

ADVICE FOR 2026 JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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

Keep reading to get all the insider tips taken directly from the survey!

If you don't see your program listed, unfortunately no one from that program responded to this year's survey. We'll be happy to get your insights from next year's survey. 😊

Comments & Advice about James Cook University

Program	University Review	Program Review	Advice for Future Students
Dentistry	JCU is a great school. It's a small campus but the facilities are pretty new and cared for very well. It is quite a relaxing campus to study at as you constantly hear the sounds of birds singing in the forest just behind the school. It is also pretty safe.	The JCU BDS program has been great so far. For a mature students (23+) that have a full degree you'll find the first year is quite slow clinical and content wise. The simulation clinic is a nice facility but because you only get 2 hours a week it really forces you to cram as much practice into those 2 hours. Because most of the first year content is equivalent to first year undergrad in Canada and it's tied into the dental science course you can't get credit for it so it is a pain to have to basically repeat first year sciences. The profs are great though and very supportive.	Be open to learning new things and having new experiences. Studying in Australia has been so fun and the experience will be the most memorable few years.
Dentistry	The JCU Cairns campus is absolutely beautiful. It's located right next to the tropical mountains, a short	The dentistry program is quite small which is great for getting one on one time with your lecturers and student	Get excited for this new way of life! Australia is beautiful and the people here are so welcoming. Be open minded and

	drive away from some of the most beautiful beaches, and the city is also very exciting. It's a small campus so there are limited clubs at the moment. However, the JCU Students Association (JCUOSA) is great at organizing events that bring the entire program together. They had great events for o-week and sports days. There is a campus gym that is free if you live on residence, a pretty decent sized library, and other buildings that you are able to study in!	teachers. The upper year students are extremely helpful and the program is designed to help you succeed through various additional resources. There is also a large number of Canadian international students, so you won't feel like you are the only one going through this huge transition! All the lecturers want you to succeed and are very approachable to ask questions. The labs and lectures are not mandatory but highly recommended to go to as this is where you will get that extra individual help. Definitely go to class to get the most out of the program!	push yourself to come out of your comfort zone. You worked so hard to get into the program, remember to enjoy yourself while you are here besides studying! Also, you will find your people. Everyone is excited to meet everyone during first year and it's truly such a fun experience getting to know everyone.
Dentistry	The Uni is a great environment to learn!	This program is comprehensive and very hands on! Highly recommend.	Apply early.
Dentistry	The dental school facilities are excellent with modern labs and a great student clinic. Campus is smaller but friendly, with a stunning rainforest backdrop. Clubs and events through JCUSA make it easy to meet people, though nightlife is quieter than big cities. I love how hands-on the program is and how approachable the lecturers are. Downsides are the bus system (a car helps), limited food options on campus, and the hot, wet tropical weather. Overall, a supportive place	The instructors are really supportive and approachable and you can actually talk to them and they care about our progress. Hands-on training starts early with simulation labs, which makes the learning feel real from day one. The course structure is intense but well organized, mixing theory with practicals so it doesn't feel like all lectures. There are also dentistry-specific events and a student dental society that runs socials and study sessions. I love the early clinical focus and the tight-knit student community. What I dislike is the heavy workload at times and the limited	No one said it is going to be easy so expect to work (a lot) and do your best. And doing the extra mile will ensure success in the program and as a future dentist.

	to study dentistry with amazing practical training.	food/coffee options on campus, plus buses aren't the most reliable. But overall, the program gives great preparation for real-world dentistry.	
Dentistry	JCU has provided infinite opportunities to grow as students. I truly feel that they have provided the best support system for international students. I always felt like I could rely on them <3	JCU's Bachelor of Dental Surgery Program has offered me one of the best hands-on experiences ever. We start in sim clinic first semester of first year which I think is super important and beneficial for this type of program. The course structure is created in a way that maximizes the students success with organized small group sessions, laboratory practicals and mini quizzes that ensure all content is being absorbed properly.	First semester is always that hardest because you are getting used to so many new environments but always stay strong and remember you were chosen for a reason. Imposter syndrome is normal but never forget the hard work you put in to get where you are.
Medicine	The student associations for medicine love to put on events for students and keep the community engaged in variety of different ways!	Really engaging content and staff, living is pretty reasonable as well. I really feel like I'm part of a community here instead of just a number. There's also plenty of chances to actually engage with clinical side of medicine early on to help you gain exposure and get insight!	Balance your life with studies, you're coming to a new country, so you should also take the time to explore it!
Medicine	The facilities on campus for the most part are quite good as there are a good amount of places to go and study with whatever study style you may have. However, the study spaces can get quite bland. There is also a gym on campus, but it is very	Most of the instructors are amazing as they are always there to help you out and make sure you understand, however, a couple of them make the exams very unfair with the specificity in the questions. The hands-on training is amazing, as you start to do so much as	I suggest that you should make sure that you stay on top of everything and not to slack off because it might come back. But also coming here has been some of the best times of my life and you should make the most of it because you're never gonna have an experience like this again. So

small and very expensive. The on-campus accommodations are not that good as they are extremely expensive with very small rooms, and the ones that give you food and have decently sized rooms are absurdly expensive and are all the way across campus from classes. The only one that is in the middle of campus and is close to classes is Burralga Yumba which you have to make your food, buy your own groceries, and the rooms are the smallest. The university has several clubs that you can join and there are many events that you can take part in to enjoy yourself.

just a first year, and JCU is known as being a very hands-on medical school. The course structure is good, as everything builds on each other, however, it is not like most schools in the sense of having multiple subjects and you have to pass each one. But rather, the grades are split up throughout the whole year equating to 100% and you just need to pass the year rather than the individual subjects. There are many medicine related clubs and events that teach so many practical skills for a doctor and they make sure that you have fun and support while doing so.

overall, you should prioritize your studies but also enjoy yourself and make memories while you're here.

