

UNIVERSITY OF READING PENSION SCHEME (URPS)

As an employee of the University of Reading, you are eligible for membership of the University of Reading Pension Scheme (URPS), and this leaflet gives you an overview.

It explains:

- The circumstances under which you will become a member
- The basic provisions of the Scheme (including contribution rates)
- Where to find more information.

When will I join?

The vast majority of our employees are enrolled in the pension scheme from day one of their employment through a process known as **contractual enrolment**. This means that entry is linked to your contract of employment.

However, if you are under age 22 or employed in certain casual or short-term roles, you won't join unless you either:

- a) meet the criteria for legislative automatic enrolment, or
- b) choose to opt into the scheme.

Your contract will specify what form of enrolment will apply to you.

Why should I join?

There are several reasons why it's a great idea to be a member of a pension scheme run by your employer:

1. You're saving for your future – with help from the University

While you're earning an income, you're also building up savings for retirement, supported by contributions from the University. Retirement might feel distant, especially when you're young, but no one wants to work forever. At some point, you'll want to step back and enjoy more time for yourself and your family. Being in a pension scheme helps provide an income in retirement or cash options to ease the transition from work to leisure.

2. You will receive free life cover

As a URPS member, you automatically receive life cover worth six times your salary. If you die while actively contributing to the scheme, a tax-free lump sum of six times your salary will be paid to your beneficiaries. If you have a family, this can be a valuable benefit — even though it's one you hope will never be needed.

3. Don't Miss Out on Valuable Employer Contributions

While you're a member of URPS, the University contributes to your Retirement Account — and at a higher rate than you do. If you opt out, you won't receive these contributions, and the University will keep the money. Plus, if you remain in the scheme for at least five years, the University's contribution increases by an additional 2% of your pay.

How much is it going to cost, and what do I get in return?

As a member of URPS, you contribute 4% of your pensionable pay, and these contributions benefit from tax relief.

Most members also contribute through our salary exchange arrangement, known as **Pensions+**. This means your contributions are taken before tax and National Insurance are calculated. As a result, it is usually a more efficient way to save and can lead to a higher take-home pay compared to standard contributions.

More information can be found on the University's **Pensions+** webpage.

Tell me about the Scheme

The University of Reading Pension Scheme started on 1 August 2011 for employees appointed to roles in Grades 1 – 5 (or equivalent). It is a Defined Contribution Scheme, where both your contributions and those made by the University are invested in a Retirement Account made up of a range of investment funds.

There is a default investment route, so you do not need to make any investment decisions unless you wish to. Contributions will be invested automatically. However, you also have the option to choose a different investment strategy or to "Self Select" the specific funds in which your contributions are invested.

You can find more information about the available investment options in the **Aviva Guide to URPS**, which is accessible via the **HR website**.

What happens when I retire?

Your retirement benefits in the Scheme will be based on the value of your Retirement Account at the time you retire. This depends on:

- a) How much has been contributed over time, and
- b) How well the different investment funds have performed during your membership of the Scheme.

When you retire, you'll have several options for accessing your benefits:

- Take the entire value as cash (some of which will be tax-free).
- Take part as tax-free cash and use the rest to buy a pension (also known as an annuity).
- Use the entire amount to purchase a pension.

You also have the option to transfer your Retirement Account to another pension arrangement.

What if I don't want to be a member?

Before deciding, please read the information under "**Why Should I Join**" and "**Tell me about the Scheme**" to understand the benefits you would miss.

If you are still sure you do not want to be a member, please read the relevant section below.

Contractual Enrolment

If Scheme membership is part of your employment contract, you can opt out after your start date. Opting out in advance is not permitted.

To opt out, contact the Pensions Team at pensions@reading.ac.uk to request a withdrawal form.

If your form is received within 30 days of your start date, you will be able to receive a discretionary refund of any contributions you made, subject to tax and National Insurance. If you opt out after 30 days, your Retirement Account will become deferred, and a refund of contributions will not be possible.

Legislative Enrolment

If your membership has been triggered by an auto-enrolment assessment, you have a statutory 30-day period to opt out and receive a refund of your contributions, subject to tax and National Insurance.

This period will begin once you are notified that you have been auto-enrolled. Aviva, the scheme administrator, will contact you with details and instructions on how to opt out.

Opting out cannot be done in advance of this notice. You will see pension deductions for at least one month, but these will be refunded if you contact Aviva within the 30-day period.

If you wish to opt out after the 30-day period has ended, please contact the Pensions Team at pensions@reading.ac.uk to request a withdrawal form. In this case, your Retirement Account will become deferred and a refund of contributions will not be possible.

Further Information

This leaflet provides a brief overview only. For full details of the Scheme, please refer to the **URPS Membership Booklet** and the information available on the University's [URPS webpage](#).

You should also read the **Aviva Guide to URPS**, which explains how your pension is invested and outlines the available funds if you choose the Self Select option.

Once your details have been passed to the external administrator, Aviva, they will send you joining information and explain how to access your Retirement Account online at www.avivamymoney.co.uk.

It is important to complete an **Expression of Wish form** through your online account so the Scheme Trustees know who you would like to receive the lump sum life assurance benefit if you die while an active member.

For general information about pensions and saving for retirement, please visit:

- [Gov.UK](#) – for information on auto-enrolment and finding lost pensions
- [Money Helper](#) – a government service offering guidance on all aspects of pensions
- [Pension Wise](#) – a government service offering guidance on your pension options at retirement

And if I have any questions?

If you have any questions on URPS or your Scheme membership, please contact the University's Pensions Team in the first instance.

You can contact the Team via email on pensions@reading.ac.uk or by phone on 0118 378 7121.