

So here you are at UNE. You've been planning and thinking about it and looking forward to it for ages. Maybe home was good or bad; maybe until recently the only homesickness you knew about was being sick of home. And suddenly – or not so suddenly – here you are maybe feeling blue or anxious. This wasn't how it was meant to be in the plan? It might be hard to admit, with everybody else seeming so together, and having a good time, but you are feeling homesick. "How uncool or lame!" you may think. When you come some distance from another town, state or perhaps another country, adjusting to study and life can sometimes be difficult. You might have to deal with a different language, strange food, a different climate, different living arrangements, independent living for the first time, different ways of doing things, and an unfamiliar landscape. If home is very far away, arranging to go home for a weekend may not be a possibility for you. We have an idea of what it may be like for you, and we are here to help. For those of you who are from overseas the experience of moving into another culture is sometimes described as a bit of a 'culture shock'. But it is important to know that culture shock or homesickness is a normal process that many go through. It is a time of letting go. You are not alone in this experience – research shows that nearly 70% of students feel homesick at some time, with most saying it lasted for 1 week and for others several weeks.

Homesickness can include :

- Being miserable without knowing why
- Feeling like a prisoner in your own room
- Being unable to get into a comfortable routine
- Not liking meals or mealtimes
- Wondering what people at home are doing; feeling as if you are missing out
- Wanting to go home straight after you have arrived
- Not liking to come back after a holiday or break
- Thinking you are the only person with homesick feelings
- Being unable to settle into anything and crying for no reason
- Doing things that are out of character
- Finding the values of people around you strange and vaguely threatening
- Getting fed up with new food, new smells, new scenery, and wanting the familiar
- Getting upset by little things that normally wouldn't bother you

Homesickness Survival Tips :

- Know that it's normal to feel homesick and that it's OK to admit this to yourself or others
- Set your room up with familiar things from home – photos, posters, plants, stuffed animals

- Get to know your environment. Check out what and who is around you – both online and off, on campus and nearby. Armidale Regional Council is a good place to start: <http://www.armidaleregional.nsw.gov.au/>
- It's sometimes hard to let go of home, but ringing home too often in the first few weeks could prolong homesickness. Share with home all the new things you are doing at UNE. Maybe plan a date when you will reward yourself with a trip home.
- Make an effort to talk to someone new – especially in those first few weeks when many students are also putting energy into building up social networks
- Get involved in activities on campus, and make the most of your time here to build up good memories of UNE. You don't have to get into everything on campus, but check out the choice... www.sportune.com.au and www.unelife.com.au/
- Go to lectures and classes because that's where you will meet lots of new people
- Avoid making big or rash decisions if you are feeling blue or anxious. Talk it through with someone – maybe another student or the list of support places shown below.
- Say yes to invitations from others to places or events where you will meet more people. If you are unsure about what to do or wear, or what the event is about, ask
- Have your door open sometimes – someone might pass by and say hi
- Think or write about the good things that this time away from home can mean for you
- Student routines don't have to be all over the place. It's healthy to have regular sleep and mealtimes. Lack of sleep can make all of us grumpy and more emotional
- Break a semester or term down into weeks, due dates, special events – use a wall planner. That way you have control and time seems to go by faster.
- Check out Sport UNE. Exercise or sport is great for feeling better and for meeting others
- Touch base with why you chose UNE and see yourself meeting your goal to graduate
- Balance study, leisure and work. Don't be chained to your desk 24/7. If you need help getting the balance right, contact the counsellors in the Student Support Team or contact the Academic Skills Office
- Check out if any religious or other group from back home is also on campus or nearby
- Be kind to yourself. You've spent most of your life at home until now, so there's no shame in missing it. And remember that having a good cry now and then can make you feel better

These suggestions may be all the help you need, but if your homesickness isn't going away, is interfering with your life, or is stopping you from getting into a new routine, help is available from:

UNE Student Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) - (02) 6773 2897

or email via studentcounselling@une.edu.au or [AskUNE](#)

<http://www.une.edu.au/current-students/support/student-support>

[Academic Skills Office](#) – 6773 3600

[International Precinct](#) – 6773 3192

[Uni4Me](#)– 6773 3116

[UNE Chaplaincy](#)

The support you need to succeed