Medicine

Living on campus has been great. Lot of great events, not a lot of clubs but it is easy to start some. I really love the support international students get here to make us feel understood and included.

I like the structure of our program, and hands-on practice in clinicals. There are a lot of events and clubs you can attend although it depends on what campus.

Learn how to manage your time and you'll be fine.

Medicine

At JCU you will find many study spots and open areas to enjoy nature while studying. The library is a wonderful and quiet place for when you really need to lock in. The Science Place and the Enterprise Building are also wonderful places to study at; they have lots of whiteboards for any collaborative

The instructors are kind and very supportive. They will give you all the resources you need to do well academically and point you to resources that are not related to academics as well if you reach out to them. I recommend that students reach out to their instructors if they've got any concerns because they will

The change from home can feel drastic but when you put the effort to make connections and socialize you will build a supportive community here. JCU medicine is a program designed to create future doctors, it is not built to fail you. The professors want you to pass and they will give you many versatile resources based on your learning needs. If you want to do well

studying as well. There is an on campus gym, volleyball courts, tennis courts, and basketball courts. You can rent the equipments for free and enjoy playing with your friends. There are many clubs to get involved in and events on campus that provide free food, entertainment, and the chance to socialize and make connections. For internationals, the university host events like Networking night where you will meet many people and JCU staff who are kind and open to welcoming you. I love the beautiful mountains surrounding the campus. Here it is very green with lots of beautiful, interesting, and adorable wildlife. I dislike that I am so far away from home and it can be overwhelming to manage studies with personal life.

acknowledge and provide help and resources for you. JCU is truly amazing for its hand-on training. There are multiple opportunities for you to practice your practical skills and they really prepare you from an early stage to boost your confidence with the skills. The professors tell you clearly what content they expect you to know to do well on exams while providing you with extra knowledge for your own benefit. In medicine, you will have multiple different types of exams like KFP, short answer, MCQs, and MSATs. KFP is your case based written exams that tests your ability to apply the knowledge from the semester to case studies, short answers test your knowledge of the content, and MSATs are your OSCEs that happen once a year. There are many program-specific clubs like JCUMSA, JCU Surg, ASHA (south Asian medical student association) and many other ones specific to specialities. There are also events like Tips and Tricks night which is valuable for incoming students to help them with difficult subjects. In this event they provide many resources and tips to do well. There is also Med Ball for medical students every year. I love how outgoing and kind people are here, I love the supportive staff, the numerous opportunities to work on practical skills. I dislike that the

then you should use these resources, sign up for any additional practice sessions that are optional for practicals, and attend any events hosted by the clubs to give you additional practice to prepare you for the exams. At this university, you are given all the resources to ensure your success regardless of if you are straight from high school or finished another degree, it is your choice to use these resources. Also, don't just focus on academics. JCU as well as Townsville is a beautiful place, so go out, enjoy, make friends and make the most of your time here.

university delays releasing exam dates
making it difficult for international
students to book flights.

Advice about Living Down Under

Top six themes are summarized below, followed by the specific comments for your university!

Prioritize Connection with Home

- Schedule regular calls with friends and family to manage the substantial time difference.
- Use video/chat apps like Facetime, WhatsApp, or other apps for quick and constant contact.
- Remember that even short chats help to curb homesickness! Short calls or quick texts are worth the time.

Build Local Support Systems

- Make friends in your program and/or with other international students. They're going through the same challenges, and you can support each other.
- Put yourself out there by talking to everyone, especially within the first few weeks of your program when everyone's looking for new friends.
- Take to others about how you're feeling and your homesickness. They likely feel the same way.

Participate in Activities and Try New Things

- Join clubs and societies to meet people with similar interests.
- Attend events like orientation week, program socials, etc.
- Explore your city and nearby nature.

Prioritize Self-care and Establish a Routine

- Dedicate time for self-care and hobbies outside of school so you have time to recharge.
- Establish a routine to prevent continuous low-level stress from building up.
- Be patient with your adjustment period and trust it will get better.

Cultural/Logistical Adjustments are Normal

- The general lifestyle and culture tend to be similar to North American life which makes adjustment to living in Australia or New Zealand easier for many.
- Australians tend to be friendly, open, and eager to teach you about their culture.
- Be ready for minor differences. Anticipate differences like housing quality and rental processes, more limited store hours, higher cost of living, driving differences, etc.

JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

- Make sure to not miss any orientation week events! These events will allow you to meet people from all the different years and will make you feel a lot better. Schedule a time everyday to speak to your family back home. Its hard adjusting to the time difference but sometime two minutes on the phone with your family is all you need. :)
- Make sure you have balance.
- As someone who came from a big city like Toronto to Cairns which is much smaller, I found the adjustment not too bad. I personally like the outdoors, so I found use of the activities here at Cairns. There aren't too many things to do but as long as you find your group of friends, anything could be fun.
- Everything here seems backwards at first but it's honestly very easy to adapt too. Australians are very friendly people and really like Canadians! The friends you make will definitely be excited to show you around and help you settle in. When it comes to homesickness, we all experience it. The best thing you can do is call your family or talk to your Canadian friends! The time difference is the biggest obstacle when it comes to staying in touch back home. Planning a time when you can you're your friends/family back home helps out a lot though. It's also super important to not isolate yourself in your dorm when you feel a bit down because I found it didn't really help. Try to keep yourself busy and hangout with friends when you have time!
- International students or even domestic students that have moved away from home are all experiencing some version of homesickness, so just know you're not alone. As well as know that everyone is learning how to become a dentist so usually what your struggling with your classmates are too so don't be afraid to make friends or reach out for help. It's a small program so just treat everyone with respect.
- Homesickness will be there, but remember you are not the only student away from home studying at this university. There are many internationals and domestic students who are on the same boat. There have been many students before you and many students that will come after you who have faced and will face what you are feeling. The best thing you can do is make friends here share with them how you are feeling, and stay in touch with your family and friends abroad by calling them often. Remember there are support services on campus if you need to talk to anyone so reach out to them.
- Make friends, be open about how you feel, you are most likely not the only one. Get out, take walks, make sure you get out of your room and allow time in your day to just enjoy it.
- Making friends was pretty easy for me, culture is pretty similar in my opinion. Missing home is common and I find immersing myself in friends here really helped me to manage my homesickness. I also keep in touch with those back at home, even with the time difference!
- Just put yourselves into situations so that you can interact with others and make friends. People are so friendly here. Also just find good times that you can call your family and try to call them every now and then when you're feeling homesick.

