



MACQUARIE
University
SYDNEY · AUSTRALIA

Exchange Program 2025

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June 2025

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1 Introduction

This report outlines my experience as an exchange student from Thammasat University, Thailand, to Macquarie University, Australia, during the period of February to June 2025. The exchange program provided a unique opportunity to engage with a different academic environment, explore diverse cultural perspectives, and develop both personal and professional skills. Through this report, I aim to reflect on the academic journey, social integration, and key lessons learned throughout my time at Macquarie University.

2 Courses, Enrolment, and Content

All course enrolments were processed via Macquarie's **eStudent** portal, while learning materials, assessments, and communication were managed through the **iLearn** platform.

You might need to send some **prerequisite waivers** for some units, if they are required which can also do so in the **eStudent** portal.

Enrolled Units

- **Web Technology (COMP2110)**
- **Offensive Security (COMP2320)**
- **Digital Forensics (COMP2310)**
- **Applied Cryptography (COMP2300)**

Assessment Structure

Unlike Thammasat's reliance on a midterm and final exam system, Macquarie emphasizes a modular and assignment-focused assessment model:

- **Web Technology**
Focused on weekly **workshop tasks** and a **Web Development Project**, submitted via GitHub or iLearn. No formal midterm or final examinations were administered
- **Digital Forensics**
Assessment comprised weekly quizzes/tasks (10% of total), plus **three module exams**, each acting as hurdle requirements (50% pass mark per module). There was **no traditional final exam**
- **Offensive Security (COMP2320)**

All assessments for COMP2320 were conducted via the **iLearn** platform—there were **no midterm or final exams**. Instead, evaluation was based on:

Three CTF-style practical “practical exams” (Weeks 5, 9, and 12), each accounting for 60% of the total grade.

In-class workshop exercises (nine during the semester, best six counted, comprising 30%).

A group research & presentation on a known vulnerability (10%), delivered in Week 13

This hands-on, continuous-assessment model emphasizes practical skills, real-world problem solving, and communication—quite a contrast to Thammasat’s exam-driven approach.

- **Applied Cryptography**

As part of the Cyber Security degree, this course emphasizes practical application, continuous assignments, and project-based learning rather than high-stakes midterms or finals .

