

2025 JCU Families Information Guide



NO. 1

in QLD for graduate
starting salary ¹

NO. 1

in Australia for
student support ²

NO. 1

in QLD for regional, rural and
remote health professionals ³

jcu.edu.au

Welcome to James Cook University

As a parent of two daughters who are completing their university studies, I understand the range of emotions that parents and partners of first-time university students can experience. This guide will provide you with information about JCU, the services and support available to students and how you can help your child or partner succeed in their study goals.



Education is vital to our shared future. It is only through education that we deepen our understanding of the world, gathering the skills needed to use knowledge effectively and grow as people able to contribute to society and shape a brighter future. Education also provides a route to access more challenging and rewarding careers. Yet education is also so much more: It can let us dream, explore exciting new concepts, have fun, and make lifelong friends.

Our commitment to you is that JCU is about all of these things. We are also about great student experiences and exceptional academic and career outcomes. JCU offers a comprehensive range of degrees and is well-positioned in the top 2% of the world's universities*. JCU has also retained its five-star rating for full-time graduate employment, for the thirteenth year in a row, in the Good Universities Guide 2024. This is the best-sustained performance of any university in Queensland and means that your child or partner can be confident that their choice to study at JCU will set them up for success.

JCU is dedicated to creating a brighter future for life in the tropics locally and worldwide through graduates and discoveries that make a difference. I am proud of the support we offer to students to allow them to achieve their potential and encourage them to take advantage of the range of services available.

As a parent or partner, you are a valuable part of our students' support network, and I am delighted to welcome you to the JCU community. We look forward to working with you to create a brighter future that makes a difference.

Professor Simon Biggs
Vice Chancellor and President

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**RESPECT.
NOW.
ALWAYS.**

James Cook University values and celebrates the diversity of our community, and is committed to ensuring our learning and working environment is safe and welcoming.

JCU is proud to be part of the Respect. Now. Always. campaign – a national initiative led by Universities Australia to highlight our determination to ensure our students and staff are safe from discrimination and sexual harassment. Further information about the campaign and free services available for students can be found at jcu.edu.au/sew.



Our commitment to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

James Cook University is committed to building strong and mutually beneficial partnerships that work towards closing the employment, health and education gap for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our students come from many backgrounds, promoting a rich cultural and experiential diversity on campus.

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the Australian lands and waters where our staff and students live, learn and work. We honour the unique cultural and spiritual relationship to the land, waters and seas of First Australian peoples and their continuing and rich contribution to James Cook University (JCU) and Australian society. We also pay respect to ancestors and Elders past, present and future. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised that this publication may contain names or images of people who have passed away.



Kassandra Savage (JCU Alumni),
'Coming Together and Respecting Difference',
acrylic on canvas, 2014, 90cm x 90cm.

University to confirm admission requirements and the availability of courses.
Information is correct at the time of printing. James Cook University reserves the right to alter any course or admission requirement without prior notice.
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*2024 ShanghaiRanking Academic Ranking of World Universities as a percentage of higher education providers in the International Association of Universities (IAU) database. ¹Good Universities Guide 2024. ²Good Universities Guide, UG Engineering 2024. ³Graduate Outcomes Survey 2016-2020, by % of recent graduates.

Transition into university

A period of adjustment

The first weeks of university are busy and exciting. There is so much for new students to see, learn, do and remember, but there is also support to help students succeed.

University will be a very different environment for those coming from a school or workplace background. Tertiary students are adult learners and are expected to manage their study responsibilities accordingly.

A typical university week

Student support services agree that the key to success at uni is being organised and managing time effectively. JCU recommends students allocate a minimum of 10–12 hours per week for each subject.

Around 25% of their time will be spent attending face-to-face classes/webinars and the other 75% will involve independent study.

This self-directed study will include academic reading, reviewing notes, completing tutorial exercises, group study, as well as assignment and exam preparation. For a full-time student studying three or four subjects, it is a significant time commitment (36–48 hours/week).

A weekly planner and a subject assessment planner are simple tools to manage time. Students can download these templates from The Learning Centre site. It is also helpful for students to share their planners with the household, so there is a shared understanding of study commitments.

Preparing for highs and lows

Students can experience a wide range of feelings and emotions as they progress through university. Parents and partners often experience the highs and lows alongside them. If you get to know the important dates, you can be ready for those times when extra support may be needed.

