

Exchange Report

The University of Sydney (Fall 2018)



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BBA in Finance and Operations

Management

Monthly Activity Log

July

I arrived at Sydney at 7 a.m. on 17 July, and it was freezingly cold, the temperature was just 8°C that day. I checked in Urbanest Sydney Central, which was just a 15 minutes' walk from the main campus. As classes begun on 30 July, I chose to spend my time travelling around Sydney. On my last day of holiday, I and my flat mates chose to go hiking in the Royal National Park, which takes one-hour train travel to get there. It was a tough walk in the end, but the views of the Figure Eight Pools definitely worth it.

August

August was a relatively relaxing month as I did not have lot of coursework in this month. Therefore, for my weekends I went to discover more parts of Sydney, like Taronga Zoo, Manly Beach, etc. My flat mates and I went to Morrisset Park to see wild kangaroos. The kangaroos were quite adorable. I also went to Canberra alone for a two-day trip. Though Canberra is the capital city of Australia, yet it is not a vibrant city at all. I merely can find a person walking on the street, instead they drive a lot. Yet, I recommend going there if you like a quiet environment.

September

I would say September was a hectic month. I had three midterms and one individual assignment to complete. After finishing all the coursework, I spent my whole mid semester break travelling to Melbourne and Tasmania with my flat mate.



October

October was another hectic month as I had two assignments to submit and I had to apply for internships back in Hong Kong. After that, I went on a day trip to Kiama and Wollongong with my four other flatmates.



November

This is the final month for my study in USYD. In early November, I went to Cairns for a four-day trip after I finished my final presentation. The Great Barrier Reef was really worth to go, and I spent three days snorkeling there. I saw beautiful fishes, giant clams and even sea turtles! After that, I was completely buried in my lecture notes, to prepare for my exams. I spent the remaining days in Sydney before heading back to Hong Kong on 3 December.

General Exchange Information

Visa Procedures

The student visa application procedure was complicated and I spent nearly a half day completing the application. Several documents were needed to complete your application, e.g. electronic Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE), Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC), official transcript, proof of English proficiency. Fortunately, the visa authority did not require me to have a body check. And it just took 3 days for me to obtain the student visa, it was so fast! But still, I suggest you start applying your visa when your documents are ready.

Orientation Activities

There are many orientation activities you should join. The first one is mandatory Student Abroad and Exchange Student Welcome, which is held one week before the semester begins. Besides, there is a free day trip to either Circular Quay, The Rocks or the Manly Beach. The Student Union even holds a pub night for the exchange students. It is a great opportunity to make new friends there.

International Services & Activities

After the semester begins, the university still organizes a number of social events like day trips or overnight trips for international students to join. I only joined the Sunset Cruise to the Sydney Harbour as the others were too expensive for me. But of course, there are still some free activities like Language exchange program, etc.

Weather

The weather in Sydney was quite unpredictable. The temperature can change drastically (four seasons in a day!!!), especially in winter time around July to September. I remembered one day in September that it was 30°C in the morning, but dropped to 15°C at night. Isn't that crazy?

Accommodations

I lived in a twin ensuite room 8 person suite in Urbanest Sydney Central for the whole semester and the rent was AUD\$335 a week, which was costly. The rent was inclusive of all utilities, air-conditioning and 20GB of broadband internet in each month. There was also a gym that is accessible for all residents and Urbanest held many activities in each month too. I once had a chat with another exchange student, who lived in a single room in a private housing, and it just cost him \$280

per week. If you have time, it may be good for you to search for more decent accommodation options.

Courses Registration

For all students studying in USYD, only 4 units of studies (equivalent to courses to HKUST) are taken in the semester. But still, you can submit more than 4 choices of units of study when you submitted the online exchange application. I strongly recommend you doing this as the exchange advisor in USYD will be very busy near the start of the semester to process the approval of courses. You can continue changing these units until the first week of classes in August. The timetable will be automatically assigned by the University similar to HKUST. You can swap classes and block timeslots that you do not want to have class, then a new timetable will be assigned to you in the system. It was really great and I just went to school three days a week.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

For all the course I have taken, they all have one 2-hour lecture and one 1-hour tutorial per week. The teaching style were quite similar except the fact that the students were relatively more eager to raise questions.