Australian and New Zealand Bucket List

Wondering what you should see and do Down Under? Here are recommendations from current students!

ADELAIDE

- Glenelg Beach for food and chilling.
- Adelaide has beautiful wineries that are a must visit. The Fringe Festival which happens in February is also a huge bonus of living in Adelaide. It is a month-long festival with shows, music, food, comedy, and more.
- Visit Sydney
- Join your program's student society (at Flinders University).
- Adelaide beaches are beautiful.
- Visit the Adelaide Central Market.
- The other Canadians and I joined Urban Rec flag football team (at Flinders University). It was a great way to take a break from studies and meet new people. There are tons of run clubs around. I did the 12k City to Bat run with the other PT students and it was a lot of fun.
- Go on little day trips down to Second Valley to enjoy the warm weather, watch the dolphins swimming, and go cliff jumping.
- Lots of spots in the city to go out to eat or grab a drink.
- Victor Harbour
- Yorke Peninsula

BRISBANE

- The markets around Brisbane are pretty nice to go to for a day out.
- Brisbane is a nice riverside city and there's many tourist locations here such as the big ferris wheel or just simply walking along the riverbank at night when all the city's lights are on is really pretty.
- Good restaurants in CBD
- Noosa Beach
- Join the Can Med UQ student club! This is a club established just for Canadian Med students--really helpful resource for getting to know people, also offers practice sessions and materials, preparing for rotations and electives back home, putting you in contact with alumni, etc.
- Go to cafes to study (most cafes in Brisbane close at 2)
- Join run clubs

- Attend UQMS events with my friends
- Travel to Gold Coast or Sunshine Coast to explore the beaches
- The footy games are really fun, lots of great workout classes & gyms (especially Pilates)
- UQ Surf Club
- They move the markets in Brisbane, but the west end markets and Milton markets on every weekend are great
- Southbank is beautiful to explore and eat some good food
- Enjoy a beautiful walk from Southbank to Kangaroo Point along the river.
- Felons Brewery is fun, they have trivia nights!
- Noosa and the Gold Coast as super close to Brisbane, few hours train ride (+ transit here is 50 cents each way!)
- Just going around the shopping centres and mall can be fun
- Brisbane River Fire
- Lots of noodle shops
- Just go out and explore your new city! Something I found really fun and exciting was picking a restaurant/cafe to eat at and then having no plans and getting intentionally lost in the city. I have found so many amazing little shops, hole in the wall places that I wouldn't have been able to find just from Google.
- In Brisbane my favourite places to eat are Felons, Regatta Hotel, Sealegs, James and Antler Cafe, & Merlo Coffee.
- My favourite beaches near Brisbane are Bribe Island, Stradbroke Island, and the Spit in Gold Coast (if you are down there you have to eat at the Holy Ship!!)
- Go to as many sport events, res club events, or even just chill in the commons to hangout with people. But in a broader sense, try going to the beach, hiking, bouldering (indoor), and other activities.

CAIRNS/TOWNSVILLE

- Great Barrier Reef!
- Make a day trip to Fitzroy Island to go snorkelling, hiking, swimming with turtles, and do some fun activities.
- Trinity Beach
- For the Muslims, join JCUMAC - very fun, support your religion and provide lots of Muslim related events especially during Ramadan
- Visit major cities like Sydney or Brisbane on your breaks
- There are so many good restaurants here, all you have to do is walk through the city to see what you feel like.
- Rusty's Market
- Join JCUSA, JCUMSA and any clubs that interest you.
- Townsville has some beautiful areas but you will need a car to get to them.

- There is Crystal Creek, Magnetic Island which has lots of beaches and forts to explore and you may even sight a koala.
- Climb the Castle Hill, go to the Strand and get Juliette's if you like ice cream.
- Go to Billabong Sanctuary if you want to meet Australian animals and get to hold a koala and feed the kangaroos.
- There are many events in Townsville like IndiaFest and others just take a look at "What's On Townsville" website there are some great events in June.
- I went to Unisports nationals and I couldn't recommend it enough if you are an athlete join a sports you like, it is so much fun.
- There is so many events here in Cairns and clubs to join, get out there!
- Explore beaches a lot, they are beautiful! Nature isn't as scary as people say it is here!
- There are also markets every Sunday morning in Townsville which is fun.
- Join the Social Sports Club. It's just a group of people that go out and play sports, or JCU Run Club.

CLAYTON

- The Gippsland area has so many beaches and trails which I definitely recommend checking out!
- Use the leisure centre to your advantage. You will never find a gym that is as empty as Latrobe leisure centre.
- If you're into sports you can easily book courts and play with your friends.
- Don't neglect Churchill and the many scenic spots it has to offer nearby.
- If surfing is your thing, Inverloch is a great beach and they have a wonderful instructor team to get you on your board and riding those waves.