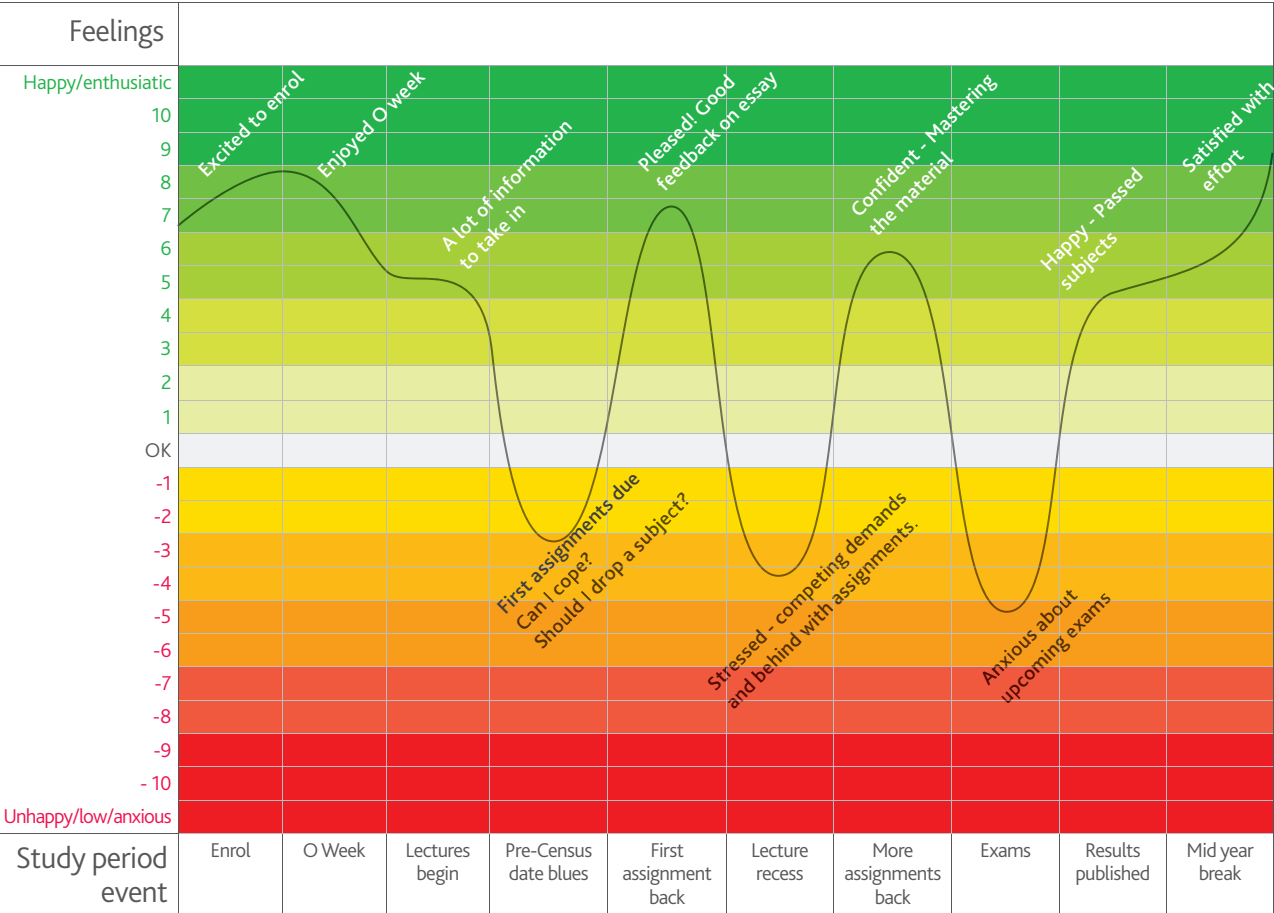
In the first weeks, students are typically happy, nervous and excited to start university and take pleasure in all the new experiences. However, within a few weeks, the realities of their workload may hit home and they may feel stressed as they juggle study, work, social life and family commitments.

Around Week 5, after their first assignments are completed and feedback is received, students should access staff assistance in the areas where they need additional knowledge or support in order to succeed.

In the second half of the study period, there will be a rush of final assessments due and preparation for exams. This is a time when students can feel the intense pressure of competing deadlines and the need to revise for exams. Students commonly feel anxious around assessment periods, as shown in the graphic below.

