

CSE Study Abroad / Exchange Student Guide: Successfully Planning Your Block Intensive Science Subjects

This guide is to help study abroad and exchange students decide on and prepare for subjects delivered in Blocks 3 and 4. Block subjects in several disciplines (AQ, BZ, EV, EA, MB) at Levels 2, 3, and 5 are delivered primarily as two-week 'Intensives'. These are designed for completely immersive and hands-on face-to-face learning experiences during these two weeks, with some study and assessment both before and after. These intensives are designed to be taken one-at-a-time, and you will get the most from these subjects if you can devote your energy to them.

The 'Intensive Subjects' offered in Blocks 3 and 4 have been strategically selected because they offer students opportunities for deeper experiential learning and more focused access to teaching and learning staff – the things we do best at JCU! This structure has been designed to significantly enhance our subjects and your learning. The singular focus on one subject at a time improves learning continuity, unpunctuated by other distractions, and allows more effective structuring, delivery and sequencing of materials to improve student engagement and learning. Although the total number of hours may marginally differ from subjects taught in semester or trimester mode, these subjects have been framed to ensure that while content may be offered differently it is enhanced rather than diminished, and all learning objectives are satisfied, in more modern and appropriate ways.

Intensive subjects move quickly and require a high level of engagement. To make the most of them, it's important to plan ahead, know what to expect, and manage your time well. Whether you're enrolling for the first time or looking to improve your approach, these tips will help set you up for success.

Guidance for Choosing and Managing Block Intensive Subjects

A Condensed Subject Format

AQ, BZ, EV, EA, and MB subjects in Blocks 3 and 4 are condensed into what we call an 'Intensive'. While a trimester-long subject involves 10 weeks of part-time engagement with subject content, an intensive subject is primarily delivered in two weeks of full-time engagement. This means you'll be learning at a much faster pace, with more contact hours and independent study expected each day (including in the evenings/after class) than in a standard trimester-long subject.

Schedule of Intensive Subjects and Assessment

Introduction period (Weeks 1–2 of your Block)

All Intensive subjects start in Week 1–2 with an "Introduction Period". It is fully asynchronous – meaning you won't come to class during Weeks 1–2. However, you *will* have work to complete. This period is designed for you to familiarise yourself with the expectations of the subjects. Instead of coming to class, you will engage with materials on LearnJCU to build foundational knowledge, ensuring you are fully prepared to participate from the first day of

your face-to-face period. Much of your self-directed background and theoretical learning may occur in this period, and so you need to be prepared to spend substantial time undertaking this learning prior to your face-to-face Intensive period.

Intensive period (two weeks of face-to-face learning during your Block)

There are two face-to-face Intensive Periods in each block (as per the [2026 Study Area Guide](#) – pg 3). Each Intensive Period is two weeks long, and an intensive subject uses **one** of these 2-week Intensive Periods. Note that the letter system might look a bit confusing – this is because it is based on the Trimester weeks, which include periods that don't align with the Block calendar used for study abroad and exchange students.

You can find the specific dates for each Intensive Subject by looking for the Face-to-Face Dates in the Offerings section of the subject's entry in the [JCU Handbook](#).

Assessment period

Assessments for Intensive Subjects will be due during the subject's Intensive Period and/or in the final week (Week 7) of the Block. This means you will be expected to do some self-study and assessment work after the Intensive Period.

See below what Intensive Periods look like in Block 3:

Block 3						
Introduction (A & B)		Intensive A		Intensive B		Assessment (A & B)
Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7

See below what Intensive Periods look like in Block 4:

Block 4						
Introduction (E & F)		Intensive E		Intensive F		Assessment (E & F)
Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7

Be aware of academic calendar dates!

All subjects have the same [calendar dates](#), regardless of the Intensive Period. This means that even if your subject won't be delivered face-to-face until Week 5, it will still have the same dates for enrolment close. Typically enrolments close before Week 1, but you should always check the [Academic Calendar](#) or confirm with the [Enrolments team](#) for the most up-to-date information.