DUNEDIN

- Go watch rugby games with friends!
- The gym is nice and a great way to destress after class. I love the sauna (84 on Albany in the OUSA) after a long day or a good workout.
- Tons of clubs on campus you can join (go to clubs week to learn about them all!)
- Get close with your flatmates, and don't be afraid to introduce yourself to people when you're out and about - everyone else wants to make friends too. :)
- Definitely visit the clubs fair during the first couple weeks of being here. You might make some friends, find a cool club, or snag a prize from some mini games.
- During your winter break and reading week (mid-sem break), head down to nearby cities (ex. Queenstown and Christchurch in New Zealand) with friends as well as make NZ and Australian friends so you have people and places to visit.

- St Clair / St Kilda beach, Brighton beach (outside of Dunedin) (You might see seals!)
- Local hikes (Pineapple track, Mount Cargill)
- Botanic Gardens
- Join any clubs you're interested in (I enjoyed a local club, the outdoors/tramping club, tennis club, and Women in Health Networks / NZDSA for more involvement in the health sector)
- The New Zealand Dental Students Association offers great support to students along with some really fun events throughout the years (such as Dent Wine and Cheese and Dent Ball).
- NZ is really known for their rugby teams, you might be able to catch an All Blacks rugby game if you're lucky.
- Drive to Queenstown by and specially during winter I recommend going to do skiing or snowboarding!

FREMANTLE

- I joined my local RSL which is like the Legion in Canada. It was great how welcoming they were and it was a nice social activity.
- The beaches def!! The weather is very nice and will make you enjoy the country.
- Go to an AFL game! genuinely better than NFL/CFL.
- Take advantage of the beach.
- Do the tourist things in your city!

GEELONG

- Surf Coast
- Great Ocean Road
- Tasmania
- Watch a footy game at Torquay Beach
- Join some of the many clubs at Deakin University
- Visit Melbourne
- There are lots of affordable recreational sports clubs at Deakin/in Geelong, no matter your skill or fitness level. People here are pretty laid back and relaxed so its always a positive environment.
- Lots of nature/animals to see so purchase/rent a car for the best experience.

GOLD COAST

- Currumbin Beach
- Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary is a must see event and try to go out watching during whaling season it's beautiful!!!
- Burleigh Heads
- Learn to surf
- Visit the beaches (there are so many!)
- Go to the farmers' markets with friends and classmates
- Rock climbing
- Movies
- Parks
- Wildlife reserves
- Bowling
- Golf
- Go for a run/jog/walk
- Beach volleyball (some beaches already have nets set up)
- If you can manage to get tickets to a State of Origin game or the AFL Grand Final, they are a lot of fun. But, it is also fun to get some friends together and watch these games on TV.
- The Bond University Student Hub is a great resource and can be a lot of fun.
- The Queensland Museum and Art Gallery are amazing places to explore and investigate.
- The HOTA market and art gallery is amazing and the gallery is free entry. HOTA markets are the perfect blend of food trucks, fresh produce and meats with some knick-knacks.
- Surfers Paradise is great spot to explore where all the action is and the market is full of jewellery shops. It also has great nightlife.
- Surfers Paradise, Byron Bay, and Sunshine Coast are all great spots to relax and socialize.
- There are plenty of concerts and festivals (Brisbane Festival, Gold Coast Film Festival, local night markets)
- Learn the Australian sports' teams (AFL, NRL, cricket)
- Join GUDSA Club at Griffith University
- Shiro and Yochi are great dessert places
- Lots of great restaurants around Nobby Beach
- Join your program's student society/an academic club and a club of your interest/for fun
- Explore Hinterland National Parks
- Hike Springbrook or Lamington
- Join uni clubs

MELBOURNE

- There are a couple uni clubs for La Trobe.
- Nice beaches along the East coast.
- Melbourne is one of the best for restaurants, food/drink (best coffee), activities like sports/festivals/music/etc.
- In Melbourne, Republic Economica has great cheap eats and drinks, live music, and pool tables!
- The Brighton beaches are nice.
- Go to Sorrento
- Visit 12 apostles in the summer here as it is beautiful.
- There is so much to do with concerts, F1 races, cricket games, the US open.
- So many restaurants and cafes to try as well!
- Join run clubs!!!
- Run the Tan track
- Melbourne University Sport is where I spend most my free time and would recommend it, especially if you are active and in the gym often like I am.
- University of Melbourne Student Society
- Go to the trampoline park with friends
- Go skiing in the winter at Falls Creek ski resort
- Lots of cafes, brunch spots, just a variety of things to do in Melbourne, just have a search online of what things there are, and watch some YouTube videos of what some tourists do here, there's plenty of things to do!
- Mornington Peninsula has been my favourite so far in Melbourne!
- Language Exchange Club is a nice one!
- I like having lunch at the Yappari Steak house in CBD.
- Great Ocean Road is a must.
- St. Kilda
- Philip Island (penguins!!), Melbourne Museum
- Scienceworks
- Queen Victoria Market

ORANGE

- This is the time to do the things you love; if you can, go enjoy the things you like - guitar, hiking, etc.!
- Cliche in university, but get involved with a lot of things and stick with it!!
- Visit Bondi Beach

PERTH

- Join social sports, get involved in the student body, and talk to your professors they want to help! (University of Western Australia)
- Go to the beach or go to a national park around the city! The nature here is very enjoyable.
- Cottesloe Beach
- Swan River
- Common Bakery
- Pronto Pilates
- Rooftop Movie Theatre
- Kings Park
- Six Senses Thai Restaurant
- Daisies Café
- Perth has some pretty good beaches and bakeries
- Getting a Costco membership
- Make friends with an Australian who has a car
- The beaches in Perth are a great way to take a rest from school. Scarborough is my personal favourite but Cottesloe is much closer and is also quite nice.
- Westfield Carousel movie theater is also a great place to go and hang out with friends.
- Western Australian doesn't have as many events and stuff happening compared to larger eastern states, but WAs nature is second to none, so if you're an outdoor person or someone who likes camping and exploring, WA is a great place. Also the beaches here are one of the most beautiful.
- Go watch the footy games
- Take some time to explore the nature of WA on your time off (Albany, Margaret River)