By the end of the first teaching period, students should be gaining confidence in their academic abilities. Students who plan for peak busy periods, ask for help, and maintain a balanced and healthy lifestyle, will increase their chances of success and be more likely to continue their studies.

Example - Emotional highs and lows for a new student in their first teaching period (based on a 13-week teaching period)



“Studying an undergraduate degree as a mature age student was quite challenging and a big commitment. My partner, Nick’s continued support helped me balance family life, study, and work.

“When I experienced the emotional lows that study can bring at certain times during the semester, Nick was always there to reassure me and to keep striving to achieve the best that I could be.

“I encourage all new students to be engaged with their learning and make the most out of their own journey through university. I would also encourage students to attend O Week, make new friends and access the free support services JCU has to offer.”

Jane Roberts

BACHELOR OF NURSING SCIENCE - ALUMINI



Starting university has been a challenging but extremely rewarding endeavour for my daughter Madilyn. I am extremely proud of her ability to successfully complete university subjects while working and balancing daily life.

“Some advice I would give to parents is to regularly communicate with your child and encourage them to share their successes and challenges with you. I would encourage students to become active members of the university community. This active participation can bring many rewards, including getting to meet new people and developing valuable support networks.”

Kathryn Beplate
PARENT

Differences between high school and university

For most new university students, their last education experience was in secondary school, so it is important to understand what the differences will be in a tertiary education setting. University is an adult learning environment, so the focus is very much on the student as a client, rather than extended family members. There is also a strong emphasis on students becoming independent learners, which is detailed in the table below.

First in the family

At JCU, we have a high percentage of students who are the first in their family to come to university. We understand that the transition into university can be exciting and stressful for these students and their families as they embark into unknown territory. JCU successfully navigates thousands of new students through this transition process every year as part of Orientation. Because each student is unique and requires different support at different times to be successful, we have a motto that 'smart students access support'. We encourage new students to know the support services and proactively access them early to support their success.

JCU families webpage

Choosing to go to university is a big step for your child or partner, and your support can make a real difference.

At JCU, we understand that helping your child or partner transition to university is easier with the right information. With this in mind, we have developed a webpage for parents and partners, which provides additional advice to help you support your family member starting uni.

jcu.edu.au/JCU-families

High School	University
Attendance is compulsory and classes are held five days per week	Students choose to enrol in university and class times and days vary
75% classes and 25% independent learning	25% classes and 75% independent learning
Teachers deliver content face-to-face	Lectures may be via video link or delivered through online learning platforms
Teachers direct learning and remind students about study responsibilities and assessment due dates	Students are independent learners responsible for managing their study workloads and meeting assessment deadlines
Teachers approach students if they believe they need assistance	Students are expected to monitor their own progress and seek help if needed
Teachers highlight important information	Students must review course and subject outlines for class content and identify important concepts
Teachers will review draft versions of assignments	Lecturers do not provide feedback on drafts
Assessment is more frequent and covers smaller amounts of material	Assessment is less frequent and covers larger amounts of learning material



Enrolment and academic progress

Key responsibilities

A student’s enrolment is a legal contract with the University. Managing their enrolment includes choosing appropriate subjects for their course, registering for classes, finalising enrolments and paying any fees by payment due dates.

Enrolment

Sorting out enrolment can take time, especially if a course has many subject choices. Students check and manage their enrolment using JCU’s online portal eStudent. If they have questions, they can contact the Student Centre. They can research and plan their subject choices using the Course Enrolment Planners online at: jcu.edu.au/course-enrolment-planners.

Privacy laws prevent parents and partners from accessing a student’s exam results, contact details, financial information or enrolment details, even if the student is below 18 years of age or you are paying their fees.

Academic progression

Students must achieve minimum academic standards for each stage of their course. Achieving satisfactory academic progress is important as it shows a student is meeting the learning objectives for their course, progressing with their studies, and meeting the requirements for graduate professions. If they don’t meet the minimum academic standards, JCU will contact them to provide advice and information on available support options.

Marks and results

Students view their marks for assignments online using LearnJCU. Final result dates are published in the Academic Calendars and are available in eStudent on that date.

