

JCU Student Association Statement on Current Student Concerns Regarding the 2027 Academic Calendar and Proposed Laboratory & Technical Services Changes

**Published by the JCU Student Association President on behalf of the JCU Student
Association Council**

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The JCU Student Association has formally adopted motions responding to significant student concerns regarding two current matters affecting the student experience at James Cook University:

- The confirmed removal of Study Vacation / SWOTVAC from the 2027 Academic Calendar; and
- The proposed Laboratory and Technical Services changes where those matters may affect student learning, practical experience, technical support, placements, fieldwork, research training and the broader student experience.

These motions were adopted following a formal Circularised Resolution of the JCU Student Association Council. The resolutions followed direct correspondence received by JCUSA from students, student groups, affiliated clubs, advocates and other members of the University community.

JCUSA acknowledges and supports the concerns being raised by students, and will actively advocate to ensure those concerns are heard, considered and responded to through appropriate representative and institutional channels. Students have expressed concern that these matters may affect examination preparation, workload management, placement scheduling, fatigue, financial pressure, student wellbeing, practical learning opportunities, access to technical expertise, and the quality of hands-on educational experiences at JCU.

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 does not support the implementation of major changes affecting students unless meaningful student consultation, clear communication, and transparent consideration of student impacts have been demonstrated.

2027 Academic Calendar and SWOTVAC

JCUSA has heard significant concern from students regarding the removal of Study Vacation / SWOTVAC from the 2027 Academic Calendar.

Students have raised concerns that the removal of this period may affect their ability to consolidate learning, prepare for examinations, manage placement commitments, balance work and study, and maintain wellbeing during already demanding teaching periods.

JCUSA is seeking clarification from the University regarding the rationale for this change, what consultation occurred with students or student representatives, what consideration was given to student workload and wellbeing, and whether further student feedback can still be considered.

Proposed Laboratory & Technical Services changes

JCUSA has also heard significant concern from students regarding the proposed Laboratory and Technical Services changes where these may affect student learning, student support and the broader student experience.

Students have raised concerns regarding potential impacts on practical and laboratory learning, field-based teaching, technical support, specialised facilities and equipment, live-animal-supported teaching where relevant, placements, work-integrated learning, research training, and hands-on practical experience.

JCUSA's focus in this matter is on the student-facing impacts of the proposal. While the Association's role is not to lead staffing, industrial or union matters, JCUSA recognises that changes affecting staff, resources and support structures may also affect students. JCUSA remains open to constructive communication with relevant parties where this assists in understanding and representing student impacts.

The Association is responding where proposed changes may affect student learning, student wellbeing, educational quality, consultation, and the broader student experience.

JCUSA is seeking clarification from the University regarding the anticipated student impacts of the proposal, what consultation has occurred with students or student representatives, and what mitigation is being considered to protect practical learning and student experience.

JCUSA's position

JCUSA will now progress the actions authorised by Council, including:

- Seeking clarification from relevant University representatives;
- Asking what consultation occurred with students or student representatives;
- Gathering student feedback directly through the Association;
- Engaging with relevant student groups, affiliated clubs and organisers;
- Attending or arranging meetings where appropriate; and
- Considering further representational action depending on the information received and the continued concerns of students.

JCUSA will continue to act independently and in the interests of students. The Association will work to ensure student concerns are heard, documented, and raised through appropriate representative and institutional channels.

Providing feedback to JCUSA

Students who wish to provide feedback, raise concerns, or share their experiences in relation to either matter are encouraged to contact JCUSA directly.

Students can contact the JCU Student Association President at:

jcusa.president@jcu.edu.au

When contacting JCUSA, students are encouraged to include:

- Which issue they are commenting on;
- Their course, campus, discipline or study mode, if relevant;
- How they believe they are affected; and
- Whether they are comfortable with their feedback being anonymised and raised through representative channels.

All student feedback is worthwhile and welcome. JCUSA encourages students across all colleges, disciplines, campuses and study modes to make their voices heard. The Association is committed to advocating for and representing students broadly and fairly, including students who may be affected in different ways by these matters.

Individual student feedback will not be publicly attributed without consent.

JCUSA is made up of students, for students. We understand that these matters have caused concern across the student body, and we take seriously our responsibility to ensure student voices are heard clearly, respectfully and through appropriate representative channels. Our role is to listen, to act, and to advocate where decisions affect student learning, wellbeing and the broader university experience. We will continue to stand with students in seeking transparency, meaningful consultation and fair consideration of student impacts.

JCUSA will continue to update students as further information becomes available.

Kind regards,



Harrison O'Kane

President

JCU Student Association

On behalf of the JCU Student Association Council