

International Student Orientation & Pre-departure Guide 2025



Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Welcome to JCU Brisbane | 3 |
| About Brisbane | 5 |
| Things to Do in South East Queensland | 6 |
| Fun Facts | 7 |
| Important Things to Do Before You Leave Home | 7 |
| Preparation for Academic Success | 8 |
| Pre-departure Planning | 9 |
| Your Journey to Australia | 12 |
| After You Arrive | 13 |
| Other Useful Links | 17 |
| Contact Information | 18 |



Welcome to JCU Brisbane



"On behalf of the entire academic community, it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to every one of you as you embark on this exciting journey at James Cook University, in beautiful Brisbane. Your decision to join our campus marks the beginning of a transformative experience that will shape your future in profound ways.

At JCU Brisbane we are committed to fostering a vibrant learning community where intellectual curiosity thrives, diversity is celebrated, academic excellence is pursued with passion, and friendships are made. You will be surrounded by dedicated academics, support staff, and fellow students who are eager to support your lifelong learning and personal growth.

As you navigate your academic pursuits, I encourage you to seize every opportunity to explore new ideas, engage in critical inquiry, and embrace the challenges that come your way. Your engagement, both inside and outside the classroom, will add to the vibrancy of the JCU Brisbane community.

Welcome to JCU Brisbane – where your potential knows no bounds."

Jillian Fox

Associate Professor

Academic Dean James Cook University
Brisbane





General Information



City: Brisbane



Population: 2.5 million



Cost of Living: Relatively low compared to other Australian capital cities such as Sydney and Melbourne



Language Spoken: English



Time zone: GMT/UTC +10 hours

Weather



Currency: Australian Dollar (AUD)



Climate: Subtropical



Summer (December - February)
Average Temperature: 27°C

CRICOS Provider Code: 00117J

About Brisbane

Brisbane, the capital of Queensland, Australia, combines modern living with natural beauty and boasts a pleasant subtropical climate all year. Brisbane is renowned for its multicultural society, low crime rate and friendly people. Nestled along the banks of the winding Brisbane River, the city has a mix of sleek skyscrapers and green spaces, with the iconic Story Bridge spanning the river.

However, Brisbane offers more than just city life. It's a gateway to stunning places like the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast, known for pristine beaches and picturesque hinterlands. With a friendly, laid-back atmosphere and a diverse culinary scene, Brisbane is a great place to experience both city living and the beauty of the Australian outdoors.

James Cook University Brisbane Campus is located in the Central Business District (CBD) and is within walking distance of the riverfront, Queen Street shopping mall, South Bank Parklands and the Queensland State Library. With discounted public transport services available for full-time students, it's easy to explore and experience everything Brisbane City has to offer.

Students who choose to study at JCU Brisbane will graduate with a tertiary qualification from a respected and highly acclaimed university. In addition to this, students will develop connections with The Sarina Russo Group, a world-renowned business recognised for achievements in vocational and tertiary education, training, employment and recruitment.

Brisbane's Top 10

1. Take a stroll through South Bank Parklands
2. Enjoy spectacular views from the Mt Coot-tha lookout
3. Cruise the Brisbane River by CityCat
4. Travel to beautiful Moreton Island and snorkel around the wrecks
5. Have a picnic at New Farm Park
6. Check out the Australian wildlife at Lone Pine Sanctuary
7. See a live stage show at QPAC or visit the exhibitions at the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) or Queensland Art Gallery
8. Take a tour of Brisbane City Hall which is also home to the Museum of Brisbane
9. Head to Suncorp Stadium or the Gabba to watch a live sporting match
10. Climb Brisbane's iconic Story Bridge



