

ADVICE FOR 2025 JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Each year we send a survey to the students in their first year of study in Australia. We ask about their university, program, life Down Under, accommodation, and activities outside of the classroom

Keep reading to get all the insider tips taken directly from the survey for a smooth transition to studying at James Cook University!

COMMENTS & ADVICE ABOUT JCU

Program	University Review	Program Review	Advice for Future Students
Dentistry	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dentistry	A small but cozy campus with a very extensive dentistry building.	Lots of hands-on training which is great and lots of great professors always willing to help.	It's okay to be homesick when you first get here but the feelings will pass.
Dentistry	James Cook University provides students with a community like atmosphere, there's many ongoing events to make the student experience a valuable one.	Instructors are super involved in your learning, they are always willing to answer questions and guide you throughout and make sure their students are on track.	Make sure to put yourself out there, don't keep to yourself and it'll make the experience a lot easier, more enjoyable and a lighter adjustment.
Medicine	As a current student in the MBBS program at James Cook University, I can say that this journey has been both rewarding and transformative. Here's my personal take on what makes JCU stand out: Curriculum and Learning Experience	I couldn't be happier with my choice to study MBBS at JCU. The combination of practical training, a strong community focus, and supportive faculty creates an environment where we can thrive as future healthcare professionals. If you're looking for a program that prepares you for real-world challenges while fostering a sense of purpose, I highly recommend JCU.	My advice for future Canadian or American students coming into the MBBS program at JCU is to not be afraid. Embrace the journey ahead! The transition to studying medicine in a different country can feel daunting, but you'll find that people here are incredibly welcoming and always willing to help.

From day one, the program integrates basic sciences with clinical practice, which I found incredibly beneficial. Instead of waiting years to see patients, we're in clinical settings early on. This hands-on experience really helps us apply what we learn in lectures to real-world situations. The problem-based learning approach encourages teamwork and critical thinking, which are essential skills in medicine.

Don't hesitate to reach out to your professors and classmates; they genuinely want to see you succeed. Building a support network is key, so make lots of friends. These connections will not only enrich your experience but also provide you with a valuable support system during the challenges of medical school. Remember, you're not alone on this journey everyone is in it together, and collaborating with others can make all the difference. Enjoy every moment, and best of luck!

Medicine

JCU is an amazing university where students come first. Everything is accommodating for students, as well as the services that are offered in residences and on campus. Moreover, since this university is in a small town, there are vouchers and student discounts everywhere you go. And everything is accessible, even in town which is but a 30 min bus ride for 1.50\$. They also offer student care, with a GP office on campus, counselling services, post office, hair salon, pharmacy, and everything one could need.

MBBS is probably the best and quickest route that a student could take to become a doctor. It's also not as known in Canada so even knowing that this program exists is niche and special as a Canadian. Knowledge is genuinely power. Instructors, as mentioned in the previous question put students first. They want us to succeed. There are so many clubs offered here and I am involved in almost every single one about medicine because there are Balls, Events, and Tips and Tricks night in succeeding in medicine, not just boring meetings once in a fortnight.

Apply!! There is no cost and OzTREKK, along with the patient, helpful staff is the best way to go through with it. There are so many programs such as dentistry, nursing, vet, engineering, and there are absolutely no downfalls in just simply applying and getting your foot in the door.

Medicine	JCU is a great university. The course is run over six years so it's more relaxed than condensed 4-year courses. You start placement in 1st year which is amazing getting that clinical experience early. Most universities don't start placement till second or third year medicine.	I love the early clinical exposure, especially in rural and tropical health settings. Instructors are experienced and approachable, though some could be more accessible. The course structure is intense but well-organized, blending theory and practice from the start.	Come two weeks before you start the program if you're living off campus. Finding housing can be extremely difficult.
Medicine	There are a number facilities on campus. I am mostly a gym/basketball person. They have outdoor basketball courts which is great but I was sad to realize that there was no indoor basketball courts! The gym is not the fanciest but it does the job! All in all, it has the facilities but you just got to make it work!	The instructors for my first year have been pretty good! They are easy to approach and are each very enthusiastic and passionate about the module they teach. The clinical skills training I think is the most valuable and exciting! Communication skills, Vital signs, Basic life support are just some of the things we covered in our first year as a medical student for the Clinical aspects. I also underwent my first placement at a sports clinic which was pretty exciting and great way to get first hand experience on our careers!	Do not hesitate to fulfill your careers and aspirations by taking on a new chapter in your life in Australia!
Nursing	JCU is an amazing campus. People here are amazing and I have made many friends. I wish the school was better at communicating. When applying for my visa, they waited until 2 weeks before I was to leave to send me CoE.	JCU nursing has so many amazing professors, and great opportunities for placements. I wish more of my classes were in person instead of prerecorded lectures online.	Be prepared for the cost of placement. I was unaware that I could be placed anywhere in Australia for placement. While it provides you with great opportunities, it is also costly to travel to them.
Nursing	James Cook University is a very welcoming university. They are a	JCU nursing has so many amazing professors, and great opportunities for	Ensure your degree transfers back to Canada. Try looking for scholarships

smaller university with smaller classes that provide students with the opportunity to get to know their professors. The buildings are quite new and everything is well kept. They have a free lunch every Wednesday which is pretty cool. The on campus gym is not great, and isn't very clean so I recommend getting a membership elsewhere. I'm in nursing so the simulation rooms allow further learning.