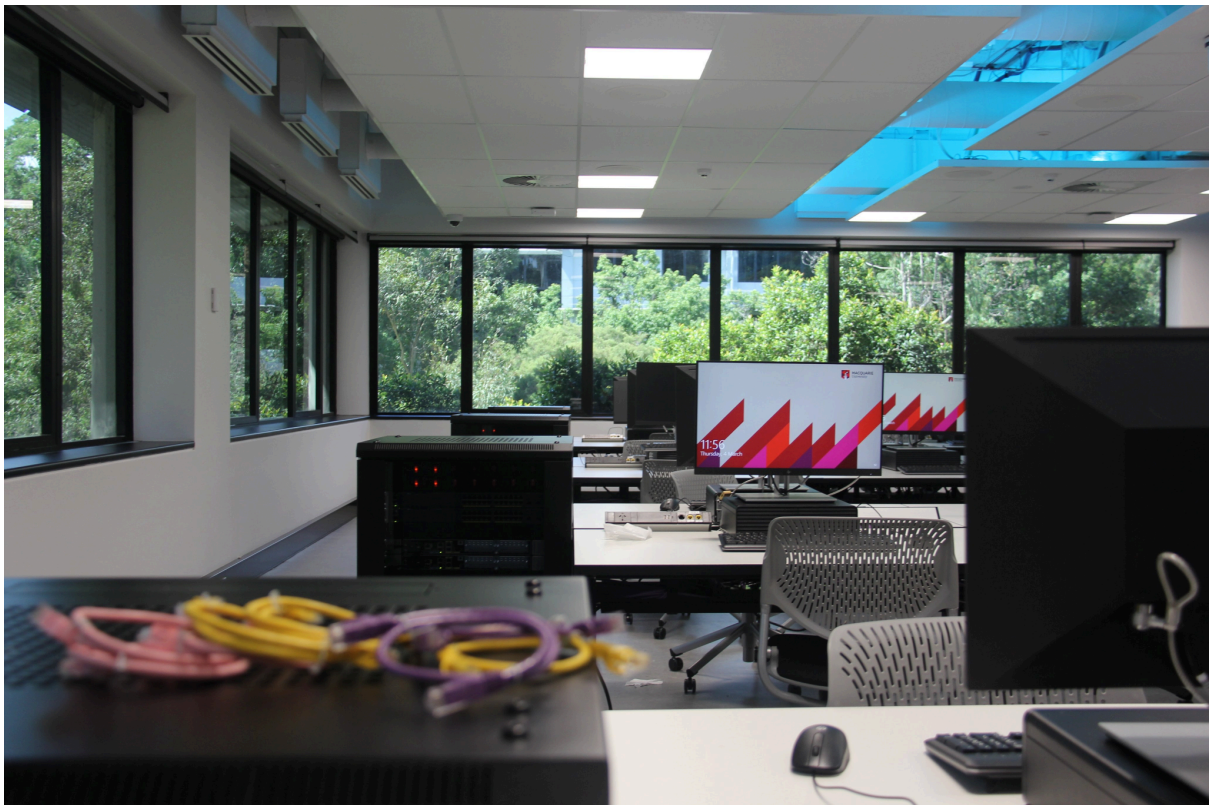


Figure 1) Macquarie University Computer Lab (used to conduct most practical classes)

3 Finding Accommodation

During my exchange, I stayed in two types of accommodation: a homestay and later, a shared apartment.

The homestay was initially appealing because it promised a genuine Australian cultural experience—living with a local family, sharing meals, and getting firsthand exposure to daily life in Sydney. However, this setup comes with risks. In my case, the experience was far from ideal due to a problematic host. While not all homestays are bad, the quality and hospitality can vary greatly, and students have little control over the assignment.

After that, I moved into a shared apartment, which turned out to be a much better experience. I found this place through a Thai Facebook group called “*หาบ้านเช่าในซิดนีย์ By Toodzeedney*”. These groups are incredibly useful for Thai students abroad, offering listings, reviews, and real-time feedback from other tenants.

In my opinion, the best option for exchange students is to skip homestays entirely and start with a shared rental found through trusted Facebook communities. It offers more independence, better value, and significantly less risk of mismatched expectations.

4 Travelling In Sydney

Sydney has a well-connected and efficient **public transportation network** that makes getting around the city convenient and affordable. The system includes **trains, metro, trams (light rail), and buses**, all integrated under the **Opal card** system. With just one card or even a linked debit card, students can travel across nearly all modes of transport without hassle.

The **train system** covers most major suburbs and the city center, while **buses** fill in the gaps with high frequency, even late at night. The **Metro** line, though limited in coverage, is fully automated and impressively punctual. Meanwhile, the **light rail (tram)** is particularly useful for travel within the inner city and to popular areas like Chinatown and Darling Harbour.

Compared to Thailand, the cost of public transport in Sydney is **relatively cheap for students**, especially with **daily and weekly caps** on fares. For instance, once you reach a certain spend limit, all additional rides that day or week are free—making weekend trips and longer commutes very cost-effective.

Overall, Sydney’s public transportation system is a reliable, safe, and economical way to explore the city during your exchange.