Autumn (March - May)
Average Temperature: 23°C



Winter (June - August)
Average Temperature: 17°C

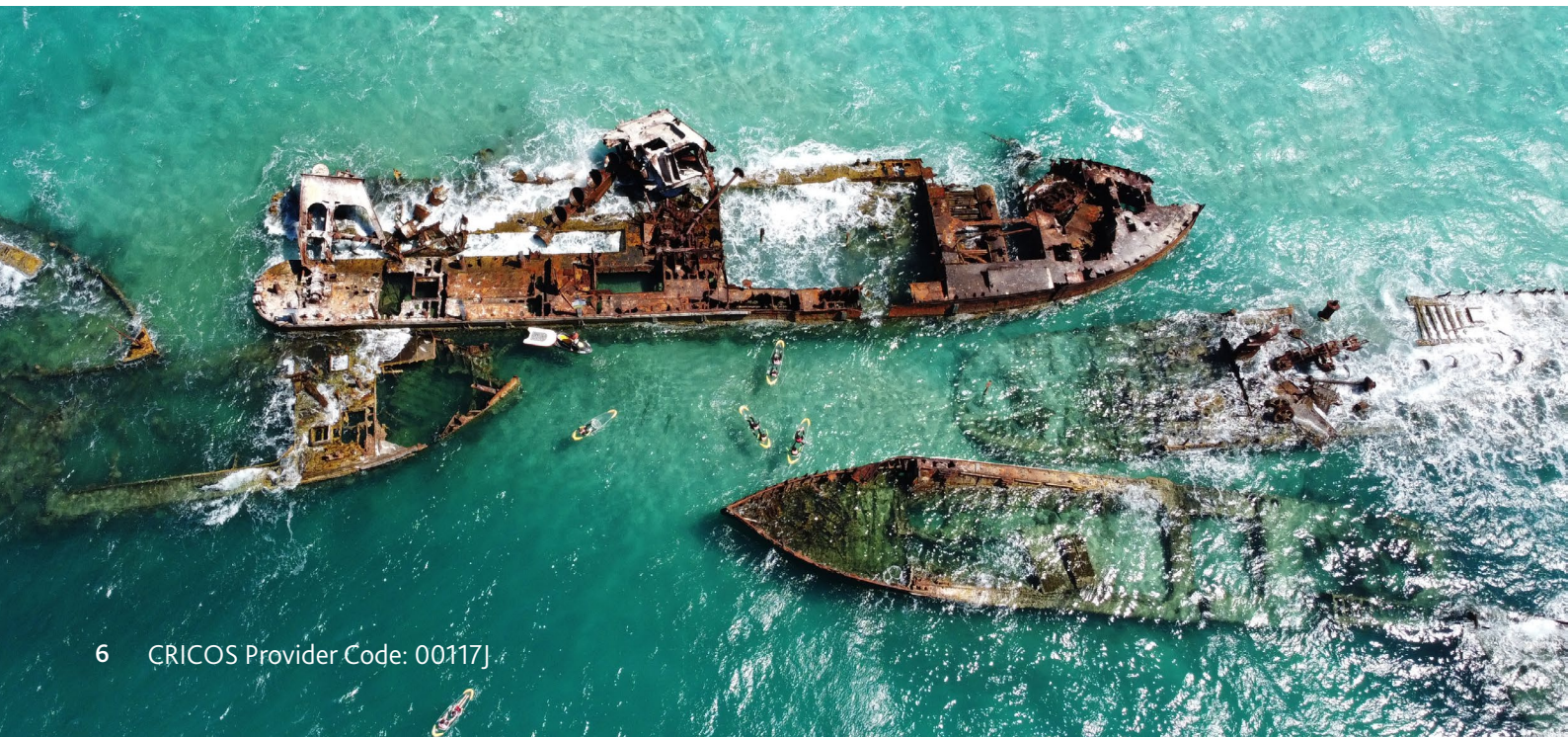


Spring (September - November)
Average Temperature: 22°C



Things to Do in South East Queensland

1. Explore the beautiful beaches of the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast
2. Spend a day exploring Mt Tamborine in the Gold Coast Hinterland; visit the quaint shops, walk through lush rainforest and view the beautiful waterfalls
3. Get lost in the World Heritage-listed Gondwana Rainforests, only an hour or two's drive from Brisbane; visit Springbrook, Natural Bridge, and even take an evening tour of the glow worm caves
4. Take a ferry to North Stradbroke Island or Moreton Island, and experience the Great Outdoors for which Australia is famous
5. Enjoy the 360-degree views from the observation deck of Skypoint on the Gold Coast or, if you're feeling adventurous, you can even climb to the top!
6. Get vertical and go rock climbing – Kangaroo Point Cliffs in Brisbane and the Glasshouse Mountains on the Sunshine Coast offer perfect outdoor adventures
7. Watch the sunrise whilst floating through the sky in a hot air balloon
8. Visit K'Gari (formerly Fraser Island), the largest sand island in the world. Visit crystal clear Lake McKenzie, pure white sand beaches and see native wildlife like dingoes, goannas and kangaroos
9. Take a whale watching tour, departing from the Sunshine Coast or Gold Coast and see the whales on their annual migration (May - October)
10. Get up close with Australian wildlife at Australia Zoo at Beerwah, Sunshine Coast



Fun Facts

1. Australia's national colours are green and gold
2. Australia's floral emblem is the wattle
3. The animals on the Australian Coat of Arms are the Red Kangaroo and the Emu. These animals were chosen to symbolise a nation moving forward (as neither animal can walk backwards!)
4. Australia is the driest inhabited continent on earth, with the least amount of water in rivers, the lowest run-off and the smallest area of permanent wetlands of all the continents
5. Australia is home to more than one million species of plants and animals, many of which are found nowhere else in the world, and less than half have been described scientifically



Important Things to Do Before You Leave Home

- Purchase a laptop
- Make travel arrangements
- Get to know the suburbs of Brisbane
- Explore accommodation options
- Check the customs requirements - [The Studying in Australia](#) guide provides detailed biosecurity requirements and restricted items; it also offers tips for a smooth border clearance process