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to help you out. Do not pack any pants or jackets because they will never get used to how hot it is here.

ADVICE ABOUT LIVING DOWN UNDER

Top 5 most common themes are summarized below, followed by the specific comments segmented by university. Some of the suggestions apply to anyone moving to Australia or New Zealand, regardless of the program or university.

Social Connection:

- Make friends with fellow international students and locals.
- Join clubs or organizations to meet people with similar interests.
- Attend social events and be open to new experiences.

Homesickness Management:

- Stay connected with family and friends through regular calls or video chats.
- Find hobbies and activities to keep busy and distracted.
- Set realistic expectations and understand that homesickness is normal.

Practical Tips:

- Arrive early to secure housing and adjust to the new environment.
- Be proactive in seeking help and support from university resources and fellow students.
- Manage finances wisely and be aware of the cost of living.

Cultural Adjustment:

- Embrace the local culture and customs.
- Be mindful of cultural differences and adapt accordingly.
- Be open to new experiences and perspectives.

Self-Care:

- Prioritize self-care activities like exercise, healthy eating, and sufficient sleep.
- Seek help if you're struggling with mental health issues.
- Set realistic goals and manage stress effectively.

BOND UNIVERSITY

- My advice would be to find hobbies that you enjoy outside of school to keep you busy and make Australia feel like home.
- There is lot things different when compared to Canada or USA but people here are helpful and the university prof are able to help you navigate things that might be new to you.
- Try not to focus on going back home and the feeling of homesickness. Enjoy your time.
- Finding a group of friends and staying social makes it a lot easier.
- Create a schedule and stick to it in the first month. Everything is overwhelming and new so it is good to have predictability to begin with to regulate your mental health!

CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY

- Make the most of orientation! I met several other Canadians who used OzTREKK to apply to their programs, and we are not only the best of friends now, but we help each other navigate all the technicalities of studying overseas.
- Make sure to make a lot of friends during orientation and always keep in touch with friends and family back home.
- Get involved, be social, find a good work-life balance as a student.

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

- Be yourself, and enjoy the wonderful people and culture that Australia has to offer.
- Make friends not only with the Canadians but the Australian's in your program as well. I haven't experienced homesickness too much thankfully but just try to stay in touch with family and friends back home even if you can only respond to messages every few days :) Weekend morning and nights will probably be the best time to speak with family with the time zone differences (unless you're in Perth!). COME EARLY, especially if you won't be living on campus, because the rental market is crazy competitive no matter which city you go to. People who came early January had a much easier time compared to people who came in the middle of January!
- It's hard initially when making the move because it feels like there's so much to do, but just take it one step at a time. If you're able to live with people who are in your same course, whether international or not, makes the transition a little bit easier.

FLINDERS UNIVERSITY

- Get involved and come out of your shell. Everyone is in the same place as you (new people, nobody knows anybody).
- It is very similar to Canada in terms of social norms, so I found that easy to adjust to. However, the homesickness is real. The time change makes it difficult to arrange phone calls with friends and families. My friends and I send long voice notes to each other to kind of mimic a phone call and that has helped me stay more connected. It is also important to understand that you will miss big events at home- weddings, babies, death, etc. And it just isn't realistic to assume you'll be able to make it to all these events. Overall, it's definitely worth it but just be prepared that there will be some hard moments.
- Go out! Explore!
- Keep in touch with everyone you can, contact them often, make friends and put yourself out there.

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY

- Arrive early! Finding housing was definitely the hardest as an international (Smith Collective doesn't ask for previous rental history so its an easy in but it is more expensive - but very close to campus which is amazing). The rest will all come naturally!!
- Make connections with the other Canadians in your cohort it can make the adjustment easier as you are all in the same boat.
- At the start try to stay busy but after a little while you will meet the best people and have the best time. Staying in touch with family is so much easier than you think it will be, I still talk to them at least twice a day.
- Try to get out and make friends and experience what there is to offer in Oz.
- Aside from left-handed traffic and scalding sunlight, Aus is very similar to Canada in almost every other way. Get to know your fellow Canadians at the school because it can be a very comforting network to have. Australia has a ton of Canadian med students and locals are comfortable with this fact too.

JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

- Keep close friends and you FaceTime lots.
- Call your family and friends back home often. They will be your biggest support.
- FaceTime is so important. I was FaceTiming my family all the time and it helps so much. The time difference isn't ideal but it works out.
- Make sure to attend social events to create good connections with people and it's important to schedule times with your family where you can call or FaceTime.

- The first couple months might be the hardest but by the end of the first semester you will form your friend group and it's honestly not that bad!
- Adapting to life in Australia or New Zealand can be an exciting adventure! My advice for future students is to embrace the local culture by engaging with the friendly communities around you; don't hesitate to ask questions and join clubs or societies that interest you, as this is a great way to meet new friends and immerse yourself in the social scene. Make the most of the stunning natural landscapes by exploring parks, beaches, and hiking trails, it's a wonderful way to unwind and appreciate your surroundings. Stay open to new experiences, whether it's trying local foods or participating in cultural events, and remember that it's perfectly okay to seek support if you ever feel overwhelmed. Lastly, stay connected with family and friends back home to maintain a sense of balance as you navigate this exciting chapter of your life. Enjoy every moment of this unique opportunity!
- Put yourself out there, get out of your room and attend those social events. I highly recommend living on campus for your first year as this makes it easier to make friends. Don't call home so often, yes I understand that you miss your family but calling home will just remind you and can make you more homesick. At first call them once a week, then try to go longer not calling.
- The sunscreen you bring from home will be useless against the sun rays here, buy Australian sunscreen.
- Personally, I am ok with being away from home but I understand that everyone is different. Making sure you have a self care routine in place before you arrive is important and to not stray from it.
- Making friends is a bit tricky and takes a while. I had definitely some troubles in that department with making friends, but trust in that you will find your footing and find your people.

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

- I keep in touch with family and friends through what's app and imo. It's easy to talk to them and FaceTime. Join BOHDs if will make making friends easier. Lastly, focus on yourself, self care is key

MAQUARIE UNIVERSITY

- This advice depends on everyone's personal preferences but never be afraid to ask for help from those who are already accustomed to living here. They are all helpful and willing to provide advice and assistance. Do research about your area beforehand because you will be on campus often and will be here early some times of the week as well.
- Try to make a few friends and connect with other international student that are in the same boat as you! There are breaks in between semesters and there is winter and summer breaks which you can use to travel home like I do so homesickness reduces drastically when you know you can go home in a month or so during break! Also regular FaceTime with friends and family back home helps a lot!

- Find a community that you enjoy living in with activities you enjoy doing – you'll meet people from all different backgrounds and as a result be much more successful in school!!!

MONASH UNIVERSITY

- Remain in touch with your loved ones back home and know that time will fly by.
- It's a vibrant and excellent country with lot of great people.
- Making friends as Canadians here is very easy, Aussies love Canadians. And you will be moving here with a solid group of Canadians anyways so you will feel the group mentality from the onset.
- It's important to stay active and get involved by joining clubs and attending orientation events to make friends. Dealing with homesickness can be easier by staying busy and talking about your feelings. Keep in touch with family through regular calls, while also exploring your new surroundings and engaging with local culture. Focus on your studies by seeking help when needed and staying organized. Most importantly, keep an open mind and embrace new experiences to make the most of your time abroad.
- Just go with the flow and don't put too much pressure on yourself to have things figured out.
- Get involved with the university community around your program as quickly as possible and get a good network going.

UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

- Make friends outside of your program, explore the country.
- You will make friends along the way, so don't worry! Also remember to call home once in awhile!
- Join clubs, get a part time job!
- Many people in the cohort will be out of town or international students who don't know anybody, so everyone's eager to make friends. If your study load permits it, try to get involved in a club you're interested in. It'll be nice to meet people outside of your day-to-day life and it could be a good way to de-stress. Also be aware that there will be a significant time difference between North America and Australia/NZ, so make use of those mornings and evenings to talk with friends and family back home. It'll be difficult to do this course without your usual support system, so try to build strong relationships among your colleagues. You'll have someone with you who relates 100% and can empathize.
- Having your close circle of friends that are going through the same thing really helps!
- Make friends, enjoy the weather, take lots of breaks and make lots of facetime calls.
- Attend the social events and be open to making friends with everyone. You can later find out which group you fit into best, but start off wanting to get to know everyone. Make sure to call home as often as you can and stay connected on social media.
- Many Canadians will be in your class so not much to fret. Find activities to deal with homesickness. Work out a call schedule with friends and family.
- Live in a non-student residence.