SYDNEY

- Macquarie has a ton of clubs to join, and I would say if you play a sport at home try to get involved in it over here.
- There are heaps of run clubs to attend (there's a website to look up local ones in Sydney).
- You have to go to the Northern Beaches in Sydney. Narabeen is my favourite spot ever.
- The Blue Mountains roughly 1.5 hours inland is absolutely stunning to hike at. You can drive or take a train to get there.
- Any beach on the coast is beautiful, Chinamans is my current favourite as it's probably the closest one to Macquarie Uni by metro.
- The food here is so diverse and sooo good there's really no going wrong.
- Definitely check out the weekend markets in the city and lots of rugby and cricket happening in the summer months!!
- There are some beautiful beaches in Sydney - Manly, Bondi, Coogee - to mention a few.
- There are also different sea life sites, such as, Sydney Aquarium.
- If you like wildlife - Toranga zoo is a good place to visit.
- The city holds a drone show in September, which is pretty nice. There are many other events that take place in the city - go attend those if you can take out time for that.
- Check out Bondi Beach, Manly Beach, The Opera House, Harbour Bridge, take the ferry to Manly Beach and go hiking at Blue Mountains!
- Check out the Sydney CBD
- Paramatta is a decent place to live! It's 1hr train from downtown. And the rent prices are cheap.
- Look for any uni specific clubs that apply to you or may interest your hobbies.
- There are a lot of events organized by dental school reps at the University of Sydney.
- Manly Beach
- There are a lot of really cool trails around Sydney that are definitely worth checking out. The Bondi-Coogee beach walk, Watson's Point to Rose Bay.
- The Australia Museum has free entry to the general exhibits and is a neat way to explore more of Australia's history.
- Sydney is full of museums and festivals and restaurants of any imaginable kind really
- Make sure you make the most the most out your breaks throughout the year. They go by quicker than you imagine but give you an excellent opportunity to explore the cities and nature of Australia be it on a trip to the Great Barrier Reef in Cairns or see the vibrant cultural and artsy scene in Melbourne.
- Sydney's Burwood, Newtown, Chatswood, CBD are all great places for great eats
- Check out Oz-ComicCon if you get the chance as well

Accommodation 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. Advice specific to your university follows that list.

- Try to find accommodation before arrival as best you can. A lot of places will want you to do inspections in person only so it can be tough.
- Shared houses are a more cost-effective way to rent. Maybe get a shared house first then look elsewhere.
- Make sure it is close to bus routes if you will be taking relying on public transport. Bikes work well here, but a lot of hills. Electric bikes are very common.
- Much easier to find accommodation on Flatmates.
- I used a service to help me find my apartment, since most places require an in-person inspection. Budget accordingly, rent, groceries, drinks, etc., are all quite a bit more here than they are at home.
- Start looking early.
- Reach out to students early over Facebook to find people to flat with.
- It's difficult to find your first rental as they prefer rental history and employment in Australia. This isn't impossible, and you may need to pay for more months in advance to obtain a nice place.
- Give yourself a buffer of 2-3 weeks to find accommodation that you like. It's important you see it in person and meet anyone you may be living with before you agree. Check out the transit routes and walk ability of the neighborhood to grocery stores and other services. Feeling rushed to find a place is really stressful and you can end up regretting what you chose.
- Use Flatmates or a real estate agent.
- Bring climate gear: Some residences don't have air-conditioning or central heating. A good fan for summer and warm bedding or a small heater for winter will make a big difference.
- Shared living reality: You'll be living with multiple people (often 4-7+), sharing kitchens and bathrooms. Cleanliness depends on you and your roommates, so be ready for cooperation, compromise, and communication.
- Noise and thin walls: Australian student housing walls are often thinner than North American ones. Be prepared for sound travel (and to be considerate of others).
- Pack light, buy local: Big appliances and bulky items can usually be bought cheaply. Don't waste luggage space flying them in.
- Transportation planning: If you don't have a car, learn the bus and train schedules early. They're reliable but not as frequent as in big cities, so planning is key. A bike is also handy for shorter trips.
- Food and cooking: Shared kitchens mean shared fridge/freezer space. Label your food and consider buying storage tubs to keep your stuff organized.
- Community mindset: Residences can feel more communal than private. Get involved in social events and it makes living with others much easier and more enjoyable.

- Budget for extra costs: On top of rent, there may be cleaning fees or bond requirements. Make sure you set aside some savings.
- Use Domain, real-estate.au if you have a group to rent with or want a 1 bedroom. Flatmates is a perfect app if you're looking to move into a shared house that's already established.

JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

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

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

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

Suburb & Building with Reviews

Private Rental

100% — Arranged before arrival

The Beaches Luxury Apartments, Smithfield, Cairns

Min. Reported
Rent: \$650

“Living alone and the Beaches is expensive. Not too bad over here at Beaches, a little far from the library and the on-campus accommodation. Do I recommend it as a first year, no. I believe it is better to go on campus as it is closer to many buildings and you are with your friends as well as other program students. Start at Unilodge (John Grey) - cheaper and more convenient.”

Max. Reported
Rent: \$650

Avg. Reported
Rent: \$650

**Student-purposed
Privately Managed**

75% — Arranged before arrival

Smithfield

25% — 2–3 weeks

“The property manager at Unilodge is kind of rude to be honest.”