- Organise documents to satisfy CoE conditions if required
- Organise a folder for official documents - eg. passport, visa grant letter, letter of offer, CoE, payment receipts, insurance policies, original or certified copies of academic documentation, other personal identification documents, medical records/ prescriptions
- Organise special medications if required
- Provide your family and friends with your contact details in Australia
- Further detailed information can be found within this publication

Preparation for Academic Success

It is said that before anything else, preparation is the key to success. However, many students don't think about their studies until the trimester has already begun. If you prefer to get a head start, here are four things you can do before arriving in Australia to increase your chances of academic success.

Explore the JCU Brisbane website

Useful links

<https://www.jcu.edu.au/brisbane>

[Important dates](#)

[Contact and location](#)

Find ways to connect with others

Useful links

<https://www.qld.gov.au/youth/relationships-safety-sexuality/relationships-sexuality/friendships>

Identify the main features of academic writing

Useful links

[Academic writing](#)

[Referencing](#)

[Plagiarism](#)

[Active Learning](#)

Practise listening to Australian English

Useful links

<https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/>

<https://www.abc.net.au/education>



Pre-departure Planning

Being organised and understanding what you need to do before you travel to Australia will help set you up for success and ensure your journey and arrival is stress-free.

Visas

Most international students require a Subclass 500 Student Visa to study in Australia. Apply for your visa online.

Processing times vary, therefore it is essential that you allow enough time for visa processing between lodging your application and your arrival in Brisbane for the compulsory Orientation period (2 weeks before lectures commence). You will need your Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) to apply for your visa.

Please contact the Department of Home Affairs for the most accurate and up-to-date information about visas and processing times.

Useful links

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/>

Accommodation

Looking for accommodation can sometimes be stressful. The more preparation you can do before you arrive the better. Investigate the urban layout of Brisbane and consider the distance of your accommodation from campus. Think about the advantages and disadvantages of living close to campus or in the suburbs.