- Try to build a support network when you arrive. Remember to call home every once in a while. Keep in mind that cars have right of way here. Remember to drink water, eat food, and sleep.
- The first 5/6 months are great. It feels like a long vacation in an amazing country/city! Australia is amazing and there is so much to do and see. No bad comments in terms of adjusting to the culture here. Homesickness hits later in the year once you have settled in and the initial sparkle of moving to a new country has worn off. It can be rough with the stress of dental school but you will have made strong connections with people in your cohort and there will always be someone there to support you.
- If you're coming alone, make sure to be close to campus for doing things outside of school. However don't be afraid to adventure far out if you're okay with a bit of a longer train commute!
- Prepare for a big change and for yourself to struggle at times with the adjustment, but you do adjust and get used to it.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

- Universities are great about having social events, so get yourself to those to meet new people and make friends. Find a time to call home. I like to regularly schedule my calls and make it a routine so that I avoid feeling homesick. Lastly, book your flights back home for holidays in advance. As soon as you know your exam dates, book your flights to avoid overpriced flights.
- I think that making friends has to occur naturally. I am a social person but I am also a shy person. It took me a semester to make some decent friends but other people made friends faster than me as I do not always put myself out there. In terms of homesickness, we have a mid-year break so you can potentially see your Canadian/American family every 4-6 months if you fly back so I do not feel it as much. I felt a bit homesick when I got here but the 2 week mid-semester break helped with that. I normally talk to my parents everyday in my mornings or before I sleep so I am thankful to modern technology. Sydney is like a more relaxed version of Toronto and people are generally nicer over here (in my opinion). I think you just have to be proactive and organized whenever you do tasks because you can easily miss deadlines and opportunities if you are not. Overall, Sydney has been a cool experience but I don't think it represents the classic Australia stereotypes we see on TV (at least since I live in downtown) with wild kangaroos, snakes and giant spiders.
- I recommend getting involved as much as you can. This way, you can make friends outside your degree or classes that share the same interests as you. Keep contact with friends and family as much as you can. Homesickness is inevitable. It may come differently to different people, and for me it sneaks up at random times. For example, I was working out in the gym when I suddenly became super unmotivated. I later realised I was feeling very homesick. Know that it's not a lingering feeling that lasts forever, and talk to your loved ones back home as much as you can.
- You gotta make friends man, especially if you go to a smaller known school without the Canadians it's gonna be tough but people in the cohort are very kind

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

- Personally, I found it quite easy to adjust to moving here. I think I was very ready for the next chapter of my life and that mental preparation was key in my experience. That is not the case for everyone, so I encourage you not isolate yourself if it's hard for you. Based on my conversations with friends who didn't have an easy time, try to find a good group of friends to spend time with - the mutual support is invaluable in a time like this! The time difference can be a bit of an adjustment (14 hours), but it hasn't been particularly difficult for me as I talk to my family at night before bed or early in the morning. As expected, there's definitely a bit of culture shock if you're coming from Canada or the USA, but it's not hard to adjust to. Your experience will be the most of what you make it, so have fun, but don't be afraid to reach out for help if you need it because there's so many people in the same position as you!
- Things are less expensive than back home but still could end up spending a lot, personally feel like you get more home sick AFTER visiting home shortly, so I like to stick to 1 long visit at the end of the year.
- Culture is pretty similar to Canada. People are very nice here and very friendly. It is a beautiful country so make sure to explore a bit during your time here.
- Find time to call home to all your various relatives, keep them updated with photos, make lots of friends and keep some close friends to feel like family here. Find your community.
- It's really not all that different from Canada and you shouldn't have an issue with living here. The best thing to do is msg in the OzTREKKers group chat to find a couple housemates so you have people you know when you get here. There's plenty of clubs to join to make friends. You can use Facebook FaceTime to call your family for free with wifi.
- It may take a few months to settle in but when you do you will love it. Everyone is extremely friendly and it is so beautiful here.
- It is quite easy to make friends especially within the cohort do not worry about making friends.
- It's really hot, the birds are weird, and the people are lovely.
- Brisbane specifically is a very easy city to live in. The city centre is small and easy to transit around. There are no large chain or box stores or pharmacies though, and there are less brands and options available than there are at home. Everything is expensive. The weather is great though, and getting outside is easy and everyone does it! It's a very active and outdoor lifestyle. Beware of birds during swooping season (I was not prepared for this)!
- Homesickness is definitely real when you first move here. My advice is to just get involved with as much as you can right from the beginning of your time here. Going to events or social activities, or even just going for a walk, can be super helpful in distracting you from your homesickness. Before you even realize it you'll start to think of Australia as home!

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

- Make friends, continue to call family home and try living with roommates.
- Get used to taking public transit.
- Adapting to life in Australia can be exciting but challenging. Be proactive in making friends through clubs and events, and tackle homesickness by staying connected with loved ones via regular calls and embracing familiar cultural comforts. Enjoy the laid-back lifestyle by exploring local customs and the natural beauty around you. Give yourself time to adjust, and be patient, it's normal to feel homesick at first, but you'll soon find your rhythm and thrive in your new environment.
- Save up enough money and everyone sleeps and wakes early.
- Make friends early and explore the city with them to get used to the city and new people. Keep in mind the daylight time changes in regards to calling back home as well.
- Join something not affiliated with the med school class, like a sports team or a shared house.
- Join uni clubs, meet new people.
- Lean on friends for support. Everyone is in the same boat and at the end of the day all you have is each other!