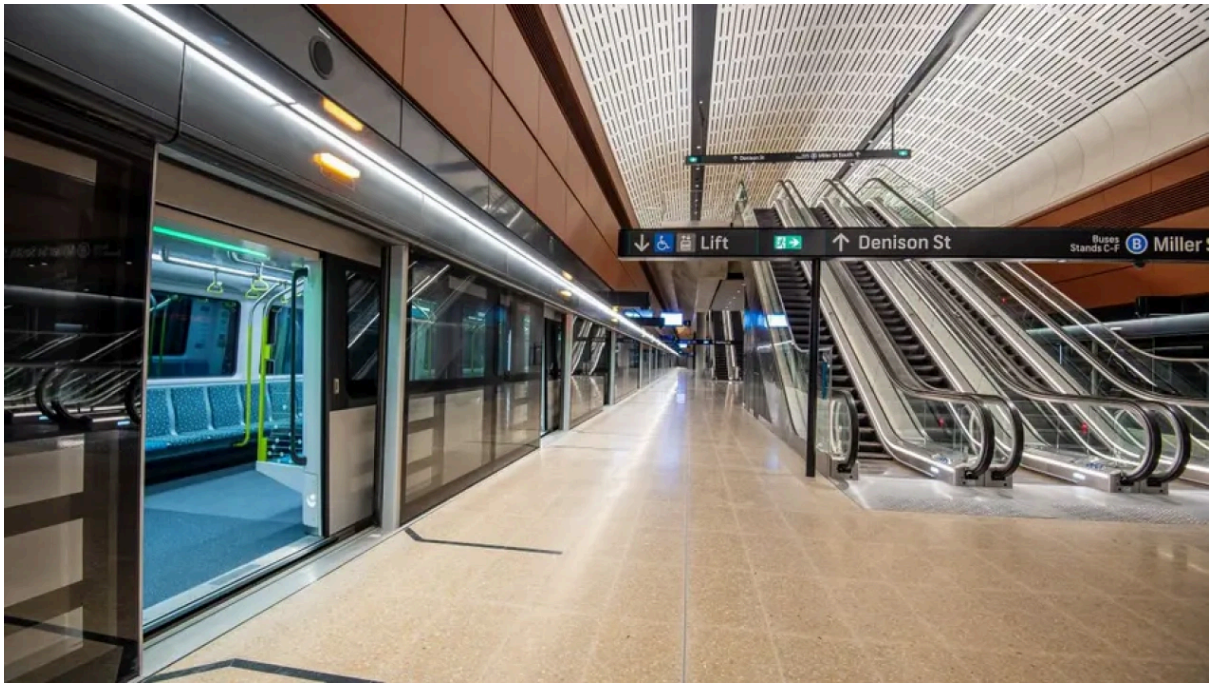


Figure 2) Sydney Metro Station

5 Cost Of Living

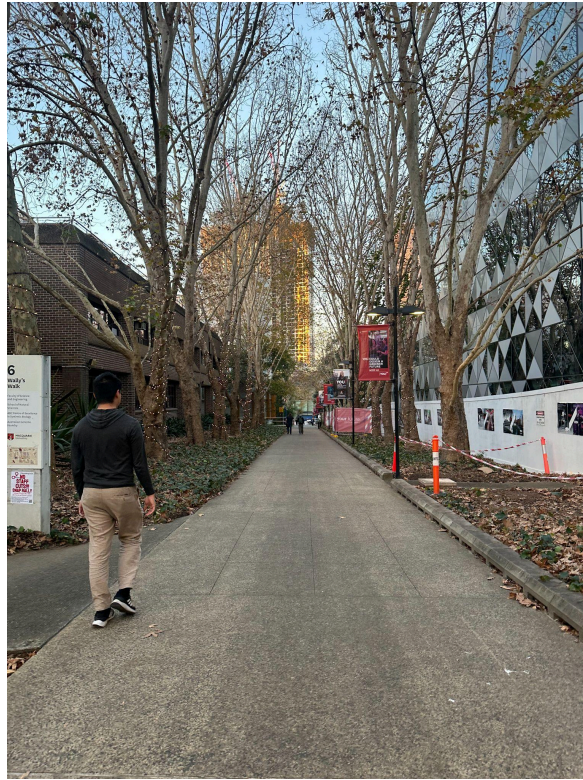
Sydney is **significantly more expensive than Thailand**, and cost of living is one of the biggest challenges for exchange students. From groceries and transport to rent and eating out, prices can add up quickly.

At a bare minimum, you should expect to spend around **฿40,000 per month**, but that requires careful budgeting—**cooking your own meals frequently**, avoiding unnecessary outings, and sharing accommodation. Even then, it can feel tight.

In my opinion, to maintain a **comfortable quality of life**, including the occasional dinner out, local travel, and some breathing room for emergencies or leisure, a monthly budget of around **฿70,000 or more** is far more realistic.

Planning ahead and tracking your spending is essential. While Sydney offers an incredible experience, it comes at a cost—one that shouldn't be underestimated.

6 Gallery



Wally's Walk - Macquarie University



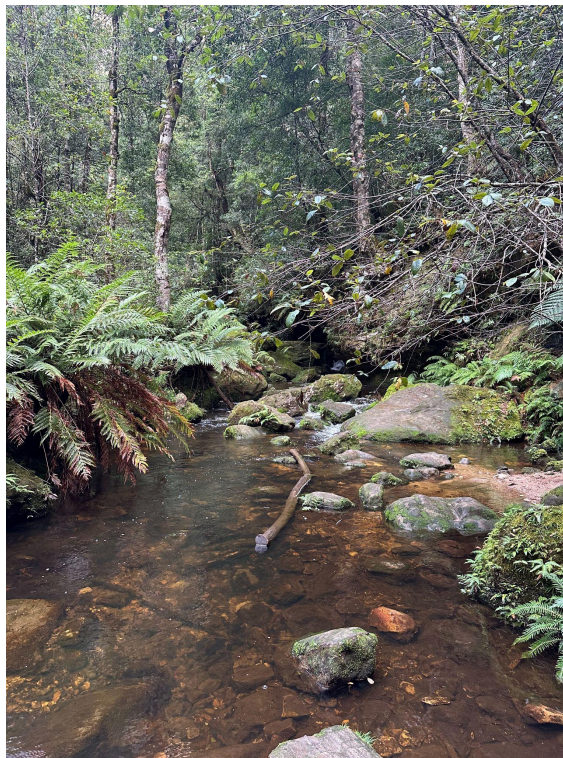
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Three Sisters - Blue Mountains National Park



Blue Mountains National Park



Blue Mountains National Park



Blue Mountains National Park



Wedding Cake Rock Walking Trail