Every Intensive Subject will use the two-week face-to-face Intensive Period slightly differently

Most will start on the Monday of the first week and finish on the Friday of the second week, but some subjects may also use the weekend at the end of the two-week Intensive Period (e.g., to fit in fieldtrips). Several subjects will use the weekend in-between the two weeks for fieldwork.

Most subjects will have assessments due both during the 2-week face-to-face Intensive Period and in the Week 7 Assessment period. For some subjects, assessment will be due before the

Intensive Period begins, based on the preparatory work in LearnJCU provided during “intro period”.

Bottom line: plan to be available for the full two weeks, and plan for some study and assessment work before and after the two weeks. Check LearnJCU for exact timings of face-to-face instruction and assessment due dates, or contact the Subject Coordinator directly for this information prior to enrolment.

Treat an Intensive Subject like a Full-Time Job

During the face-to-face Intensive Period of an intensive subject, you can expect to participate in lectures, tutorials, workshops, independent study, fieldtrips and/or practicals. Together, the time in these activities is equivalent to full-time hours over the face-to-face Intensive Period. Avoid scheduling travel or other major commitments during these two weeks.

Use Weeks 1-2 to Prepare Before the Intensive Periods Begin

During “Intro Period” (Weeks 1 and 2), access the LearnJCU site early, read the Subject Outline and Assessment Overview, and complete any pre-readings or tasks for ***all*** intensive subjects you are enrolled in. Do not wait until the first face-to-face class — most intensive subjects hit the ground running from Day 1.

Check Assessment and Exam Timing

Most intensive subjects will have assessments due within the two-week face-to-face teaching period as well as during Week 7. Make sure you check your Subject Outline carefully and/or correspond with your Subject Coordinator about assessment expectations so you can plan ahead and avoid surprises.

AccessAbility Students

If you require adjustments to support your participation during Intensive Periods or fieldwork, please make an appointment to meet with an Advisor prior to accepting your offer to discuss available supports. You can visit the [AccessAbility Services Webpage](#) to register or book an appointment.

It is important to note that for any exams/in class tests/quizzes held during intensive subjects, that you will need to apply for your exam adjustments. You are responsible for completing the [AccessAbility Exam Adjustments Application Form](#) **at least 10 university working days prior** to the assessment date; noting if you are outside of this timeframe, your request is not guaranteed to be accommodated. You will need to supply the dates and times of your On Course exams. The exams team already have a copy of your Access Plan. Note Examinations are unable to accommodate requests for weekend exams or exams held off campus.

For online tests and quizzes, your Subject Coordinator will adjust the timing on Learn JCU.

Stay Organised

Use a planner, app, or calendar to map out key dates and study times. Missing even one session of an intensive subject can set you back significantly due to the fast pace.

Know Where to Get Help

Global Experience

Your key contact point for study abroad and exchange enquiries. The [Global Experience team](#) can assist with:

- subject selection
- assistance with your exchange application process
- tips and guidance on living in Townsville or Cairns
- accommodation information and general advice
- any other general enquiries

Subject Coordinator

Reach out early to your Subject Coordinator if you need support or clarification. There's also academic support (e.g., [Student Success Officers](#)), [Enrolment Team support](#), peer study groups, and other university services available — and the earlier you access these supports, the better for you.

Other support

For non-academic support, JCU [Counselling and Wellbeing Service](#) is a free and confidential service provided to students currently enrolled and actively engaged at JCU Australia. The Service is provided by highly qualified Counsellors with backgrounds and experience in Psychology, Social Work, Counselling and Occupational Therapy.

JCU Counselling and Wellbeing Service offers brief-intervention support, up to ten sessions per student. Appointments are available Monday to Friday between 9am to 3pm and can be offered by phone, Zoom (online video call software) or face to face on either the JCU Cairns, Nguma-bada campus, Smithfield or JCU Townsville, Bebegu Yumba campus, Douglas. Please note there are limitations to the support we can offer to students located off-shore.

If you need urgent support and the JCU Counselling and Wellbeing service is closed, **the JCU Urgent Mental Health Support Line provides support via phone or text when other university student support services are unavailable.** It helps callers by addressing immediate safety concerns, discussing coping strategies for their current crisis, and linking students to appropriate services for ongoing support.

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