Useful links

<https://www.jcu.edu.au/brisbane/aboutbrisbane/accommodation>

<https://studentone.com/>

<https://amberstudent.com/>

<https://www.realestate.com.au/>

<https://www.domain.com.au/>

<https://www.gumtree.com.au/>

<https://flatmates.com.au/>

<https://www.flatmatefinders.com.au/>

<https://www.studyaustralia.gov.au/en/life-in-australia/accommodation>

Use Translink's [Journey Planner](#) to make sure public transport is available so you can get to classes on time and get home safely if you have evening classes.



Renting in Brisbane

The majority of students choose to rent their accommodation for the duration of their studies. The Queensland Government Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) website provides all the information you will need to find out about renting.

Useful links

<https://www.rta.qld.gov.au/>

<https://insiderguides.com.au/rental-rights-tenant/>

Setting up a bank account

Consider opening a bank account before you arrive in Australia. Before opening a bank account, research the services provided by the major banks. Most banks provide student accounts with no or low fees. You will need to visit a branch after you arrive before you can start using your new account.

Useful links

<https://www.canstar.com.au/>

Cost of living

Understanding and budgeting for your expenses is a very important part of your financial preparation when planning to study as an international student.

We recommend you undertake your own research to develop an understanding of how much you will need to budget for your living expenses whilst in Australia, as cost of living can be highly variable depending on your lifestyle and choice of accommodation. The Study Australia website provides a useful Cost of Living Calculator you can use to help you understand your own living expenses based on your personal lifestyle and accommodation choices.



How much money to bring

Australia's national currency is Australian dollars (AUD) which comes in denominations of \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100 notes. Coins come in 5, 10, 20 and 50 cent and one- and two-dollar denominations. Only Australian currency can be used in Australia. Once you have arrived in Brisbane, you can change money at currency exchanges. Search online for currency exchanges in Brisbane before you arrive.

Make sure you have sufficient funds to support you when you first arrive. We recommend you have approximately AU\$4000 to AU\$6000 available for the first two to three weeks to pay for temporary accommodation and transport. If you are renting, make sure you bring enough cash to cover your bond (equivalent of four weeks rent) as well as to purchase furniture and appliances.

| Weekly Expense | Estimated Costs (AUD) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Rent/Accommodation | \$240-600 |
| Groceries & Eating Out | \$140-290 |
| Phone/Internet | \$15-35 |
| Utilities (gas, electricity, etc.) | \$30-55 |
| Public Transport/Travel | \$20-220 |
| Personal (toiletries, clothes, etc.) | \$35-80 |
| Entertainment | \$80-150 |
| Total Estimated Weekly Costs | \$560-1430 |

All prices are to be used as a guide only and can vary based on individual circumstances.

Useful links

<https://www.studyaustralia.gov.au/en/life-inaustralia/living-and-education-costs>

<https://www.studyqueensland.qld.gov.au/live/living-expenses>

<https://moneysmart.gov.au/>

Financial support

A scholarship is a great way to make the most of your student experience, meet people to build your professional network, and enjoy greater financial freedom.

Useful links

<https://www.jcu.edu.au/brisbane/courses/scholarships>

What to bring

We have developed a handy checklist of items you should bring with you. Visit our website for the full and most up-to-date list.

Useful links

<https://www.jcu.edu.au/brisbane/courses/before-you-arrive>

Bringing your family

Depending on your visa status, you may be able to bring family members to Australia with you. You will be required to include details of any family members travelling with you in your visa application, and you will be required to demonstrate how your family will be supported financially.

Please be aware that you will need to cover all additional costs involved in bringing your family with you to Australia, which will include airfares, accommodation, Overseas Student Health Cover for all family members, and all living expenses including education costs for children.

You should also consider the social and emotional needs of your family members. Many international students find it beneficial to travel to Australia individually before arranging for family to join them later.

