

JCU Offer Strategy

2015-2020

Preamble

In March 2013 the JCU – the Future Taskforce released a report titled *Crystallising our Purpose*. This document was the culmination of an extensive consultation process within the University over approximately a 12-month period and built on our refreshed Strategic Intent and University Plan.

The Report identified key attributes to underpin our core business, and collectively these defined a JCU Model that would be: focused on the tropics; research rich; student focused; connected to community; internationally engaged; and culturally informed.

The JCU model was underpinned by our obligations under the *James Cook University Act 1997*; the Statement of Strategic intent; the close integration of learning and teaching, research and engagement (our core business); the advantages afforded by our three tropical campus locations; and the requirement to remain sustainable in terms of our financial, social and environmental performance.

The JCU Offer Strategy in conjunction the JCU Learning and Teaching Blueprint gives effect to the JCU Model and will guide the development, architecture and delivery of our undergraduate and postgraduate programs for the next five to ten years. It is anticipated that other Blueprint documents will be developed to assist with the implementation of the Strategy.

Through the Offer Strategy JCU will provide a unique value proposition in the Australian higher education sector.

Key Principles

We will intentionally design our programs to develop graduates who have the knowledge and skills to make a difference in their field of endeavor in the tropics.

We will achieve this through a range of learning and teaching practices, including placements and field experiences in tropical locations, problem based learning and case studies focused on the tropics.

We will focus our research on our strategic intent and responding to the grand challenges of the tropics and this will systematically inform learning and teaching programs.

We will invest in the design and implementation of curriculum that respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the diversity of our region.

We will conduct market research to test demand for all new programs and majors prior to development. We will systematically and rigorously review our existing programs considering alignment with strategic intent and/or grand challenges, workforce needs of our regions, student demand, research capacity and financial viability.

We will look to develop a small number of new flagship learning and teaching programs that address the grand challenges of the tropics.

Flagship programs will be headquartered at one campus (although potentially also offered via technology enhanced learning mode elsewhere), thereby helping to define distinctiveness amongst our campus locations. Flagship programs will:

- focus on a designated and defined grand challenge relevant to the tropics
- include a work integrated learning or field experience
- show-case the research-teaching nexus and therefore show tight alignment with research

We will prioritise investment in programs that explicitly engage with grand challenges and/or our strategic intent.

We will design programs to prepare students for clearly identified career outcomes to serve our region and the tropical world.

We will provide programs of study to develop the professional workforce for our region.

We will encourage students to undertake an international experience as part of their program of study through a coordinated approach to student mobility.

We will design programs to include a defined capstone experience; where possible and relevant this will be a Work Integrated Learning program.

We will develop programs to attract and retain high achieving students. This may include AQF8 level degrees, access to active researchers and/or opportunities to be involved in a grand challenges project.

We will enhance our programs through partnerships with institutions that can add value in terms of achieving our strategic intent or within a grand challenges framework, especially but not exclusively with those in the following jurisdictions: Singapore, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Fiji, Hawaii and Malaysia.

We will offer experiential short courses such as field-work opportunities or master classes on a fee -for-service basis at our tropical locations in areas where we are world-class and quality can be assured.

We will promote the value of an on-campus or place based experience in all of our programs.

Program Architecture

Entry requirements for all of our programs will be clear, rigorous and enforced.

We will provide clear pathway options to students who do not meet the entry requirements for their chosen program including strengthened English language, enabling and diploma programs. These programs will ensure students enter degree programs with appropriate foundational knowledge and skills.

We will prescribe or propose the core components of first year within each undergraduate degree program for students to enable them to gain the foundational knowledge and skills required for their chosen degree or major. This will also streamline enrolment procedures and enhance student cohort identification, particularly in generalist degree programs.

A major will be defined as an integrated and cohesive sequence of subjects in an undergraduate degree program that introduces students to a discipline and its key themes, theories, concepts and boundaries.

A major will comprise 8 subjects (24 credit points), with at least 3 subjects taken each at level 2 and level 3. (*Professionally accredited disciplines will not be bound by this structure*).

A specialisation will be defined as an integrated and cohesive sequence of subjects in a postgraduate coursework program that either builds on existing knowledge or introduces students to a discipline.

The number of subjects to comprise a specialization will be determined through consultation with academic divisions but will be between 4 – 8 subjects (12 – 24 credit points) depending on the duration of the program.

A formal definition of a minor will be introduced in undergraduate degree programs.

A minor will comprise 4 subjects (12 credit points), with at least 3 subjects completed at either level 2 or 3. It may comprise of subjects from across disciplines, colleges and divisions. (*Professionally accredited disciplines will not be bound by this structure*).

We will develop minors and subjects, based on topics relating to the grand challenges. These will be interdisciplinary and open to students in all undergraduate degree programs that have elective options.

Students will be encouraged where possible to take subjects outside of their primary discipline focus to broaden their educational experience.

Each grand challenge minor will include a subject that focuses on developing innovative solutions to issues identified by the community or business partners. This will be a core pillar of our community engagement activities.

