



EXCHANGE REPORT

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY AUSTRALIA

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BBA IS & ACCT
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Monthly ACTIVITY LOG

FEBRUARY 2023

I arrived in Sydney 2 weeks prior to the start of the semester, but it was off to a rough start. It was raining when I arrived at the airport and the staff claimed that the luggage could not be offloaded due to the bad weather. I was stuck at the airport for almost 4 hours, which was not the best start to my exchange.

I went to the nearest shopping centre, Broadway Sydney, on the second day to purchase some daily necessities. Major Australian supermarkets and retail companies like Coles, Aldi, and Kmart are available there. However, many students arrived at the same time and did their shopping there, so bedroom and kitchen items were frequently out of stock at the beginning of the semester. To get everything I needed, I went to IKEA. It is a good alternative although the price is a bit higher.

I lived in the student accommodation called Queen Mary Building (QMB), which offered a wide range of activities to help residents mingle with each other. During the first week, I participated in a city sightseeing tour and met people from other countries for the first time. We had a great conversation while walking from Darling Harbour to the Opera House.

The Orientation Day and Welcome Fest were held a week before the semester started, and I was in awe of the magnificent "Hogwarts" in Australia. The Quadrangle and the Great Hall were stunning! (Don't miss the opportunity to take some pictures, as you might not be able to revisit the Great Hall again). We had a light lunch on the lawns of the Quadrangle, where I met some wonderful people who became my travel companions for the rest of the semester. We still keep in touch to this day.

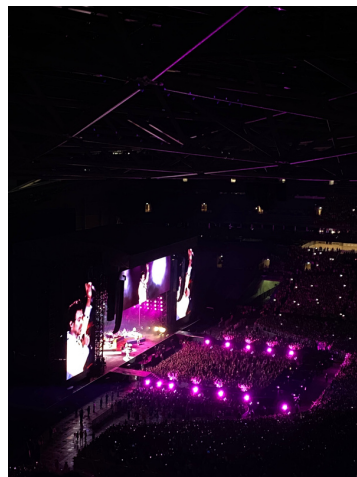


MARCH 2023

I had the opportunity to attend a concert by one of my favourite singers. Many more celebrities were coming to Australia after the COVID-19 pandemic. The concert was held in a stadium that could accommodate thousands of fans, and the atmosphere was electric! I had an amazing time enjoying the performance with other fans.

On another weekend, I walked the Bondi to Coojee coastal track. The path is relatively easy, with mostly flat roads. Along the way, I passed by several beaches, with Bondi and Bronte Beach being my favourites. One unique feature that caught my attention were the rock pools in Australia. Lots of them can be found along the coastal line of New South Wales.

I also took a weekend trip to Canberra. The train was not running that day so we had to take a 4-hour replacement bus instead. Canberra is different from Sydney as it is a more relaxed and less busy city with more open space given its sparse infrastructure. However, it can be slightly inconvenient for visitors who do not have a car. We visited the Australian War Memorial, Mount Ainslie Lookout and the Australian National University (ANU) there.



APRIL 2023

After completing my midterm exams, I took a trip to Brisbane and Gold Coast during the Easter holidays. Surfers Paradise is definitely one of the most stunning beaches I have visited in Australia. As someone who enjoys excitement, I visited Dreamworld and Wet'n'Wild. If you are a fan of exhilarating rides, Gold Coast would be a great choice for a holiday as there are many theme parks to enjoy.

Immediately after the trip, I went to the Royal Easter Show. It was an impressive carnival with numerous food stalls, live performances, mechanical rides, and animal interactions. The celebration ended with a fireworks show every day.

Skydiving has been on my bucket list for a long time, and I finally had the opportunity to do it at the end of April. The entire experience was surreal. From taking the plane to the sky, putting on the goggles, jumping off the plane, and opening the parachute, everything just happened so quickly. However, I can say for sure that it was the most memorable day of my exchange.

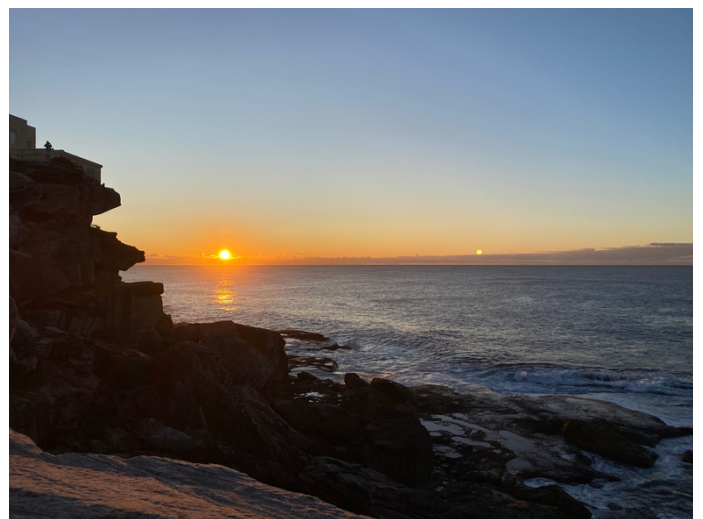


MAY 2023

Vivid Sydney is a significant annual event in Sydney, but it was canceled for the past few years due to COVID-19. However, it made a comeback this year with a drone show that was truly impressive. To enjoy the colourful lights spread across the city, I went on a cruise.