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

- Living in college housing is a great way to meet people and participate in activities. Taking time to do fun things, explore Perth and the surrounding areas, and keeping in touch with people at home through video calls are all ways that help in adjusting.
- Overall very similar to back home. Weather back in Canada is something very unique and I miss it very much. Not much of a winter if you are a winter lover.
- Very similar to home but nicer weather!
- Stay in touch with family and friends from home and make lots of friends here to establish a new support system here.
- Makes friends. Especially with the other international students because they know what you're going through too.
- Make friends quickly and call family as much as you can.
- Get involved with clubs, sports teams, etc. Australians tend to stick to their own groups, so it can be difficult to embed yourself into one and make friends without having a reason to be there. Joining an organization or team can help you break down this barrier and gain some friends!

AUSTRALIAN BUCKET LIST

Wondering what you should see and do while you're in Australia? Here are some of the "must see" spots according to current students!

ADELAIDE

- Brighton Beach
- Glenelg Beach
- There are lots of great coffee spots and cute restaurants

BRISBANE

- Visit the Gold Coast, Sydney, and Melbourne (great beaches!)
- Trips to Tasmania, Canberra, Sydney, and Melbourne
- Stradbroke Island
- Bondi to Coogee Walk
- Burleigh Heads
- Noosa Heads
- There are lots of hiking trails and sports leagues
- Lots of festivals, AFL and NRL sports games, plenty of clubs and bars
- Byron Bay
- Whitsunday Islands
- Take advantage of the train that goes up and down the coast
- Go to the beach while you can (especially at the start of the semester)

CAIRNS/TOWNSVILLE

- There are amazing beaches, water falls, and spectacular nature
- In Townsville, visit the Strand
- In Cairns, snorkeling and diving at the Great Barrier Reef
- Visit the Daintree Rainforest (hiking, wildlife, learn about Indigenous culture)
- Trip to Kuranda (scenic railway or skyrail gondola for breathtaking views)
- Local markets have unique crafts and delicious food
- Barron Falls or Josephine Falls

- Visit Melbourne
- Visit Gold Coast

GEELONG

- Torquay Beach
- Grampians and You Yangs for hiking
- Great Ocean Road for a road trip (stop at Anglesea for the chocolate factory, Lorne for hiking and great beaches, and the 12 Apostles)
- Amazing beaches and hiking in Lorne
- Eastern Beach/Geelong Waterfront (walks along the water)
- Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads (beaches)
- See an AFL game

GOLD COAST

- Australia Zoo
- Byron Bay (cafes and coffee shops)
- Burleigh Beach
- Currumbin Wildlife
- Coolangatta
- Explore the hinterlands in Gold Coast
- See an AFL game

MELBOURNE

- Downtown Melbourne for an unlimited array of restaurants
- Many bars
- Explore the laneways and alleys
- Great sport culture
- 90 Mile Beach
- Great Ocean Road
- Wilsons Promontory National Park

- Go to Sydney for a weekend trip
- Brunch spots (Humble Rays and Operator Diner)
- Lots of nearby beaches
- Plenty of out of city tours
- There are always concerts happening
- Visit Gold Coast
- Check out an AFL game
- Brighton Beach
- St. Kilda
- Go shopping in the CBD
- Attend a foot game at least once (big part of the culture)
- Try a Frozen Coke from Macca's (McDonald's)
- Visit the Queen Victoria Market for local produce, meat, bakeries, and souvenirs
- Road trip to the parks (Grampians, Werribee Gorge, and Dandenong Ranges)
- Chelsea Beach is beautiful
- Go to Phillip Island at least once

ORANGE

- In Sydney: check out Bondi Beach and Bondi to Coogee Walk, Darling Harbour, Central Key, Mapo Gelato, Opera House, Manly Beach
- Visit the Blue Mountains for hiking (Three Sisters)
- Dorrigo Rainforest
- Airle Beach
- Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary
- In Orange: great food spots, wineries, walks, Mount Canobolas

PERTH

- Beaches are nice
- Go to a footy game
- Go down south to Margaret River
- Cottesloe Beach

- Western Australia Aquarium
- Elizabeth Quay
- Event Cinemas
- Kmart
- Yochi Frozen Yogurt
- Beaches and outdoor summer activities year round
- Cafes
- Concerts
- AFL games