Failing a subject

Nobody likes to fail, but it’s not the end of the world. If your student fails a subject, they can access a range of support options. These may include skill development workshops and online modules with The Learning Centre’s team or support from other areas. They may need to re-take the subject (if it is a core subject) or take another subject of equal value to complete their degree. They can contact an Enrolment Officer at the Student Centre for study plan advice.

Changing course

A large percentage of students change their course or major/s in their first year. This is usually an informed decision after studying several subjects. Try and be supportive and respect their decision and encourage them to see a Career Counsellor to discuss graduate career options in their proposed new field. Find valuable information and contacts online at: jcu.edu.au/careers.

Many new students can feel overwhelmed. Encourage your student to stick with it and to speak with JCU staff about their concerns as soon as possible. Their lecturer or tutor should be the first person they speak to. The JCU Counselling and Wellbeing Service have qualified staff who can help students cope with the stresses of study and life.

Options include reducing their study load (number of subjects) or changing a course or major. Another option is to apply to take a ‘leave of absence’ from their course for up to a year. This allows time off to explore other options while their university place is reserved for them.

They should discuss these options with an enrolment officer at the Student Centre before taking any action.

If a student decides to withdraw from their course or drop a subject, it’s very important they do this before the Census Date for their subject/ study period. These deadlines are listed online at: jcu.edu.au/students/academic-calendars.

Students are required to pay fees for subject/s they have not formally withdrawn from on or before the Census Date. This applies even if they do not complete the subject. Additionally, they will have ‘fail’ recorded on their academic transcript if they do not withdraw before the academic penalty date.

Study load – full-time or part-time

The number of subjects that students enrol in each teaching period is their ‘study load’. Generally, a subject is worth 3 credit points. A full-time study load is an enrolment of 18 to 24 credit points (or six to eight subjects) in one academic year. A part-time study load is an enrolment of fewer than 18 credit points in an academic year.

If your student decides to reduce their study load and change to part-time (particularly if less than 3 subjects in a teaching period), this may affect any government payments or scholarships they receive. They should seek advice from an enrolment officer at the Student Centre about course progression and contact Centrelink regarding possible impacts on their benefits.

Balancing work and study

Many students combine work and study. Good time management skills are the key to making it work. Students need to plan for assignments and exams. In addition, timetables for lectures and tutorials change with each new study period, so they may need flexibility from their employer. We advise full-time students to do a maximum of 15 hours of paid work per week.

Work experience (either paid or as a volunteer) provides many benefits to students by:

- building confidence
- helping to develop basic or specialist work skills
- providing experiences to help them make career decisions
- broadening their networks
- providing employer references and experience for their resumé

Successful Students...

- Are genuinely interested in their area of study
- Attend lectures and tutorials
- Are resilient and work through challenges
- Recognise that university is not just about study and develop a social network on campus
- Have the self-discipline to prioritise study
- Complete assignments by the due dates
- Know how and where to find help
- Have a clear vocational goal or reason to study
- Develop a sense of academic self-confidence



Academic Integrity

Integrity matters

Academic integrity is the commitment to acting ethically, with honesty, respect and fairness in creating and communicating information in an academic environment. In short, it means to produce original work and use other people’s academic work with honesty and acknowledgement.

JCU takes an educative approach to academic integrity and has developed a series of online modules that all students must complete.

jcu.edu.au/students/learning-centre/academic-integrity

Rights and responsibilities

The JCU Student Code of Conduct promotes mutual respect and fairness, ensuring a safe and inclusive learning and research environment. The Code sets out the obligations expected from students of JCU in terms of conduct and respecting the rights of others.

jcu.edu.au/policy/academic-governance/student-experience/student-code-of-conduct

Talk to academic staff

One-on-one time spent with lecturers and tutors can be invaluable. Consultation times – when students can speak to a lecturer one-on-one – are usually shown in the Subject Outline and on the lecturer’s door. Students can also email a lecturer with questions. New students are encouraged to seek out their sessional tutors for advice and clarification about assessment tasks.



“My advice for being successful is to be organised, driven, and passionate about what you are studying. It is also important to build social support networks, keep up-to-date with lectures, and allocate time for study, exercise, family/friends and self-care. JCU is very supportive and staff understand the stresses involved with study, so if you do find yourself struggling or behind, there are lots of support services available to access.”