We will map the research/teaching nexus during the course design phase to enable all JCU coursework students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) to develop research literacy. This may involve exposing students to current research being undertaken at JCU, advanced subjects in enabling disciplines and/or involvement in research projects underway.

We will consider developing 4-year AQF8 level programs in Science, Arts and/or Business. If developed these programs would be based on the 3-year standard degrees, but include a grand challenge minor. In the fourth year students would have the option of a structured 'project' track where they create an enterprise or project to tackle a grand challenge, or a 'research' track more like a traditional honours year.

Program Delivery

We will take a systematic coordinated approach to the potential development of open access online programs, (i.e. MOOCs) in areas where we are considered world leaders or have a unique offering and such a product will enhance our reputation or market position.

We will carefully select programs to offer in external mode, but will promote the value of an on-campus or place based experience in our programs.

We will support and promote technology-enhanced learning initiatives.

We will seek to align study periods across our campuses and locations to achieve efficiencies and enable student mobility.

We will adopt a whole-of-institution approach to the development and delivery of foundational disciplinary knowledge including (but not limited to) mathematics, statistics, biology, chemistry, research methodologies, communication and digital literacy. The intent is to consolidate delivery and reduce duplication across Colleges while ensuring that the content is customised to the program into which it is being delivered to ensure student engagement and maximum educational benefit.

We will rationalise our teaching effort through the consolidation and rationalisation of subjects. From 2016 all undergraduate subjects will have at least 20 students enrolled within each offering or meet one of the following criteria in order to be delivered face-to-face on campus:

1. An identified foundation discipline
2. Facilitating work integrated learning
3. Facilitating student mobility
4. Core subject in a program in teach out mode
5. Core subject in a program identified as being of strategic importance to the University
6. An Honours subject

Subjects that are core to a major, degree program or required for course accreditation purposes will be given a special dispensation for one year if numbers are below the minimum enrolment number. Where a subject in the afore mentioned categories is not achieving these enrolment numbers over a two year period, the College will be asked to show cause as to why the major or degree program should continue to be offered.

We will look to achieve a reduction in the number of subjects on offer for 2015 in accordance with the current minimum enrolments policy.

Definitions

Term	Definition/Explanation
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework.
Blended Learning	Learning design that strategically, systematically and effectively integrates a range of face-to-face, online, mobile, distance, open, social and other technology enhanced learning across physical and virtual environments, as informed and driven by student needs and support for desired learning activities and learning outcomes.
Capstone experience	A crowning subject or experience coming at the end of a sequence of subjects with the specific objective of integrating a body of relatively fragmented knowledge into a unified whole. As a rite of passage, this subject provides an experience through which undergraduate students both look back over their undergraduate curriculum in an effort to make sense of that experience, and look forward to a life by building on that experience.
Core subject	A subject that is mandatory in order to complete prescribed program requirements.
External delivery	Subjects or programs that do not require on-campus attendance.
Field experience	An activity that involves a student travelling to and working at a place/s away from the University, is a requirement for a course being undertaken at JCU and is carried out under the general control of a University staff member.
Flagship programs	A program that is distinctive, builds on JCU strategic intent and brand and provides students with knowledge and/or experience they could not receive at another institution.
Grand challenges	Challenges that transcend national boundaries and pose significant threats to societies and ecosystems.
Grand challenges framework	A mechanism to elaborate on the four themes embedded in the University's Strategic Intent and an opportunity to assist staff and students contextualize the topics in relation to their specific discipline.
International experience	Study (including Work Integrated Learning) at an overseas institution undertaken as part of a JCU degree
Major	An integrated and cohesive sequence of 8 subjects (24 credit points) taken as part of an undergraduate program that introduces students to a discipline and its key themes, theories, concepts and boundaries.
Minor	An approved sequence of 4 subjects (12 credit points) in a discipline or cognate group of disciplines taken as part of an undergraduate program.
MOOCs	Massive Online Open Courses
On-campus or place based experience	Face-to-face teaching and learning at JCU campuses, locations and field stations. This may be the delivery method for an entire subject, or just part of a blended learning mode subject.
Program	A complete course of study such as a diploma, degree or postgraduate award offered by JCU.
Region	Northern Queensland, Northern Australia and where applicable, Singapore.
Research/Teaching nexus	The relationship between teaching and research within a university, predicated on the assumption that not only is there a relationship between the two academic activities, but that they are mutually beneficial.
Short courses	Short courses are usually one subject about a specific topic. Participants may be able to choose whether the subject is being taken for academic credit and include assessment.
Specialisation	An integrated and cohesive sequence of 4-8 subjects (12-24 credit points) in a discipline taken as part of a postgraduate coursework program.
Student mobility	This is currently provided through the JCU Exchange program that allows eligible JCU undergraduate students to study at an overseas partner institution for up to a year and receive credit towards their JCU degree. In future it may be applied to students undertaking shorter periods of time away from JCU in order to complete a program or research at an institution within Australia or overseas.
Technology enhanced learning	An umbrella term for a range of delivery methods including online, flexible or blended learning.
Work integrated learning	An umbrella term for a range of approaches and strategies that integrate theory with the practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum. It can include clinical placements, vacation work, practicums, internships, fieldwork, simulations and volunteer work.