Sydney is situated on the east coast of Australia, making it an ideal location to watch the sunrise. I had the opportunity to witness it once at the Sydney Opera House and once at Bondi Beach.

During my stay, I also visited Kiama, a coastal town situated in the southern part of New South Wales. The town is peaceful and scenic, and most visitors come to see the blowhole, which is a natural wonder that will leave you amazed at its formation.



JUNE 2023

June was a hectic month due to the final exams. I spent around two weeks revising but also made the most of my time by continuing to explore Sydney.

Before the exams, I finally had the chance to visit the Blue Mountains, one of the most renowned natural resources in Sydney. It takes a 2-hour train ride from Central Station, but it was well worth it. Although Australia is famous for its beaches and sunshine, the mountains are also magnificent. The steep cable car at Scenic World was a thrilling experience, and it felt like a roller coaster with people screaming around me.

I also tried kayaking for the first time, and it was much more enjoyable than I had anticipated. It is an easy water sport, even for a beginner like me. Tandem kayaks, which are typically equipped with a rudder to steer the kayak in the right direction, are recommended for new learners. It requires less physical effort, and you can go faster while enjoying the view.

After the exams, we went to Port Stephens, where the desert meets the sea. It took a 2.5-hour drive from QMB (so joining a day tour is a popular option). I rode a camel and tried sandboarding there, but it was more tiring than I had expected. Climbing up the sand dune to slide down was quite exhausting and it was easy to fall over, so be prepared to bring lots of sand home!

We also went on a road trip to Adelaide and Melbourne after the semester ended. The two highlight destinations were Bumbunga Lake (The Pink Lake) and the 12 Apostles. I would also recommend visiting Sovereign Hill, Phillip Island and The State Library of Victoria.



JULY 2023

From May to July, it is the season for whale migration in Australia. Most tours offer a guarantee of whale sightings, and you can spot several whales in just 3 hours. If you are fortunate, you may even see the whales leaping out of the water. The ticket price is not too expensive, and I would highly recommend going whale watching as you can see the whales up close.





General Study Abroad INFORMATION

1) VISA PROCEDURES

The Electronic Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE) is required to apply for the visa, which will be issued after completing all of the enrolment processes at USYD. It is recommended to apply for the visa as soon as possible after receiving the email from your exchange officer. Additionally, although HKUST provides insurance, the Australian government requests overseas students to apply for the Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC). Biometrics collection is required during the visa application process, which incurs an additional fee. Visa processing times are generally quick, but it is important to book in advance as spots are limited each day. To check the visa application status, visit the ImmiAccount.

2) ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES

The Welcome Fest (O Week) lasts a full week, with the Official Welcome (Orientation) Day for exchange and study abroad students taking place on the first day. Attendance is mandatory for all exchange students, so be sure to take note of the dates provided in the email. The event lasts half a day and includes various activities such as games, talks, and social events. It is an excellent opportunity to meet new friends as all exchange students gather together for the first time.

3) INTERNATIONAL SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

USYD provides a free airport shuttle service (Redy2Go shuttle) to central Sydney locations. You must book your seat using the secure online booking form at least 3 working days prior to your arrival date in Sydney. Additionally, the USYD exchange office offers a range of activities (e.g., Australian Rules Football (AFL) games, koala encounters, Sydney Opera House tours, Surf Camp Australia, VIVID Harbour Cruises, day trips, and overnight excursions around Sydney and Australia) to help students learn about Australian culture. There are also various student societies available for different nationalities, and many of them hold activities at the International Student Lounge (ISL) located next to the Wentworth Building.

4) ACCOMODATIONS

USYD offers two types of guaranteed accommodation for study abroad and exchange students: Queen Mary Building (QMB) and Scape. QMB is a 20-minute walk from USYD, while Scape is a 10-minute walk away and located next to the Broadway shopping centre. Personally, I recommend QMB because of its numerous common areas, which provide plenty of opportunities to socialise and interact with other residents. If you choose to live in QMB, be sure to clean and clear your room, mailbox and kitchen locker thoroughly before leaving to avoid post-departure fees. Most student accommodation providers require evidence of COVID-19 vaccination to reside in their buildings.

5) COURSES REGISTRATION

USYD courses are typically 6 credits per course, with a standard full-time study load of 24 credits (i.e., 4 units of study) per semester. However, you can take a minimum of 18 credits (i.e., 3 units of study) to satisfy the full-time student requirement for the student visa. USYD will provide a master list of undergraduate courses, and it is important to check if the selected units of study are offered in both semesters or just one. When filling out the online enrolment form, you will be asked to list 8-10 initial preferences, including backup choices. You can request additional units of study until the end of the first week of classes by filling out the enrolment variation request form and sending it to your exchange officer.