For the midterms, all the three finance courses I studied were all in multiple-choice format, so you may expect it may be easy, but it was not the case. I still had to work hard to get a good score.

For the three finance courses, the final exams were quite difficult, as there were no more multiple-choice questions. And one thing USYD examination has is a 10-minute reading time before you can write. You may have to borrow **an approved non-programmable calculator** from the Students' Representative Council in the Wentworth Building. The invigilators will check whether your calculator is approved before the start of the exam.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

It was so unfortunate that in Sydney, all sport facilities have to charge you an entry fee, unlike HKUST. For example, the Victoria Park Pool near USYD costs me \$5 to

enter. Therefore, I chose to workout in the gym provided in Urbanest, though it was really small.

Finance & Banking

One thing you want to do is to open a bank account online before departure to Australia. Once I arrived in Australia, I only needed to activate my account at my chosen branch. But for the first few days, it was pretty inconvenient as it took nearly a week for my debit card to be sent to my address. You may want to apply for a tax file number (TFN) once you arrive in Australia, because if you don't, your interest earned in your bank account may be tax deducted.

Transportation

You should get an adult Opal card once you arrive in Sydney. Later on, you can apply for a concession Opal card, and the fares will be a bit lower. Note that getting an Opal card is free, but you have to top up your card before you can use it. If you want to transfer your funds from the old card to a new card, you can set up an account in Opal website, and the old card will be permanently blocked. On Sunday, you just have to spend AUD\$2.7 to travel around!! You can also use your bank card to pay your fare on the train in Sydney, without using the Opal card, but adult fares will be charged.

Communication

There are three big telecommunications companies in Australia, which are Telstra, Optus and Vodafone respectively. You could get a SIM card easily in their retail stores all around Sydney. I bought a prepaid SIM card for \$50 at Optus, providing 25GB of data per 28 days, which was quite economical.

Destinations that I went to

Sydney	Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney Opera House, Sydney Fish Market, Darling Harbour, Chinatown, Bondi Beach, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sea Life Sydney Aquarium, Sydney Wildlife Zoo, Taronga Zoo
Places surrounding Sydney (for 1-day trip)	Royal National Park (Figure Eight Pools), Blue Mountains National Park, Morrisset Park, Wollongong, Kiama
Canberra	Old Bus Depot Market (only open on Sunday), Australian War Memorial, Parliament House, Museum of Australian Democracy (Old Parliament House), Royal Australian Mint, Lake Burley Griffin, Patissez (a café famous for freakshake)

Melbourne	Brighton Beach Boxes, State Library Victoria, Hosier Lane, Melbourne Museum, Old Treasury Building, Queen Victoria Market, Old Melbourne Gaol, Maru Koala & Animal Park, Phillip Island (Penguin Parade)
Hobart, Tasmania	Museum of Old and New Arts (MONA)
Launceston, Tasmania	Cataract Gorge Reserve, Queen Victoria Museum, National Automobile Museum of Tasmania, Trevallyn Dam
Tasmania in general	Tessellated Pavement State Reserve, Tasman Arch, Devils Kitchen, Waterfall Bay, Mt Field, Mt Wellington, Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary, Port Arhur, Sheffield (Town of Murals), Cradle Mountain
Cairns	Skyrail and train ride, Michaelmas Cay, Hastings Reef, Fitzroy Island, Green Island

Items to Bring

Clothing for winter and summer	Medicine (have clear English level)
Sport shoes	Towel
socks	Slippers
Toothbrush and toothpaste	Travel Adapter
Shampoo and shower gel	Swimsuits
Umbrella	Formal suit (for presentation)
Water Bottle	

Useful Link and Contacts

Tax file number application

<https://iar.ato.gov.au/IARWeb/default.aspx?pid=4&sid=1&outcome=1>

Sydney Student Login

https://sydneystudent.sydney.edu.au/sitsvision/wrd/siw_lgn

Sydney, Australia - Official Travel & Accommodation Website

<https://www.sydney.com>

Opal card

<https://www.opal.com.au/>