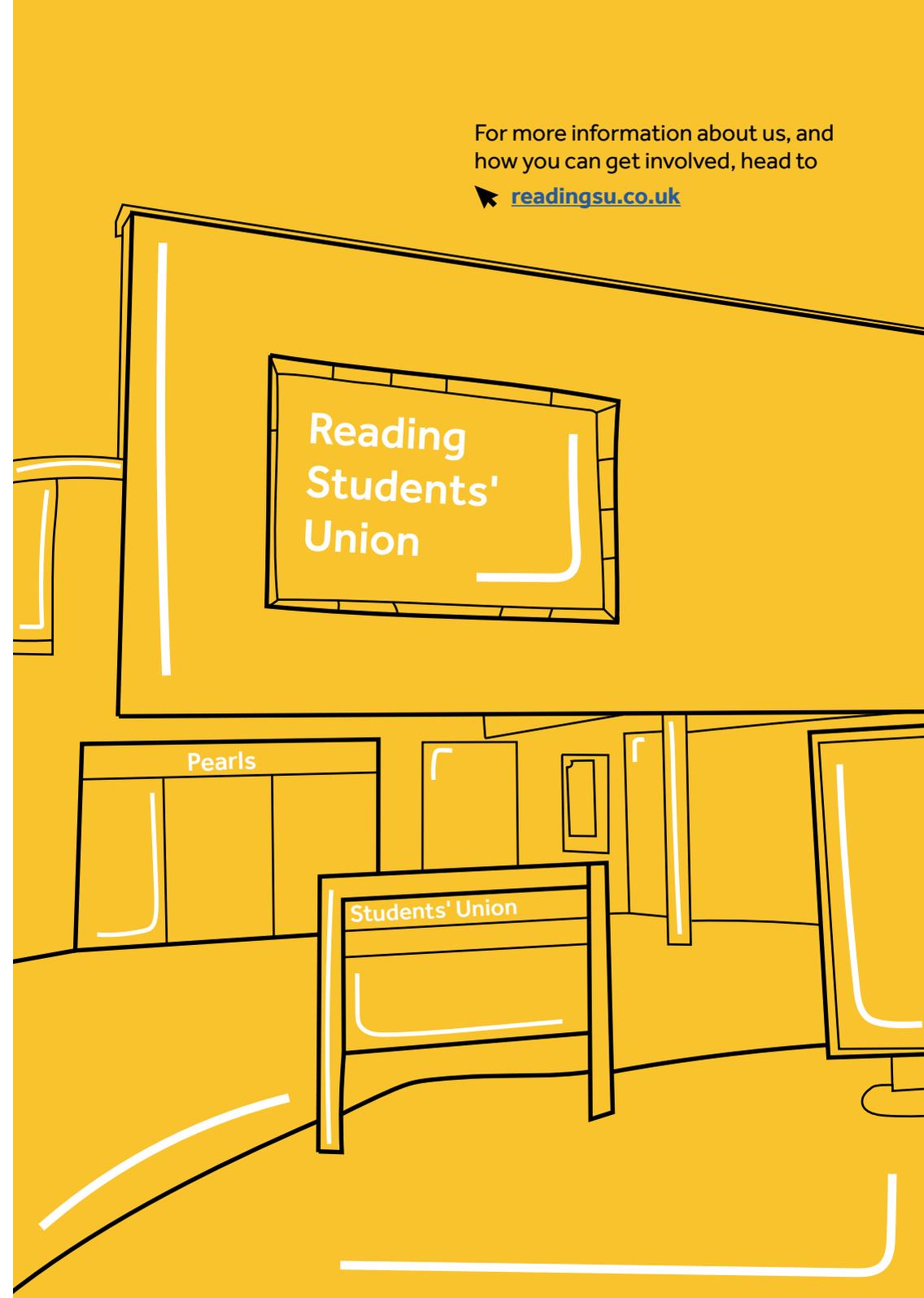
Our free, confidential, independent and non-discriminatory advice service is here for all students. We deal with a wide range of issues such as academic, housing and money advice - if you are unsure, just get in touch.

➤ [readingsu.co.uk/advice-&-support](https://readingsu.co.uk/advice-&-support)



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

➤ [readingsu.co.uk](https://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](https://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](https://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](https://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](https://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](https://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](https://reading.ac.uk/careers)

☎ 0118 378 8359

➤ **Henley Business School Careers:** [henley.ac.uk/careers](https://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](https://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](https://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](https://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](https://risisweb.reading.ac.uk)

➤ [reading.ac.uk/essentials/Support-And-Wellbeing/Disability](https://reading.ac.uk/essentials/Support-And-Wellbeing/Disability)

✉ [disability@reading.ac.uk](mailto:disability@reading.ac.uk)

☎ 0118 378 4202



# 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](http://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](http://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.

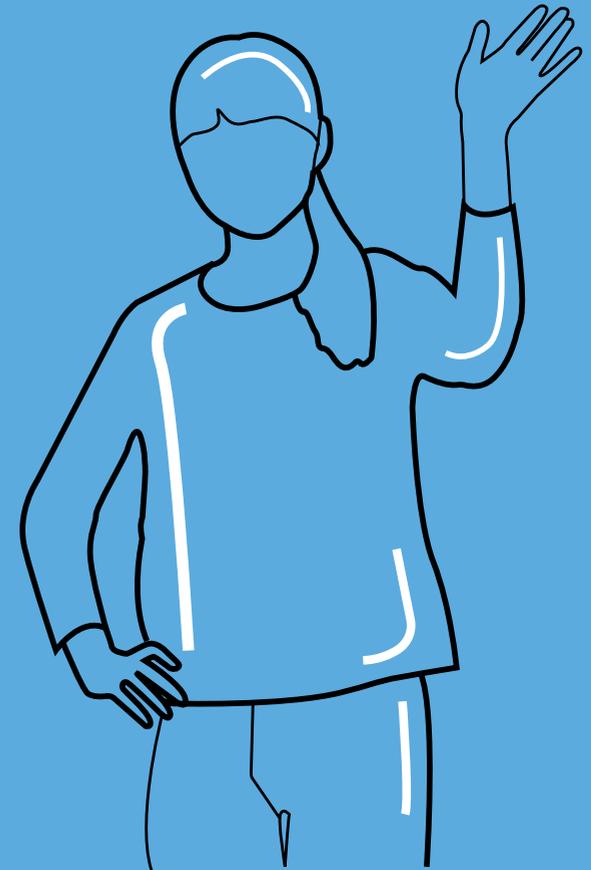
### Tutorial / Seminar

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.