Min. Reported
Rent: \$214

“The location is very convenient for uni students for classes! I suggest it if you're able to! Though it can get tricky with the accessing amenities and restaurants because it is far from city centre.”

Max. Reported
Rent: \$300

John Grey Hall Unilodge*

“John Grey Hall is a great place to live. It's a 7 min walk to class. The staff is very nice and the rooms are decently sized. Your fees also include the

Avg. Reported
Rent: \$756

on-campus gym membership, the John Grey Hall gym access, a video games room, and a really nice sky deck.”

“Yeah I would recommend John Grey to new students. It's a great way to meet people and to stay connected with students in your program. It is walking distance from the university so its very practical for those without a car.”

**On-Campus
College / Dorm**

100% — Arranged before arrival

Min. Reported
Rent: \$278

Max. Reported
Rent: \$290

Avg. Reported
Rent: \$285

John Grey Hall, Smithfield, Cairns*

“I would definitely recommend living in John Grey Hall first year at JCU. Its the on-campus student residence. I stay in a 6-bedroom ensuite apartment, so I have my own room and bathroom, and share the kitchen and livings space with five other girls. This is great especially if you don't have a car because you are five minutes from the library, dentistry building, and bus stop. They also have weekly events where they serve dinner. It's also the easiest way to meet people outside of class and events and get to bond with them. They maintain the building very well, it's a fairly new building so its quite modern. You also have a great view of the mountains! John grey offers studio apartments, shared apartments with shared washrooms, or ensuite shared apartments.”

“Great for first year students, clean, right on campus so really easy to get to classes. Not far from grocery and has a car to rent for free which is awesome for errands. Great to make friends since they do a lot of dinners and specials days like free fruit Fridays, on Sunday and Wednesday there is always free dinner and on Thursday a group comes for games and bring donuts and makes pancakes. Great to socialize and make friends.”

Burrallga Yumba, Douglas, Townsville

“Burrallga Yumba (BY) is an amazing accommodation that is very close to a lot of the campus areas compared to other accommodations. You are very close to the medical lecture buildings, the engineering building, the Central Plaza and many more. However, you will have to walk quite a bit

to get to the library but the walk is beautiful and relaxing. Same with the bus stop and the student service building, you will need to walk 10 minutes to get there. I recommend getting the ensuite rooms because the common bathrooms can get messy. There is a restaurant called Canto attached to BY by the main entrance. At BY you will have to cook your own food in the common kitchen that is downstairs close to the entrance. All cooking pots, pans, knives, peelers, graters, spatulas, even baking pans are provided. They provide you with dish soap and sponges, iron box and pad. Neighbours are mostly quiet, especially during exam periods, but it can get loud when events like floor crawl happens. BY is definitely for those who don't mind cooking, and enjoy quiet living environment with not many parties.”

“If you can cook then I suggest it because you will need to cook your own meals and do your own grocery shopping. Also, this accommodation is in the middle of campus and it is the closest to classes for almost any major. It is very clean hear as the cleaners do a great job, even cleaning our rooms every other week. There are three study rooms, a cinema room, a massive kitchen, a large social area, AC, a mini fridge in each room, a pool table, and a music room. However, the rooms are quite small unless you can get an accessible room.”

*Some students classified John Grey Hall as “student-purposed privately managed” while others classified it as “on-campus” housing. JCU classifies it as on-campus housing.

General Accommodation Advice for James Cook University Students

- Apply for housing as soon as you get your acceptance as rooms fill up fast. Starting looking and messaging rentals early. They probably won't give you a contract though until you actually move to Australia which is annoying.
- Reach out to people before going to ask them how they find their accommodation. If you are unable to connect with people just make sure to do your research and to keep in mind utilities, distance from the uni, etc. Facebook Marketplace is another great way to find roommates.
- Prepare everything beforehand!
- I would definitely look into on campus living for first year before anything else. Since you probably won't be driving a lot first year, its easiest to live on campus so you don't have to worry about bussing everyday. You can also reach out to the residence

office to ask more direct questions. If you are able to contact current students that go to the university through social media, they are also very good at advising you and what to do.

- Talk to other years and students.
- Start looking before hand, don't wait until last minute to find accommodation. For internationals who are moving abroad for the first time, I recommend staying on campus for at least the first year to understand how things are in Australia and to get used to it before moving out.
- I applied through Unilodge, which sent me an email after my acceptance. The application was very straightforward and easy.

Advice About Working While Studying

The tables below segment respondents' jobs by their program.

CHIROPRACTIC

- I just got started at the Macquarie Ice Rink, it is just finished up being renovated, and we reopen on November 14, 2025. I will probably work around 16 hours per week during the school year, and this would have been perfectly manageable with the schedule in first year. It was very difficult to find a job personally, however I would suggest bringing in resumes and hand them to people in person, along with your online application. My wage will be \$30/hour and \$33/hour when I become a supervisor.
- I transferred from Lululemon Canada to Australia. This allowed me to have work immediately. I work 10-15 hours/week.

DENTISTRY

- I am an international student ambassador for the school. It's a casual position but has been fun.
- I work two part time jobs! I work between 5-10 hours a week on average. It's super manageable with school, if you have good time-management! One is at a golf course and one is at a golf simulator! (I love to golf and have worked at golf courses a ton back home). I make ~\$25 an hour, and it definitely helps to sustain myself with groceries and weekend trips!
- Private online tutoring which is just 1 hour per week and is CAD\$40/hour.
- I work part-time in the faculty (at University of Otago), doing graphic design for the "sustainability in dentistry" group.
- \$23.50/hour at a restaurant. I work cash and make food at the back. I'm casual, so ranging from 2-8 hours a week.
- Dental assistant, 1 day a week, \$30/hr.