Please refer to the Department of Home Affairs for further information about bringing family to Australia.

Useful links

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/>

<https://www.jcu.edu.au/students/support/childcare-and-schooling>

Working while in Australia

Many international students seek part-time or casual work while studying to contribute towards living expenses. A casual or part-time job can also be a great way to meet people, develop experience and networks, and improve your English.

Australia has a strong system of laws and regulations which protects the rights of all workers - including international students. If you plan to work to help pay for your living expenses whilst in Australia, please understand it may take several months to secure part-time or casual work after you arrive. It is essential that you have access to sufficient funds to cover your expenses.

Please visit the Department of Home Affairs website for all information, including strict regulations and restrictions, relating to working while studying in Australia.

Joblinx provides advice and services to assist with securing part-time or casual employment. You can also access the JCU CareerHub where you can find job listings including part-time/casual, graduate, vacation work, internships and volunteering, as well as career-related events, workshops and information sessions.

Useful links

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/>

<https://www.joblinx.com.au/>

<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/>

<https://www.jcu.edu.au/careers/information-sheets>



Wellbeing

Living and studying abroad is an exciting adventure, however it can also present a range of challenges. Adjustments to many areas of your life will need to be made; these adjustments may be cultural, social and academic in nature.

Adjustment to a new country and culture is a process that occurs gradually and takes time. You may experience a wide variety of feelings and reactions. For example, you may feel confused, nervous, irritable, uncertain and dependent on others. Being prepared for these feelings and having some coping mechanisms in place can help.

- Plan to make the unfamiliar, familiar. Expect many things to be different: your room, the people you live with, the weather, the food, the wildlife. Having some familiar things around you can make you feel more comfortable and less overwhelmed. Many students bring simple reminders of home with them, and these can be very comforting. Some ideas include a favourite pillowcase or coffee mug, photos of loved ones, or familiar shampoo or body products.
- Access JCU services and ask for help if you need it. The JCU Student Equity and Wellbeing Service provides a range of information sheets that you might find useful as you prepare to arrive in Australia. These are linked below and we suggest you have a quick read through before you leave. Some of this information is specific to Townsville and Cairns campuses; however, the majority of information is relevant to all students.
- Attend events and connect with others. We encourage you to participate in the variety of events and activities arranged for international students during the first days and weeks of the trimester as they are great ways to make friends, have fun, and learn about the wide variety of support services available. Staff are available to help you with any issues you might have, or just to have a chat.

Useful links

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settlement-services-subsite/files/english-ausco-culture-shock.pdf>
<https://www.jcu.edu.au/student-equity-and-wellbeing/resources/information-sheets>

Your Journey to Australia

Baggage

Ensure you check baggage limits with the airlines with which you're travelling, as these can vary. International flights usually allow between 32-35kg of baggage, while Australian domestic flights may

only allow 20-23kg of baggage. You don't want to be stuck with a large excess baggage fee, so check before you depart. Make sure you have an electronic copy and photocopy of your flight tickets, passport and other important documents or valuables in your carry-on luggage.

Australian customs

Australia has strict customs and biosecurity laws with tough penalties for travellers who fail to truthfully declare high-risk biosecurity goods when they arrive in Australia. Visit the Australian Border Force website linked below to understand what you can and cannot bring into Australia, as well as what items you must declare upon your arrival in Australia. There are rubbish bins available in the airport terminal for you to dispose of any unwanted items before you pass through Customs.

Before landing, you will be asked to complete an Incoming Passenger Card (IPC). This is a legal document and heavy fines are incurred if you provide false or misleading information. The IPC is available in many languages. You can download a sample in your language via the link provided.

