Exchange Experience Report

My exchange experience at Macquarie University was both academically challenging and personally rewarding. One of the first things I noticed was the size and beauty of the campus. Macquarie has a spacious campus with a variety of facilities, green spaces, and places to study, eat, and socialise. There were many food options available on and around campus, although I found that cooking at home was significantly more cost-effective. Sydney has high-quality produce, so I found it relatively easy to prepare meals for myself. As a general guideline, I would recommend budgeting approximately THB 2,500 every two weeks for groceries. For my overall day-to-day expenses, including food, activities, transportation, and other personal expenses, I generally spent around THB 20,000 per month. I stayed at IGLU which is a known student accommodation option with my rent costing THB 75,000 per month, with several amenities and social activities available

Academically, I found that studying at Macquarie required a greater degree of independence and personal responsibility than I was accustomed to. Each unit generally consisted of pre-recorded online lectures and weekly face-to-face tutorials, meaning that students were expected to complete much of the foundational learning independently before attending class. The tutorials placed considerable emphasis on participation, discussion, and engagement with both the tutor and other students. Macquarie's expectation of approximately 100 hours of personal study per unit encouraged me to develop a more structured approach to managing my workload. I usually spent around 2–3 hours preparing for each class, including watching lectures and completing recommended readings. During midterm and final examination periods, I increased this to approximately 2–3 hours of study each day in addition to my regular preparation.

The assessment structure was also different from what I was accustomed to. Rather than relying exclusively on traditional written examinations, many of my assessments took the form of research papers and oral examinations, with standard examinations being used more sporadically. This required me to develop skills in independent research, critical analysis, and communicating legal arguments clearly and confidently. Overall, the academic environment encouraged me to become more self-directed and disciplined in my studies. Macquarie also offered a wide range of class options, allowing me to explore subjects beyond my usual curriculum and tailor my studies according to my interests. I particularly appreciated the opportunity to learn from experienced and tenured professors, many of whom were able to draw upon their own professional and academic experiences when teaching. Their practical insights and personal experiences helped to contextualise the material and made the classes more engaging, particularly when discussing complex legal issues that could otherwise feel quite theoretical.

Outside of academics, I made a conscious effort to stay active and explore Sydney. Sydney is a very active city, with many beautiful places for walking, running, hiking, and other outdoor activities. I particularly enjoyed exploring both metropolitan areas and more natural environments, and I went on a number of hikes during my exchange. I also took several road

trips with friends, which allowed me to visit different cities and parts of Australia beyond Sydney. Public transportation made it relatively easy to explore the city and participate in activities without needing a car.

Macquarie also provided many opportunities to become involved in university life. There were numerous student societies, including a Thai Society, although I became more involved with the football society and rock-climbing society. I also joined the Macquarie University Law Society (MULS), which was particularly valuable because it allowed me to meet other law students and connect with people who shared similar academic and professional interests. These societies made it much easier to meet people outside of my classes and become part of the wider university community.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my exchange was the opportunity to make new friendships and find a sense of community in an unfamiliar city. While university societies and classes were an important part of meeting people, I found that many of my connections also came from the places I visited as part of my everyday routine. I gradually became familiar with the local cafés, shops, gyms, and sporting facilities that I regularly visited, and these places gave me a sense of familiarity and belonging outside of campus. Going to the same cafés or training facilities regularly allowed me to become familiar with the people and community around me, and I found that some of my friendships and social connections developed naturally through these shared routines.

I also found that Sydney's active lifestyle made it particularly easy to meet people with similar interests. Through football, rock climbing, hiking, and other activities, I was able to meet people from a wide range of backgrounds who I otherwise might never have encountered. Joining university societies gave me an initial community at Macquarie, while participating in activities outside the university helped me become more connected to the wider Sydney community. I was fortunate to make many friendships throughout my exchange, and having people to explore the city, attend activities, study, and travel made the experience feel much more like living in Australia rather than simply studying there.

Overall, my time at Macquarie University was an experience that extended far beyond academics. It challenged me to become more independent and disciplined in my studies while also giving me the opportunity to explore Australia, participate in university life, and build meaningful friendships. I would encourage future exchange students to make the most of both sides of the experience: take your studies seriously, but also make time to explore, join societies, stay active, and experience everything that the university and the surrounding city have to offer.