Tips for Parents and Partners

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

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 a student can regularly study without having to pack up whenever they need a break. 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 license 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.