Useful links

<https://www.abf.gov.au/>
<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/files/sitecollectiondocuments/travelling/studying-in-australia.pdf>
[https://www.abf.gov.au/entering-and-leaving-australia/crossing-the-border/at-the-border/incoming-passenger-card-\(ipc\)](https://www.abf.gov.au/entering-and-leaving-australia/crossing-the-border/at-the-border/incoming-passenger-card-(ipc))



After You Arrive

Transport from the airport

Useful links

<https://www.airtrain.com.au/>
<https://www.con-x-ion.com/services/brisbane-airporttransfers>
<https://book.13cabs.com.au/>
<https://www.uber.com/au/en/>

Jet lag

Jet lag occurs when your sleep rhythms are disturbed after long flights through multiple time zones. It can affect everybody and can be worse the more time zones you travel through, especially if you travel east. Jet lag can cause you to feel tired during the day and find it hard to sleep at night. Other common symptoms include irritability, difficulty concentrating, not being as alert as normal, and feeling low. The symptoms will gradually get better as your body adjusts to the new time zone. Be prepared for these symptoms; be gentle on yourself and take it easy for the first few days after arrival.

Useful links

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/jet-lag>

Shopping

Brisbane has a wide range of indoor and outdoor shopping centres, fresh food markets, and specialty stores both in the CBD and in the suburbs; the major ones are listed below. It's always best to check the stores' websites for opening hours and a full listing of stores/tenants.

Useful links

[Queen Street Mall](#)
[Westfield Carindale](#)
[Indooroopilly Shopping Centre](#)
[Westfield Chermside](#)
[Westfield Mt Gravatt](#)

Banking

If you opened an Australian bank account before you arrived, you will need to visit a branch with your original documents to activate your account. Please refer to the information on opening a bank account in the 'Pre-departure planning' section earlier in this Guide.

You can also open an account after you arrive in Australia. You can apply online; however, you may then need to verify your ID in person before activating your account.

Mobile services & internet

We recommend you purchase a SIM card and begin using your Australian mobile number when you arrive. Numerous providers



offer prepaid services and mobile phone plans which include internet data. Ask the providers for details of plans that might suit you.

Students are provided with unlimited internet access while on campus via the Wi-Fi network, Eduroam. Further information is available on the JCU Brisbane website.

Useful links

<https://www.studyaustralia.gov.au/en/plan-yourmove/your-first-week-in-australia.html>
https://www.jcu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1979789/JCUB-Wi-Fi-instructions.pdf
<https://www.whistleout.com.au/>

Transport

Brisbane is an easy city to get around. The metropolitan area has a great range of options for moving around the city and suburbs with ease.

- Trains
- Buses
- Ferries
- Driving
- Taxi
- Rideshare
- Touring
- Cruises
- Cycling
- Scooting

All public transport fares on Translink services are 50 cents per journey, regardless of how far you travel on the network or how you choose to pay. To travel on services in South East Queensland, you can use a blue adult go card, your contactless Visa, Mastercard or American Express credit or debit card or a pre-purchased paper ticket.

Useful links

<https://www.australia.com/en/places/brisbane-and-surrounds/getting-around-brisbane.html>

<https://translink.com.au/>

<https://www.queenslandrail.com.au/>

<https://translink.com.au/tickets-and-fares/concessions/tertiary>

Wildlife

Living in Queensland means living close to nature. Sometimes nature can come a little closer than you might expect. In our backyards, it is common to see amazing wildlife such as possums, skinks, blue-tongue lizards, tawny frogmouths, lorikeets and perhaps even a snake or two. Be aware that some wildlife, like geckos, frogs, spiders and other insects might find their way into your home. Brisbane's native animals and birds play an important role in our city's biodiversity and it is an offence to harm them. Some native animals can have nuisance behaviours, such as swooping magpies and noisy crows.

Useful links

<https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/clean-and-green/natural-environment-and-water/biodiversity-in-brisbane/wildlife-in-brisbane/living-with-wildlife>

<https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals/living-with>

Driving

International students can drive in Queensland using a current and valid home-country licence. The licence must be in English or you must have a certified translation. Please ensure you bring this with you if you plan to drive while in Australia. We also recommend you attend at least one driving lesson before you drive in Australia, to ensure you understand the road rules and to reduce your risk of having an accident.