SYDNEY

- Bondi Beach
- Manly Beach
- Macquarie Center (huge shopping mall beside Macquarie University)
- Opera House
- Sydney CBD/downtown (great cafes)
- Go to a footy game
- Museum of Contemporary Art
- Check out the festivals
- Go scuba diving or surfing
- Try an escape room/games night
- Ask your friends from the area for their suggestions (they'll know the less touristy spots)
- Jarvis Bay
- Blue Mountains
- Kiama
- Bondi to Coogee Walk (stunning coastal walk with breathtaking views, can see whales)
- Bronte Beach
- The Grounds of Alexandria for brunch
- Sydney Fish Market for fresh seafood
- Australian Museum
- Night Markets

- Pretty much the entire coastline of Sydney is connected by walking paths so there are endless coastal walks you can do in the city which are gorgeous
- Lots of hiking accessible by trains as well
- The coffee in Sydney is excellent
- Go watch Australian sports like Australian rules football, cricket, and rugby
- Featherdale Wildlife Park
- Whale Watching
- Great Ocean Road

RECCOMENDED STUDENT GROUPS AT JCU

Here are some of the groups other OzTREKKers have joined!

- Weekly interfaculty sports
- JCU Dive Club
- International Students Club
- Marine Science Club
- Residence/college events and activities

ACCOMODATION ADVICE

The advice listed below is general advice that can apply to any students moving to Australia or New Zealand, regardless of the university or city to which they are moving. Location specific accommodation information and advice follows.

Note: Students were asked about what type of accommodation they live in currently. Respondents might have lived in a different type of accommodation when they first moved to Australia or New Zealand.

- Connect with other students and share accommodations and also get car as soon as possible.
- Use flatmate.au, try to arrange early.
- Find a buddy to room with to decrease finance costs!
- Location Matters: Living close to campus saves commuting time and makes it easier to attend events or late study sessions.
- Budget: Factor in rent, utilities, and any hidden costs.
- Social Environment: If you're new or want a community-feel, living with a group can help you make friends quickly.
- Manage your budget wisely - have a budgeting plan - money burns quickly.
- Be prepared to have rental references ready. Be patient with the application process, it is more involved than in Canada. You will need to submit rental references, proof of income/funds, previous paystubs, copy of your visa, etc. I went to about 25 viewings before finding a place.
- Always go and see the accommodation before signing lease, look for roommates on cohort group chat (Facebook).
- Check the prices of the accommodations and familiarize yourself with the price range beforehand. It is best recommended to rent with an agent and see the house before making decisions.
- Know what your priorities are for accommodation. I have friends living in many different styles of accomms. Do you prefer living closer to the school? Closer to restaurants? Is the cost a big factor? Do you want to live in student housing or roll the dice with finding a roommate?

JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

**Weekly Rent
(\$AUD with
Utilities)**

**How Long it Took to Find
Accommodation After Arrival**

Suburb & Building with Reviews

**(% of JCU students in that type of
accommodation)**

Private Rental

50% — 2–3 weeks

Smithfield

“Very convenient, comfortable, next to uni, walking distance.”

Min. Reported
Rent: \$450

50% — 3+ weeks

Douglas, Townsville

Max. Reported
Rent: \$480

Avg. of All
Responses: \$465

**Student-
purposed
Privately
Managed**

100% — Arranged before arrival

John Gray Hall, Cairns

“John grey Hall is very convenient for students at JCU and it’s been great in terms of cleanliness. There’s a gym, media room, rec room.”

Min. Reported
Rent: \$285

“John Grey Hall is a great way to make new friends as they always have events going on to meet new people. The studio apartments are small but are newly done and look nice. The staff is also very kind.”

Max. Reported
Rent: \$433

Saints Catholic College*

“Yes every residence is close in proximity to the university, there are also houses near to the university that 3rd year and above live in with housemates in which they share rent. In saints, we have cleaners once a week and in BY I believe they are every 2 weeks. There are restaurants on campus to get your daily latte of course.”

Avg. Reported
Rent: \$363

George Roberts Hall

"I recommend George Roberts (GR) for first year students. There is a great environment to make friends because of the dining hall. In the dining hall it is easy to go and sit with strangers and have conversations. GR is the only residences that includes a gym membership. It is about a 15-minute walk to the main campus, while that seems far it's not, and the benefit is that it's quite and relaxing. The biggest downside would be the food. It was great at first, but then it got really repetitive."

On-Campus College / Dorm

100% — Arranged before arrival

Min. Reported
Rent: \$222

Max. Reported
Rent: \$190

Avg. of All
Responses: \$332

John Grey Hall, Unilodge

"It's very close to the university only a 5 min walk to classes, but the studio apartments are quite small."

"John Grey Hall is a good starting place when you first move to Australia. Because you're on campus, get familiar with the area and environment. After that, you can go look at some places to rent that work for you."

