

# James Cook University Letter Of Support: What You Need To Include



The following guide goes into detail about what and how to write your Letter of Support for your James Cook University Application to the School of Medicine. But before we dive into specifics, here's some more general information about entry requirements and due dates for submission.



## **JCU Medicine Application Form 2022**

The James Cook University offers a 6-year full-time equivalent Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery degree qualification for students from diverse educational backgrounds, in addition to school leavers.

JCU's undergraduate medical degree values the ATAR as a dominant indicator to estimate a student's academic merits. Suppose that you are not a Year 12 student or do not have an ATAR, then the university assigns an equivalent score to rank you among the cohort.

This equivalent score is derived based on your recent degree completion (secondary, tertiary or vocational) or paid employment experience that shows your academic knowledge and interpersonal skills to match the university's eligibility criterion.

## **JCU Undergraduate Medicine Eligibility Criteria**

James Cook University does not consider the UCAT score in the ranking process; rather, it merges your ATAR, the information you provide on the written application (a component within the application form you intend to lodge) and gives special attention to the Letters of Support from your superiors, supervisors, teachers, and the like - attached to your application.



## What Is A JCU Letter Of Support?

Most undergraduate medical schools have personalised selection procedures that give them a unique systematic approach to rank students that fit the medical school's structure and ideology. In this case, JCU has opted for the letter of support as a novel method to evaluate your character traits, giving them a better idea of who you are as a person.

With this letter, you want to demonstrate that your personality and extra-curricular experiences are best suited for a career in the medical profession.

### JCU Application Due Date

If JCU is your preferred medical school, the final date to submit your undergraduate medical application is on 30th September to commence medicine and dentistry courses the following year. We suggest that you start scanning through your available referees, and ask for a letter of recommendation.

You need to set aside sufficient time for people to write good things about you, so notify your referees well in advance so they have plenty of time to contemplate and complete the task you have assigned them.

Furthermore, remember that the letter of support can NOT be offered by a family member as they would be considered as too biased to fairly support your application and may lack knowledge to comment about your work ethic, which are crucial aspects needed for this letter.

### How Many Letters of Support Do I Include?

JCU allows students to attach upto three letters of support along with your application form. However, it is essential to remember that these letters of support should include the referee's name and contact information.

Furthermore, the letter should be linked with your application form and not lodged separately, as they may get misplaced and lose their purpose entirely.

### Types of References That Are Useful for Your Letter of Support

As a student, it is your responsibility to liaise with individuals whose references can make a considerable difference to your application. For example, if you shadowed a doctor for three days but have three months worth of experience working as a research assistant in a field outside medicine, a reference letter from the latter adds more value and seems more reliable.

This is because of two reasons:

- 1) The place of employment has witnessed your work ethic and can comment on your professionalism with supporting evidence.
- 2) You would have built a degree of rapport with the supervisors and colleagues compared to the three-day encounter with the doctor which also displays your people skills.

The following individuals can offer you the letter of support as solid proof to study medicine at JCU:

1. High school teachers, or principals
2. A supervisor from an extra-curricular activity you undertook
3. An employer or supervisor from your previous/current place of employment.



## What Can A Teacher Include in the Letter of Support?

As a teacher, if you are writing a recommendation for your student interested in pursuing a career in the medical field, you should validate your student's academic achievements with credible evidence. The purpose of these letters of support is to highlight your student's potential and their ability to work within a dynamic healthcare environment.

A medical school like JCU is attentive to these critical components as they display the student's academic potential for medical subject knowledge as well as their competency to work well in a competitive medical field. Hence, as a teacher who has observed the student's potential in the classroom, your statements add tremendous value to their medical application.

### Education Factors to Consider Highlighting in the Letter of Support:

- 1) Teaching credentials** - It is essential to mention your professional role and how you have come to know the applicant in order to make your statement more authoritative. You may also highlight the day-to-day encounters with the applicant to add credibility.
- 2) Student's academic progress:** This is a crucial criterion that the medical school is evaluating. You could begin by highlighting the student's excellence in the prerequisite subjects needed for medical school.

Most undergraduate medical schools focus on communication skills, leadership, logical reasoning, and emotional maturity, it could be beneficial to expand on these factors and how the applicant has displayed these in a classroom setting.

- 3) Student's work ethic and other skills:** Student's leadership skills and personality traits, can be best explored by using extra-curricular activities and internships as examples.

As a teacher, you could discuss the student's resilience towards their career goals, how they undertake new challenges, and most importantly, their capability to overcome obstacles that they have encountered along the way.

### How Can Your Previous Internship or Employment Contribute to the Letter of Support?

As previously mentioned, extra-curricular activities are a great way to demonstrate a student's strong work ethic and personal development. Therefore, JCU's admission committee closely examines an employer or supervisor's letter of support, focusing on anything that can underline the student's interest in community engagement, practical skills and overall propensity to illustrate conscientious decision making.



## **Employer/Supervisor Factors to Consider Highlighting in the Letter of Support:**

- 1) Highlight work ethic:** This is a crucial factor that can influence the admission committee's decision to a great deal. Begin by discussing the student's commitment to continuous improvement and acknowledging constructive criticism. Additionally, you can shed light on components like punctuality, maturity and professionalism to depict their good work ethic.
- 2) Discuss the student's character:** Medical schools are highly decisive of an applicant's attributes. For instance, as medical schools promote problem-based learning, they are looking for students that are self-learners and motivated individuals that can prevail in a group dynamic.

In the letter, it is good to summarise how respectful and empathetic the student is and continues to display compassion within and outside the workplace environment.

- 3) Collaboration:** The final aspect you can highlight is scenarios wherein you and the student have engaged in a collaborative work environment. This can pertain to working on projects and the key skills the student illustrated that was beneficial to the team and overall productivity.

You can also take this as an opportunity to include the student's receptivity to constructive criticism, an essential skill expected in medical students and future doctors.