Further information about road rules and driving safely is available via the Queensland Transport and Main Roads website.

Useful links

<https://www.qld.gov.au/transport/licensing/driver-licensing/overseas/driving>

Diversity & inclusion

At JCU Brisbane, we believe in the strength of diversity and an inclusive and respectful learning and working environment. We celebrate the uniqueness of every individual, cultivating an environment where all members of the JCU Brisbane community feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their best. Our aim is to foster creativity, innovation, and collaboration through a culture of inclusion.

Let us know how we can further support you by contacting our Wellbeing Team.

Attend Orientation

At JCU Brisbane, Orientation is compulsory for all international students. This is generally the week prior to Week 1 of your classes commencing. You are required to attend face-to-face activities during the Orientation period at the JCU Brisbane Campus where you will be introduced to student systems, gain access to computer accounts, request your Student ID card, meet your Academic Lead and support staff, enrol into your subjects and receive your class timetable. Shortly before Orientation, you will receive your Orientation schedule via email.

CRICOS Provider Code: 00117J





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 rich cultural and experiential diversity on campus. We acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters where we operate our business.

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.



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.

RESPECT. NOW. ALWAYS.





Other useful links

Aussie values and culture

<https://insiderguides.com.au/australian-etiquette/>

<https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/australian-culture/australianculture-core-concepts#australian-culture-core-concepts>

<https://insiderguides.com.au/essential-aussie-slang-internationalstudents/>

Recreation

<https://www.mycommunitydirectory.com.au/Queensland/Brisbane>

<https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation>

<https://www.mustdobrisbane.com/whats-on>

Public holidays

<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employment-conditions/public-holidays/2025-public-holidays>

Health and wellbeing

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health>

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/services/emergency/keep-emergency-for-emergencies>

<https://www.allianzcare.com.au/en.html>

The law, legal services and advice

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settlement-servicesubsite/files/english-ausco-australian-law.pdf>

<https://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au/Get-legal-help>

<https://www.qls.com.au/Find-a-Solicitor/Search>

Personal safety

<https://www.police.qld.gov.au/safety-and-preventingcrime/personal-safety/adult-safety>

<https://www.studyqueensland.qld.gov.au/live/safety-and-support>

<https://www.studyaustralia.gov.au/en/life-in-australia/safety-in-australia/beach-safety>

Cyber security

<https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/>

<https://www.cyber.gov.au/>

Contact Information

James Cook University

Brisbane Campus
349 Queen Street
Brisbane Queensland 4000
Phone: 3001 7800

New Student Enquiries

register@jcub.edu.au

Wellbeing Team

JCU Brisbane Counsellor
Access: Face-to-face, video, and phone consultations available
Phone: 0455 432 919
Location: JCU Brisbane Campus
Email: studentcounsellor@jcub.edu.au

Queensland International Student Hotline

1800 QSTUDY (1800 778 839)
Free call 24/7
<https://www.studyqueensland.qld.gov.au/live/safety-and-support/1800qstudy>

Community Information & Support Services

Emergency

Police/Ambulance/Fire Brigade
000

Policelink (non-urgent)

131 444

Lifeline (mental health)

131 114

Beyond Blue (mental health)

1300 224 636

Department of Home Affairs

299 Adelaide Street
Brisbane Queensland 4000
131 881

Brisbane Visitor Centre

167 Queen Street
Brisbane Queensland 4000
3006 6290





Contact us

BRISBANE

Sarina Russo Plaza
349 Queen Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
Australia

Tel + 617 3001 7800
Email enquire@jcub.edu.au
Web www.jcub.edu.au

     JCUBrisbane

CRICOS Provider Code: 00117J