Saints Catholic College*

"I'm currently living at Saints Catholic College, and I can't recommend it enough for students! The building itself is well-maintained, with comfortable living spaces and great communal areas where you can relax or study. The best part, though, is the vibrant community. There are so many friendly people here who are very interactive and social. It's easy to make friends and find study buddies, whether it's through organized events or just hanging out in the common areas.

The suburb is also a plus, it's quiet and safe, with convenient access to local shops, cafes, and public transport. Plus, being close to the university makes commuting a breeze. Overall, Saints Catholic College offers a fantastic living experience that enhances both

academic and social life. If you're looking for a supportive and engaging environment, this is definitely the place to be!"

No James Cook University students living in homestay accommodations completed the survey. As such, we don't have student reported data on rent, suggested buildings, or advice on those housing types.

*One student identified as Saints Catholic College as student-purposed privately managed and another identified it as on-campus housing. JCU classifies it as their own on-campus accommodation in Townsville.

General Accommodation Advice for James Cook University Students:

- "Look early places get rented fast here."
- "I think it's important to live on campus for the first year to get an understanding of the city especially if you do not know anyone there!"
- "For future students seeking accommodation, my top advice is to start your search early, as popular options can fill up quickly. If possible, visit potential places in person to assess the space and meet potential roommates, which can help you get a feel for the neighborhood. Consider the location carefully; being close to your university while also having access to grocery stores and public transport is crucial for a balanced lifestyle. Lastly, if you'll be sharing accommodations, communicate openly with your roommates about expectations regarding cleanliness and shared responsibilities."
- "Friends referral is key to getting apartments."
- "Find something close to campus."
- "Find accommodation before hand and have it organized for when you arrive to make things a lot easier on yourself."
- "Make sure you align your values to which residence you want to go to. Each residence has their own pros and cons and values and things they look for in each student that lives there. For example, Saints is very social, but BY is more for students that keep to themselves. John Flynn is also more on the social side. And the events they host will showcase that. Every residence at JCU is on campus so it's not too bad, the only residence that is farther from campus is George Roberts which is a 15-20 min walk as opposed to the other one which are 5-10. Keep in mind the weather here is hot so you don't want to be walking for that long."
- "If your school offers on campus accommodation, I highly encourage you to stay there for at least your year. Staying on campus made the transition easy. The price was also very good compared to what is offered off campus in rentals."

ADVICE ABOUT WORKING WHILE STUDYING

Time Management is Crucial

- Prioritize schoolwork over your job, if that starts becoming an issue then try to find a less demanding job or work less hours.
- Schedule out a daily and weekly to do list.
- Find a job with extremely flexible hours because your weekly/semesterly schedule will constantly change.
- Find a job with a boss that is very considerate of your schedule and schedules you on your availability.

Look for Jobs in Your Field

- If your program is really busy and want to work, it's a good idea that your job has something to do with your program.
- If in vet med, find a weekend job at a vet clinic, scheduling your own hours via dog walking/sitting
- A lot of 4th years work as dental assistants and give up their jobs to first years if you reach out to them. In terms of handling a job, just know what your priorities are; don't put too much on your plate. (Melbourne Dental Student)

Tips for Finding a Job

- It is easy to find a job, depending on the field you like to apply for. There are MANY places to work so make sure it works for you.
- There are lots of barista jobs.
- Create a LinkedIn account!
- It's much easier to find jobs in the suburbs than in the city.
- Ask friends if the place they work at is hiring.
- A lot of companies are looking for casual workers, meaning there are very few requirements to minimum hours worked per week. This is convenient for around exam times when you will not be able to work. Remember that employers need you more than you need them, and to prioritize yourself first.

How the Australian Job Market Differs from the Canadian Job Market

- Working on the weekends you generally make more money and gives you your evenings free for uni work/to stay at the library.
- Work as early and often as you can, as minimum wage is much higher here than in Canada.
- It can be a process to get HR to sign papers.

JOBS CURRENT STUDENTS HAVE

The tables below segment respondents' jobs by each respondent's program. The university which they attend is noted in brackets.

DENTISTRY

- I work at the campus cafe as a barista/cashier. They only need me around the lunch rush, so I work about 8 hours a week as my schedule allows, and my wage is \$31/hour. (Charles Sturt University)
- Chemist's Warehouse. (Charles Sturt University)
- I work part-time, about 5-10 hours per week in a remote job. It pays \$21CAD/hr. (University of Melbourne)
- I work as a Casual Dental Assistant. Don't get many hours but wage is \$30/hr on weekends and \$25 on weekdays. Working in second semester is a lot, and working in a dental clinic AND being in dental school can be a bit of dentistry overload. (University of Melbourne)
- Dental Assisting, Clinical Research. (University of Sydney)
- I work at a dental clinic as a dental assistant and receptionist, where I help with various tasks, including assisting the dentist during procedures, managing patient appointments, and handling front desk duties. As a casual employee, I usually work about 10-16 hours per week, which allows me to balance my job with my studies. My wage is around \$36 per hour, making it a great way to gain experience in the dental field while earning some extra income. (University of Sydney)
- I work through the university athletics department as a sport attendant, where I score keep field hockey and help run events at the gym. I only work about 4 hours a week, however I make more when I work weekends. (University of Western Australia)