MEDICINE

- I'm coaching kids chess for \$60 an hour for about 1-3 hours a week. Pays for groceries.
- Physiotherapist. 20 hours a week and \$35 an hour.
- I work at Bakery's Delight (in Adelaide) once or twice a week and make about \$30 AUD an hour.
- I work as a casual relief teacher (I was able to convert my teaching degree from Ontario).
- I tutor the MCAT, I work from home, approximately 15 hours a week.
- I work at Specsavers as an optical assistant working about 8 hours/week and as a casual I make \$35/hour.
- I work as a part time tutor at a tutoring centre and as a private tutor. I work about 10 hours a week. My wage for the tutoring is \$40/hour.
- I work at a medical clinic as a receptionist, and I work approximately 20 hours a week and I am paid \$32 an hour on a casual basis.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

- I coach gymnastics once a week. I also tutor online a girl from home.

OTHER

- I work casual in homecare. I have 4 years of experience back in Canada. This sector is in need of staff so if you have experience in this area I highly recommend applying! I work about 20 hours a week and earn about \$1000/week.

PHYSIOTHERAPY

- Very low hours as a first aid responder with a soccer club.
- I work at a middle eastern restaurant as a cook. I work roughly 8 hours a week and my wage is \$32/hour on weekdays and \$36/hour on weekends.
- I work at Lululemon as a sales associate. I work x2/week. My wage is \$33.19/hour.
- I work as an allied health assistant at a physiotherapy clinic. I'm in the hydrotherapy pool helping patients rehab after different procedures. I work 10 hours a week, getting paid between \$38-57/hour.
- I am a soccer coach.
- Support worker.
- Currently an RA at the dorm I'm staying at (at University of Melbourne).

VET SCIENCE

- Work casually with a puppy yoga company and also at a cat shelter, around 10-20 hours a week with wages around \$25/hour.

Advice about Transferring Money

The points below detail the advice provided by respondents about transferring money, grouped by topic. If a point was mentioned several times, such as using Wise, it is only listed once but noted that several students provided that piece of advice.

General Advice about Money and Transfers

- Don't depend on the bank transfers unless you don't have another option. 3rd party apps like XE Converter often offer a significantly better conversion rate.
- Find the one with the smallest amount of cost. And if you do choose to do the international transfer make sure you send it in large sums.
- Get an Australian bank account, wire money from your CAD bank to AUS account.
- How I transfer money to Australia is through TD bank and Wise. I've setup direct deposit between the two accounts, and whenever I need money I send it to TD bank, withdraw with Wise, wait until the exchange rate is good, and bring money over. There is a bit of a bottle neck for sending tuition money, and I used Remitly for that instead.
- I did it through my bank, I know some people used Wise but I saw that there was some issues with it. Going directly through my bank allowed me to have the money almost instantly.
- I find Bank Transfers are the easiest for my family and I. There are online transfer systems like WISE which have better rates
- I have an Australian bank account but many Canadian credit cards will give you good foreign exchange rates so you can just spend from your Canadian accounts for most smaller things.
- I personally have found success using a credit card that accurately matches the dollar exchange rate (CAD to AUD). I make 99% of purchases with my Canadian credit card and thus pay it off with my Canadian bank account. You are definitely able to open a bank account here and transfer money from Canada/America to Australia/NZ (although will incur a fee). I would eventually set up an account here especially if you plan on working or needing to take out cash. It is a pretty seamless process. As far as transferring money, many banks have free/cheap transfer rates or you can look into third party apps like "Wise" which makes the process very easy as well.
- I would recommend setting up an Australian bank account within the first week you arrive. That way you can transfer funds to your Australian account and reduce international fees.
- Make sure you double, even triple check the account numbers and SWIFT codes for the account you are transferring to. Also, there are often fees for accepting international transfers so make sure you plan accordingly when sending any funds.
- Open an Australian bank account and get your transfer limit highest you can.
- Some banks have a cheaper fees. Also try to transfer on days where the Canadian dollar is strongest.
- Sometimes third party transfers are not cheaper than transferring with your own bank. Make sure to compare and read the fine lines before you choose which bank or service to use.
- The easiest thing is to open a personal bank account here and transfer through them.

- The money transfer is actually quite fast - usually, when I transfer money from Canadian account, it reaches my account in Australia on the same day. I would suggest having a family member keep the some of the loan money in their account and work out with them as to when to send you the amount you need every time.
- There are options for sending direct wire transfers through your bank outside of using Convera - although it's strongly recommended to use it, it's not necessary and you don't need to be afraid to go with another option if it means saying quite a bit!
- Transfer in bulk to save on transaction fees.
- Start moving money early as you can only move 10K a week or something like that.
- Apply for OSAP or whatever your provincial loan is, if you qualify it really helps with rent! I am supporting myself entirely through this process (i.e. no parental or family financial support) so working two jobs while I am here, as well as working full-time while I'm home has been necessary - but it's doable!
- Make sure you get a bank account that can utilize wise as a payee. This will save you hundreds of dollars maybe even thousands over the course of your time here.
- Get a New Zealand bank account. BNZ is the best, ANZ is also good. Transfer from your home bank to Wise, then transfer to your NZ bank as needed. This gives you the best exchange rate.
- Be sure to have enough cash. Australia charges for credit card fees.
- Using a platform like Wise allows you to transfer the money quite easily, can make a traditional bank account in Aus (recommended long term) or use an online financial institution like Revolut.
- Get comfortable with paying stupid fees to use your card here and they don't have e-transfer here either it's bank account to bank account.
- Yes, use Wise and open an Australian bank as well. Can ask students for a referral code!

