# UR Device RGBUniversity Research Fellowships 2025 to 2026

**Route A: Innovation (Mid-Career Researchers)**

The University Committee for Research & Innovation is supporting up to five University Research Fellowships which provide **£15,000** to successful applicants to cover teaching replacement costs and research expenses. Fellowships will be for the **duration of one year** and can be taken by part-time staff on a fractional basis over two years.

**Three** of the University Research Fellowships (Route A) are intended to support research **innovation in the** **arts, humanities, and social sciencesacross the four University research themes**. This year, the Fellowships will support the development of **Mid-Career research leaders** and the projects should therefore show a demonstrable **step-change in terms of significance and ambition**, appropriate to the applicant’s career stage. Successful applicants will be supported to develop **research leadership** through mentoring and training, where appropriate. Support for this career stage has been prioritised in response to feedback received through the Research Culture Survey (2023). Eligibility criteria for these Mid-Career Fellowships are set out below.

## Objectives and Criteria

The objectives of the University Research Fellowship (Route A) are to:

* Significantly progress the development of **an innovative programme of research** in the arts, humanities, and social sciences across one or more of the four University research themes, that **shows ambition and constitutes a step-change** in the work of the applicant;
* Support the **development of new approaches, partnerships, interdisciplinary collaborations and research** outputs (including creative practice research) at a quality that is world leading (assessed in terms of originality, rigour, and significance of the proposed Fellowship project).

All successful applicants will be supported to set out a personal development plan that identifies individual goals for research leadership and appropriate training and mentoring to achieve them.

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

* The extent to which the Fellowship will enable an innovative and ambitious programme of research (25%)
* The contribution of the Fellowship to supporting a step-change in the research programme of the applicant and their research leadership development (25%)
* The quality and significance of the proposed project and its outputs, and the strength of the proposed plan to deliver it (50%).

During the course of the Fellowship, all award holders will make an interim presentation to the University Committee for Research & Innovation. On completion, all Fellowships will be evaluated by the University Committee for Research & Innovation, to assess the extent to which the envisaged objectives have been achieved. Fellowships that are judged as unsatisfactory in terms of having met the envisaged objectives might result in limits on the access of the individual or school in question to future funding from RDF.

## Eligibility

All Mid-Career RI or T&R staff within the arts, humanities, and social sciences across the four University research themes are eligible to apply.

The University defines a Mid-Career Researcher as someone meeting the following description:

* **Grade 7 or Grade 8 on a permanent academic RI or T&R contract** with 5-15 years cumulative experience within these grades, allowing for professional and personal career interruptions.
* Completed probationary period.
* Evidence of independence and leadership of a research area.
* Have published works or outputs of intellectual distinction in line with expectations of the discipline.
* Have a track record of securing research income in line with expectations of the discipline, preferably as principal investigator.
* At least one external role, such as journal editorship, research funding panel, REF panel, conference organisation etc.

Please note that:

* It is anticipated that applications will primarily come from researchers in the H&C Theme, the P&R Theme and the Research Division AFESS, but may also include relevant research from other areas, for example Built Environment and PCLS, depending on the nature of the topic/research methods. Potential applicants from the latter and other areas are advised to consult with their APVC Research if they are uncertain whether their topic is eligible.
* Holders of active internal University Fellowships or RDF (formerly RETF) Open Call awards will not be eligible to apply until such time as their current awards are successfully completed.
* Projects in partnership with RBFT will not be considered.

## Application Process

Applications are invited for appointment to University Research Fellowships for the academic year 2025/26. **The deadline for applications is Tuesday 25 March 2025**.Applications must be submitted on the attached pro-forma and emailed to Executive Governance Office Research ([research-execgovoffice@reading.ac.uk](mailto:research-execgovoffice@reading.ac.uk)).

Proposals will be assessed by the University Committee for Research & Innovation against the assessment criteria outlined above.

# University Research Fellowship 2025 to 2026

# Application Form (Route A)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | | |  | |
| **Research Division** | | |  | |
| **School** | | |  | |
|  | | | | |
| **Section 1 - To be completed by the Applicant** | | | | |
| **Project Title** | | | | |
| **Research Innovation**  Briefly describe the proposed programme of research. How is this innovative and ambitious within the research context of your discipline (e.g. new approaches, partnerships, interdisciplinary collaborations, etc)? (max. 350 words) | | | | |
| **Research Leadership**  How will the project constitute a step-change in your work? In what ways will it contribute to the development of your research leadership and what will it enable you to do in the future? (max. 350 words) | | | | |
| **Research Design and Quality**  How does the project build on your current and past research? What groundwork has been carried out to ensure its feasibility? How will you plan and deliver your research to ensure originality, rigour, and significance? (max. 500 words) | | | | |
| **Deliverables**  Describe the expected deliverables and the timetable for their delivery. The emphasis should be on outputs to be delivered within the period of the Fellowship, providing details where possible of target journals/publishers/practice research. If longer form outputs (such as monographs) form a complementary part of the Fellowship, indicate the timetable for completion and milestones that will serve as agreed monitoring points (maximum period within 2 years of the completion of the Fellowship). (max. 300 words) | | | | |
| **Finances**  The awards will provide £15,000 to contribute to teaching buy-out for the year of the Fellowship and/or research support/research expenses. A maximum of 20% (£3000) can be used for research expenses. Please outline any research expenses you expect to fund from the University Research Fellowship below. | | | | |
| **Previous External Grant Applications**  Provide details of any external grant applications during the past 5 years (Funder, topic, funding scheme, value, and outcome). (max. 200 words) | | | | |
| **Previous Funding from RDF (formerly RETF)**  Please provide details of, and outcomes from, any other RDF (formerly RETF) funding received in the last three years. | | | | |
| **Eligibility as a Mid-Career Researcher (G7/G8):** I confirm that my career at University of Reading as a Grade 7 or Grade 8 researcher on a permanent academic RI or T&R contract has spanned between 5 to15 years and meets the eligibility criteria as described above. | | | | |
| **YES** |  | **NO\*** | |  |
| \*If No then with regard to the first criteria above, if you have greater than 15 years’ experience across Grade 7-8, please briefly outline why this is the case. You do not need to provide personal details just professional and/or personal break periods. | | | | |
| **Signature of Applicant**  **Date** | | | | |
| **Section 2 - To be completed by the Research Division Leader** | | | | |
| **RDL Supporting Statement**  Please provide a supporting statement for the application. Based on your knowledge of the applicant’s discipline, please comment on the significance of the proposed project. | | | | |
| **Signature of Research Division Leader**  **Print Name** | | | | |
| **Section 3 - To be completed by the Head of School** | | | | |
| **HoS Supporting Statement**  Please confirm:   1. Your support for the project, and that successful applicants will be relieved of all teaching responsibilities (excl. PhD supervision) for the year of the Fellowship and your commitment to cover funding shortfall if required. 2. That the School, through its line management and PDR and ARP processes, will seek to ensure that the Fellow will produce promised outputs of the Fellowship within the envisaged time. 3. That the School will ensure that the appropriate teaching buy-out arrangements are put in place. Please briefly outline the buyout plan below: | | | | |
| **Signature of Head of School**  **Print Name** | | | | |

Once completed, please email to the Executive Governance Office Research ([research-execgovoffice@reading.ac.uk](mailto:research-execgovoffice@reading.ac.uk)) by **Tuesday 25 March 2025**.