6) TEACHING & ASSESSMENT METHODS

Classes at USYD are typically divided into two parts: lecture and tutorial. Attendance is usually not required for lectures but mandatory for tutorials. USYD employs absolute grading, meaning you pass as long as you achieve an overall score of 50% for the course. Some courses have hurdle tasks set for their final exams, which means you must pass the exam to pass the course. You are expected to do readings on your own and are encouraged to ask questions during tutorials. For the business faculty, most lectures are still conducted via Zoom or pre-recorded, but tutorials and labs are face-to-face.

7) FINANCE & BANKING

Some students at USYD open an account with Commonwealth Bank. While I did not open one for myself, I recommend you to do so as it can be more convenient for transferring money to non-HK students. The cost of living in Sydney is similar to Hong Kong, but food and transportation are more expensive. Cashless payment is common in Australia, but some restaurants offer discounts for cash payments, so it is a good idea to carry a small amount of cash.

8) CLIMATE

Sydney experiences a large temperature difference between daytime and nighttime. In the summer, it is hot during the day and cool at night. With a temperature difference of up to 10 degrees, it is best to dress in layers. The winter is colder than Hong Kong which I had totally underestimated it. Other southern cities like Melbourne may find it even colder so make sure you have brought enough thick clothes.

9) HEALTH & SAFETY

It is mandatory to apply for OSHC, and you can either apply by yourself or through USYD for a small handling fee. The nearest clinics are located in Broadway Sydney, but you will need to make reservations beforehand. Overall, Sydney is a safe city, but it is best to avoid walking around the dorm late at night, as the area can be dark and quiet.

10) FOOD

Sydney is a diverse city with many nationalities represented, so the food choices are varied. Different immigrant communities have their own districts where you can find authentic food there (e.g., Chinese food in Chinatown and Burwood, Korean food in Strathfield, and Halal food in Lakemba). Students usually cook in the dorm during the week, and the kitchen at QMB is a great place to socialise and get to know people.

11) TRANSPORTATION

Transport in Sydney is convenient and better than other Australian cities, with buses, trains, trams, and ferries as the main modes of transportation. It is important to note that bus services reduce at night, so checking the schedule is key. To enjoy a 50% discount on each ride, remember to apply for the opal concession card. Only local and exchange students are eligible for the discount, not international students.

12) COMMUNICATION

English is the main medium of communication in Sydney, but there is a significant Chinese community there, so Cantonese and Mandarin can be commonly heard as well. The dorm provides wifi, but sometimes it can be unstable. Telecommunication providers offer student plans with discounts occasionally, so it is important to compare the plans before choosing one.

13) SPORTS & RECREATION FACILITIES

The Sydney Uni Sports & Aquatic Centre (SUSAC) is located next to the business school and offers a range of fitness services, but membership fees apply. The dorm also has a small gym.

14) SOCIAL CLUBS & NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

USYD has many interesting societies (e.g., Chocolate Society, Dog Society, Mahjong Society). It is free to register a USU account and join them. During the orientation week at USYD, it is a good idea to explore the Eastern Avenue and the Quadrangle to check out the booths of different societies. If you join a society during that week, the membership fee is usually cheaper (around \$5). USYD also provides networking opportunities through the weekly careers centre newsletter and career fairs throughout the semester, where over 50 employers come to campus.

15) CAUTIONARY MEASURES

The sunlight in Australia is comfortable, but it is easy to forget how strong and dangerous the UV light can be. It is important to wear sunscreen and sunglasses. Sunscreen sold in Australia is usually affordable and provides strong protection.



Items to BRING

Passport	Adaptor
HKID	Extension socket
Credit / debit card	Cable
Cash	Power bank
Summer & winter clothes	Data card (for first few days of arrival)
Swimsuit	Travel size toiletry
Hat	Personal care product
Sunglasses	Hair dryer
Slippers	Medicine
Umbrella	Carry-on luggage (for short-term trip)
Stationery	Formal suit (optional)
Calculator	



Useful

LINKS & CONTACTS

SUBCLASS 500 STUDENT VISA

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/student-500>

IMMIACCOUNT

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/applying-online-or-on-paper/online>

REDY2GO'S ONLINE BOOKING PORTAL

<https://redy2go.hudsonltd.net/rwd?USERIDENTRY=10425&LOGON=GO>

USYD UNIT OUTLINE

<https://www.sydney.edu.au/units>

USYD ACCOMMODATION

[https://usyd.starrezhousing.com/StarRezPortalX/7C3CEFBB/1/1/Home-Welcome to the Unive?UrlToken=308793FE](https://usyd.starrezhousing.com/StarRezPortalX/7C3CEFBB/1/1/Home-Welcome%20to%20the%20Unive?UrlToken=308793FE)

USYD AVAILABLE PAYMENT METHODS

<https://www.sydney.edu.au/students/paying-fees.html>

SYDPAY

<https://www.sydney.edu.au/students/sydpay.html>

OPAL

<https://transportnsw.info/tickets-opal/opal#/login>