

JCUSA Request for Clarification Regarding the Removal of Study Vacation / SWOTVAC from the 2027 Academic Calendar

21 July 2026

Professor Mitch Parsell
Chair, Education Committee
James Cook University

Via email: [DVC Education Office](#)

Dear Professor Parsell,

RE: Request for Clarification Regarding Removal of Study Vacation / SWOTVAC from the 2027 Academic Calendar

I write on behalf of the JCU Student Association Council regarding the removal of Study Vacation / SWOTVAC from the 2027 Academic Calendar.

JCUSA is aware that JCU UniLife advocates have separately sought clarification regarding this matter. JCUSA welcomes that student concerns are being raised through appropriate support and advocacy channels. Following the formal adoption of motions by the JCU Student Association Council, JCUSA now writes separately in its capacity as the representative student body to seek clarification and further engagement on behalf of students more broadly.

JCUSA has received significant correspondence and feedback from students expressing concern about the removal of Study Vacation / SWOTVAC. Students have raised concerns that the removal of this period may affect examination preparation, workload management, placement scheduling, fatigue, financial pressure, employment commitments and student wellbeing.

This correspondence includes concerns raised directly by individual students, as well as matters communicated through student groups and affiliated clubs. JCUSA is continuing to collate student feedback and can provide a de-identified summary of key themes where appropriate.

JCUSA's concern is not simply that the academic calendar has changed. Rather, the concern is that the change appears to have significant student-facing implications and has caused substantial concern among students regarding communication, consultation, examination preparation, workload management and wellbeing.

JCUSA believes that where major changes affect students, students deserve clear communication, meaningful opportunities for feedback, transparent decision-making and appropriate consideration of student impacts.

JCUSA has also established a direct feedback pathway for students to raise their concerns with the Association. This process is intended to assist JCUSA in identifying common themes, documenting student impacts and ensuring student perspectives can be raised through appropriate representative and institutional channels.

JCUSA understands that the development and implementation of the Academic Calendar sits within established University education governance processes. Given the impact of the 2027 Academic Calendar on students, JCUSA considers it important that those processes include appropriate consideration of student feedback, student wellbeing, learning support and the broader student experience.

Given the level of concern expressed by students, JCUSA considers it important that the University provide a clear account of the rationale, consultation and student impact considerations that informed this decision. JCUSA raises

these matters constructively and with the intention of ensuring that student concerns are clearly understood, appropriately considered and addressed through the relevant University governance channels.

On that basis, JCUSA seeks clarification on the following matters:

1. Decision-making and governance pathway

JCUSA requests clarification regarding:

- a. Which University body, committee or decision-maker approved the removal of Study Vacation / SWOTVAC from the 2027 Academic Calendar;
- b. Which University committees or governance bodies considered, endorsed or were informed of the change, including whether the matter was considered by the Academic Calendar Advisory Committee, Student Experience Advisory Committee, Education Committee, Academic Board, or any other relevant body;
- c. The governance pathway followed in developing, endorsing and approving the 2027 Academic Calendar; and
- d. Whether any minutes, papers or decision summaries relating to the change can be made available to JCUSA or otherwise summarised for students.

2. Student consultation

JCUSA requests clarification regarding:

- a. Whether students were consulted before the decision was made;
- b. Whether JCUSA was consulted before the decision was made;
- c. Whether student representatives on relevant committees were consulted;
- d. What student feedback, if any, was received before the change was approved; and
- e. How that feedback was considered in the final decision.

3. Student impact considerations

JCUSA requests clarification regarding what consideration was given to the student-facing impacts of removing Study Vacation / SWOTVAC on:

- a. Examination preparation;
- b. Student workload and assessment pressure;
- c. Placement scheduling and placement recovery periods;
- d. Students balancing study with employment, family or caring responsibilities;
- e. External, mature-age, regional, postgraduate and other student cohorts who may be affected differently; and

- f. Student wellbeing, fatigue and academic performance.

4. Opportunity for further student feedback

JCUSA requests clarification regarding:

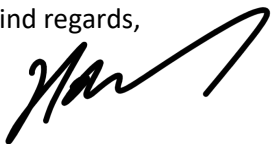
- a. Whether there remains an opportunity for further student feedback to be considered;
- b. Whether the University is willing to open a formal student feedback process on the removal of Study Vacation / SWOTVAC;
- c. Whether the 2027 Academic Calendar remains amendable in response to student feedback;
- d. Whether the University would be willing to meet with JCUSA to discuss the concerns being raised by students; and
- e. Whether the University would be willing to receive and consider a de-identified summary of student feedback collated by JCUSA, noting that this would complement, rather than replace, any direct University feedback process.

JCUSA also requests that this correspondence be circulated to the Academic Calendar Advisory Committee, the Student Experience Advisory Committee, the Education Committee and any other University body involved in the development, approval or implementation of the 2027 Academic Calendar.

JCUSA remains committed to working constructively with the University to ensure student concerns are heard, documented and considered. JCUSA is made up of students, for students and we take seriously our responsibility to advocate where decisions affect student learning, wellbeing and the broader university experience.

We would appreciate a written response to the matters raised above and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you, relevant University representatives and where appropriate JCU UniLife advocates, to discuss the concerns being raised by students.

Kind regards,



Harrison O'Kane
President
JCU Student Association

On behalf of the JCU Student Association Council

cc:

Student Representative, Education Committee
JCU UniLife Student Advocacy representatives
General Manager, JCU UniLife