Annaliese Giger

BACHELOR OF MEDICINE, BACHELOR OF SURGERY

Costs and financial assistance

Plan for the cost of study

University fees and charges

It is important to be aware of the fees and charges your student is responsible for, and if they can defer payments with a HELP loan or need to pay fees upfront. Fees and charges depend on citizenship and enrolment. Along with subject fees, students are also liable for the Student Services and Amenities (SSA) Fee per subject.

Find more information online here: jcu.edu.au/students/fees-and-financial-support.

Payment due dates and census dates

Students who are required to pay their fees upfront must do so by the payment due dates. Another important date is the 'Census Date'. This is when a student's enrolment must be finalised. See key dates explained online at: jcu.edu.au/students/academic-calendars.

Other study expenses

Other costs include textbooks, stationery, copying and printing charges. Students may also need equipment such as uniforms, lab coats or calculators. Textbooks can be costly and students should review the costs of study materials as soon as subject information is available. Textbooks may be available as e-books, second-hand or from the library.

Although there are computer labs around the campuses and in the library, students need their own computer or tablet to access study materials, library resources and other online resources and to participate in discussion boards and other digital assessments. Whilst they are studying, students can access some free software from JCU.

Some subjects include a professional placement that may be in another town, which will have a financial impact and students will need to plan for these course requirements.

Find potential compulsory purchases and approximated costs for them online here: jcu.edu.au/students/fees-and-financial-support/incidental-fees.

Scholarships

There are many scholarships available to undergraduate and postgraduate students. Programs such as the JCU Access Fund and Indigenous Commonwealth Scholarships help students from low-income families and those from remote areas who need financial assistance to get started at university.

To view the list of scholarships, visit: jcu.edu.au/scholarships.

Government assistance

The Department of Human Services administers student income support programs such as ABSTUDY, Austudy, Youth Allowance and Pensioner Education Supplement. Financial assistance may also be available through Rent Assistance and Fares Allowance.

OS-HELP Loan

OS-HELP is an Australian Government loan used to help students undertake part of their course of study overseas. Students may receive one loan per six-month period, up to a total of two OS-HELP loans. The period of six months in relation to which a student is entitled to OS-HELP assistance begins on the commencement date of the overseas placement. The maximum OS-HELP amounts are as follow:

Payment in 2024:

\$7,921 in 2024 for study in non-Asian countries

\$9,504 in 2024 for study in Asian countries

Students may also receive a supplementary loan amount of \$1,263 in 2024 to undertake language study in preparation for overseas study in Asia. For more information, visit: jcu.edu.au/students/fees-and-financial-support/os-help-loan.

Budgets

Preparing a budget is important for couples and families who may be dropping a wage or for school leavers managing money for the first time. Discuss costs and income together to ensure everyone has a clear understanding of their financial position and can manage their finances.

Compiling a budget helps students understand how much they need for essential items like accommodation, living expenses, textbooks and petrol/travel. It can also help to factor in high-cost periods and financial emergencies that take place throughout the year. You can help your student manage their finances by discussing ways they can minimise costs and providing strategies for dealing with financial problems.

Discounts

Student discounts are available for many services and items. Make sure students asks for student discounts, whether they are buying a movie ticket or purchasing software or computers online.

Find more information on student benefits online here: jcu.edu.au/students/student-life.



Student Support Services

Finding help and improving study skills

Free Student Services

We welcome all students to connect with JCU support services. Regardless of their course or mode of study, we offer a wide variety of free and confidential support services to students to help with their academic, personal and employability development, including:

- Accommodation Advice
- Careers and Employability
- Student Success Officers
- Pathways Support Team
- Feedback and Complaints
- First Year Experience Coordinators
- Global Experience
- Indigenous Education and Research Centre
- International Student Support
- IT Support Services
- Library
- Student Association
- Student Centre
- Student Mentor Program
- Wellbeing and Counselling
- The Learning Centre

Students will be introduced to these services during Orientation and more information can be found in the Student Support Services Directory.

jcu.edu.au/support

JCU Orientation

At JCU, we want you to succeed in your academic journey. That's why we have designed the Personalised Orientation Planner, a tailored program that prepares you for university life. Orientation introduces you to the essential skills and knowledge you need to excel in your studies. You will also have the opportunity to attend various sessions, workshops, and social events that will help you connect with your peers, academic staff, and community leaders.

JCU Orientation is not only informative, but also fun and engaging. Students who participate in Orientation have a 23% higher success rate than those who don't. Don't miss this chance to make the most of your university experience. View your Personalised Orientation Planner online here: jcu.edu.au/orientation.