Advice About Banks and Cards

- Don't use TD as they charge every transfer.
- I use RBC, which has free international transfer which has made it so easy, usually comes in a few days.
- Once I set up an Australian bank account it has been really easy to transfer money back and forth just through my banks with no fees (CIBC - Westpac).
- RBC currently allows you to transfer money internationally without a fee (I believe it was up to \$12,000 CAD). I am currently using OSAP and my savings to pay for school along with my loan.
- Use an international credit card that has a point system with flights (eg: avian, scene points) so every time you go to buy stuff your collecting points.

Suggested Transfer Services

- EQ and Wise are your best bet.
- I use PayPal, I found it pretty low fee and very quick processing times.
- I use XE it's pretty good. I usually spend around \$2800 a month.
- Use Bupa.
- Several students noted using Remitly.
 - I use Remitly. My dad has access to my student loan in Canada and he withdraws from it and sends me money as I need it to my Australian account. Remitly has pretty low fees and the transfers process within a day.
 - Using Remitly has been great to get the best exchange rates!
- Several students noted using WISE.
 - I use Wise as the middle man. CAN > WISE > Aus bank.
 - I use Wise for my personal banking over here as it allows me to easily transfer to the different currencies.
 - I use Wise which is pretty good, however, you can also use OFX for larger sums.
 - I used Wise for immediate transfers, but OFX has better rates usually. Keep an eye on the exchange rates.
 - Use whichever money transfer service has the best rate at the time. For me consistently Wise has been the best overall in terms of exchange rate and minimal fees.
 - Use Wise and send it in big chunks, especially when the rates are most favourable.
 - Use Wise! easiest and cheapest way to quickly transfer money instantly.
 - Use WISE! It's a great app for cheap money conversion. Set it up BEFORE you leave Canada.
 - Use Wise, cheaper transfer and conversion fees.
 - I usually use Wise, I think the transfer rates are slightly better.
 - I would recommend using the WISE credit card, it's very convenient to send money abroad.
 - I would recommend using the Wise app as the fees are lower than directly from bank.
 - Set up an account with Wise (Wise app) as they have the lowest cost for transferring money as well as being easy to transfer money from different currencies and countries. I would also suggest looking at exchange rates between CAD and AUD or NZD before exchanging the whole tuition amount into AUD/NZD.
 - Definitely download Wise App before moving here. It is by far the easiest way to convert currency and they give you the best rates.
 - Use an app called Wise, little fees to transfer but depends on your bank it could be cheaper that way.
 - I don't know a lot, but I do know my parents do this through WISE.
 - It's better than bank transfer.
 - Use Wise app for cheaper transaction fees.
 - Use Wise as a bank card.
 - It's the cheapest in terms of fees.

- Using a WISE account was faster and easier than a bank transfer!
- Wise is a great resource and with the conversion rate using your credit card can be a great option.
- Wise is great for transferring money!
- WISE is pretty helpful for conversions.
- Wise is really good for getting money exchange rates!
- Wise is really useful for keeping track of the exchange rate, and spending is straightforward. I used it as my travel account previously but now I use it for my daily spending.
- Wise is the best.
- Wise is the best option and easy to work with.
- You could transfer money through Wise! It's convenient and has lower transfer fees compared to banks. You can also send large amounts of money relatively fast and it is safe to use. Wise is a good party account so you would have to transfer from your Canadian account to Wise and then either you can use your Wise card or make another transfer to an Australian account

Final Advice from Current Students

Students were asked if they'd like to provide any final words of advice. Their answers are listed below.

- All the best to all of the incoming students!
- Be prepared to have new connections and experiences! Don't be shy and reach out to others in upper years and in your year.
- Do not underestimate the Aussie sun. Hats and sunscreen are your best friends.
- Don't be scared to take the leap. You will be well supported and you will adjust quite easily.
- Enjoy the city! (Melbourne)
- Dental equipment and uniform that I wasn't aware of the cost and how to find used or ones for cheaper price.
- Find the other Canadians in the school especially the upper years they will be more than happy to help you with everything. There is a large cohort of Canadians in most Australian medical schools.
- For me moving to Brisbane, I packed way too many sweaters and have now since sent them home because it's been very hot!!
- Have fun and make the most of it. Many students just stay home and study.
- Health insurance will not cover most elective surgeries for the first 12 months after arrival so if you have any medical issues you may need an operation for I would do it in Canada unless it can wait another year.
- I DONT REGRET IT AT ALL!! LIVE YOUR LIFE AND DO SOMETHING CRAZY.
- I know OzTREKK doesn't deal with Student Visas, but when you arrive in Australia, make sure to update your personal information (phone number, address, etc.) as soon as possible. There will be a lot happening when you get here, but it is important to have that up-to-date so you are always in compliance.
- It's a commitment for sure but if you're willing to make the sacrifices you will have a great time.
- It's a tough transition, but I am finally starting to feel settled in and looking to have an amazing summer here Down Under.
- Goodluck everyone!
- Studio apartments all the way for student accommodation, living in a new country with a bad roommate situation is not the way to go.
- Studying abroad can be a life changing experience but it can be overwhelming. Make sure to have a good support network!
- Take a breath, you made it to med school. Everything else will fall in place.
- This is truly a wonderful opportunity. Moving abroad was never a plan for me when I was little, but this opportunity helped me learn about myself, grow, and become independent. It made me feel confident in myself. Even though everything is new and you are missing home remember that you are brave for taking the leap to study abroad and with time you will enjoy it here.
- Totally recommend coming to Australia to study and especially through OzTREKK.
- Transportation in Adelaide is pretty convenient as there's a train station five minutes away. And the bus is also really good too. There's a mall not too far away, called Marion. It's got a bunch of stores and is my go to place to buy stuff.