LAW

- I tutor internationally. I was already doing it when I came to Australia and already had some students. I have been able to find some more students here as well. I like it because it is rewarding and flexible. However, I am starting to look for jobs in the legal field, because it will give the necessary experience for my future career. (Monash University)

MEDICINE

- OSCH at YMCA, 10 hours per week for \$34/hour. (Flinders University)
- I am a physiotherapist and had my Canadian credentials transferred over to Australia. So I am now working as a physiotherapist here as well. I work between 8-12 hours per week as a contractor, this allows me flexibility with my schedule. Given I am a private contractor, I make approximately \$140/hour. Many of my classmates work in health-related jobs without prior experience- such as medical reception, ED unit clerk, porters at the hospitals. Their wages are typically around \$40/hour during the week and about \$70/hr over the weekends. (Flinders University)
- Research assistant, 2-3 hours a week. (University of Melbourne)

- I teach swimming with the many different companies and local governments. Good pay especially penalty rates at 45 & 55 on the weekends, starts anywhere from \$30 on swim school. I work anywhere from 8-24 hours per week on a casual basis. (University of Notre Dame)
- Remote work in translation, unstable hours because I'm just freelancing and taking jobs where I can. (University of Queensland)
- Swim instructor and the uni pool. (University of Western Australia)

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

- Kids' sports program. (Monash University)

PHYSIOTHERAPY

- Sports trainer and allied health assistant. (University of Melbourne)
- Receptionist at a physiotherapy clinic. (University of Melbourne)

PUBLIC HEALTH

- I am a registered nurse. (Macquarie University)

FINAL WORDS OF WISDOM FROM CURRENT STUDENTS

- Australia is beautiful and so warm.
- Be open minded! It's honestly not that different from Canada. I've only ever seen spiders outside (although cockroaches are a big thing here and unfortunately you could have the cleanest place and still get roaches). The sun sets super early during the non-summer months so its basically dark after 5:30pm most of the time. The early morning culture is so real and its almost annoying trying to gym at that time! If you want an iced coffee, ask for an iced latte (otherwise you'll get ice cream in it). You'll get used to not tipping everywhere (although they will ask even on the QR codes – don't do it, the service doesn't change) and it's so nice.
- Goodluck!
- Have fun!
- Have fun! Melbourne can get quite cold with the wind.
- I just want to emphasize how important it is to embrace the entire experience of studying abroad. Beyond academics, take the time to explore Australia, make new friends, and engage in different cultural experiences. Whether it's trying new foods, attending local events, or discovering hidden gems in the city, these moments enrich your journey and create lasting memories. Additionally, don't hesitate to seek support when needed, universities often have resources for mental health and academic help. Balancing study and personal life is key, so prioritize self-care and enjoy every aspect of this exciting adventure.
- I'm extremely grateful to OzTREKK team for giving us the opportunity to study our dream program in the beautiful country of Australia, I appreciate your support, can thank you guys enough.
- Fellow Canadians here were ultra helpful in helping me get adjusted.
- It's a wonderful experience and a once in a lifetime opportunity make the most of it.
- Make sure to enjoy the journey not just the destination.
- Make sure to network with people in who will be in the class with you or with students who have completed this moving process previously.
- Make sure you utilize the option from OzTREKK to see who is all enrolled to JCU from Canada. It is very easy to reach out so you have a friend when you move.
- Australia is awesome!
- OzTREKK is great and so is Australia! Thank you to all.
- Read your university emails and keep up to date with program requirements (like immunization). Don't put stress on yourself right at the beginning - stay up to date with the administrative tasks.
- Thank you OzTREKK for being there for me :)
- Thanks so much h OzTREKK for helping me, I am so happy here in oz to be living my dream.

- You really cannot go wrong with any programs at any school in Australia, especially if OzTREKK is partnering with them. Just know what matters to you the most when picking schools (i.e. reputation, location, size, etc.) and pick the best uni for you. Some aspects about different schools may seem uncertain at first, but once you become immersed in the school, it won't seem as bad. For example, I had some questions about studying medicine at a Catholic university such as Notre Dame, given that the Catholic teachings and values may contradict with the responsibilities of a physician. However, I soon learned that although UNDA Med is within Notre Dame, we are often seen as a separate entity. Additionally, the staff and faculty and students are so very welcoming regardless of your background, so please do not let the fact that it is a Catholic university deter you in your choice to come here!