“Attending O Week really helped me get started and gave me a great insight into my course and what to expect at university.”

“Some of the things I learnt during my first year at JCU was how important it is to attend all my lectures and tutorials, utilise all the free resources available like the Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS), remember to have a break sometimes, and ask for help when needed.”

Ethan Moody
BACHELOR OF ENGINEERING (HONOURS)



“Jane returned to study a Bachelor of Nursing Science as a mature-age student to upgrade her qualifications from an Endorsed Enrolled Nurse. Having the flexibility to study part-time was really important to us as it allowed Jane to balance study and family life. Providing Jane with the support she required to complete her studies, and at a pace suitable for her to meet her personal expectations and goals, led to the best outcomes for us personally and as a family.”

Nick Roberts
PARTNER

Tips for JCU Families

Commencing university is an exciting and challenging time for new students and their families, luckily there is a lot you can do to make this transition period easier.



Plan for success

Encourage your student to attend all classes and create a weekly and semester study plan to reduce stress and stay on track. Remind your student to ask questions, especially in the first few weeks.



Celebrate achievements

Acknowledging success is important. Celebrating small achievements and milestones throughout the study year will help students maintain a positive attitude and lift levels of motivation ahead of their next academic challenge.



Promote participation

Meeting new people – students, academics and other JCU staff – will help your student develop valuable support networks and a sense of belonging. These contacts can be helpful when challenges arise.



Keep in touch

If your student lives away from home, make regular contact to show your support and plan a visit as homesickness is common in first year. Ask about their studies, how they are feeling, and what you can do to help, such as offering to proofread assignments.



Encourage discussion

Becoming familiar with the course, campus and university terminology can help open communication channels. Chat about what your student is looking forward to with their studies, any concerns they may have, and how you can help them.



Study space

It's important to have a quiet place with good lighting and a comfortable chair, where students can regularly study without interruptions or having to pack up when they need a break. While studying at home, plan with your partner and family how household tasks and childcare can be divided over semester time. The JCU Library is also open seven days a week during teaching periods.



Foster independence

Self-directed learning and help-seeking behaviours are critical skills for students to develop in order to be successful. Be a sounding board for your student and let them know they have your support, even if they decide to change direction with their course of study.



Living away from home

Check that they have a Medicare card, a Tax File Number, Healthcare card, personal bank account, and relevant phone apps for maps and public transport. A driver's licence and a certified copy of their birth certificate are also useful as extra ID.



Maintain a positive attitude

It is common for students to worry about making new friends, the difficulty of their course, or their ability to get everything done and succeed. Providing a positive, encouraging outlook can be really helpful to support students through challenging periods.



Support Success

JCU has a range of free services available to support student success and wellbeing. Academic support, counselling, disability, careers and mentoring services are available. Smart Students Seek Support, so please encourage students to connect with the relevant support services as early as possible to avoid stress.



Be flexible

There are times in the academic calendar when students really need to devote more time to their studies, especially during pressure points when assignments are due and during exam periods. You can assist by trying to arrange family holidays and gatherings to coincide with 'quiet' times in the academic year, so students don't have to miss out on important events.



Transition challenges

Even high-achieving students can face challenges forming new social networks, financial pressures, maintaining health and wellbeing, becoming independent learners or relocating. Success at university involves maintaining a balance between academic study and personal wellbeing. Encourage a healthy routine with regular study breaks, sleep, exercise and healthy eating.

"I think it is important that parents and new students know about the range of free services available to students. The first thing I would recommend is that new students attend O Week, look at all the preparatory activities on offer, and attend everything that looks helpful - not just the academic workshops but the social activities as well. Seeing Ethan take an interest in things like the JCU Dive Club has been great, as well as knowing he has access to PASS, student mentor programs, and The Learning Centre."

"From a parent's point-of-view, I would recommend taking an interest in what's happening and offer as much support as possible - but also remember that this is a new and exciting experience for our kids and we should encourage them to take advantage of it."

Lisa Moody
PARENT



We're here to help



Phone:
1800 246



Email:
enquiries@jcu.edu.au



Find answers to common questions at:
jcu.custhelp.com

JCU Student Centre is your number-one point of contact for help with enrolment, subjects, fees, support services, scholarships, exams and more.

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