

Studying Effectively at Macquarie University Without Accommodation

By
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The author was an undergraduate student at Macquarie University studying a Bachelor of Science degree majoring in mathematics 1995-1999. The author was living at home so accommodation (which is the biggest expensive for students) was not an issue. The author would also catch a local bus from Lindfield Station to the university for a minimal cost (about \$2/day). The Macquarie University train line opened on the 23rd February 2009 running from Epping Station to the City (via Chatswood station). To catch a train to Macquarie University from Lindfield Station requires changing lines at Chatswood station. The train line from Epping to Chatswood (via Macquarie University) closed in September 2018 for seven months for conversion to a Sydney Metro station on the Sydney Metro Northwest line, which included the installation of platform screen doors. It reopened 26 May 2019. This new network now runs from Tallawong to Chatswood (via Macquarie University), and there is a connecting train from Chatswood to the city. The services with this new network are more frequent than the previous system (up to one train every four minutes during peak hours). There is also an extensive network of buses from Macquarie University running directly to Parramatta, Blacktown, Castle Hill etc. Hence it is unnecessary for students to travel to Macquarie University by car if they are living at home (which is highly expensive). However, what if students would prefer to live out of home (or are international students) and need accommodation. It would be counter-productive to be studying effectively as a full-time student and be working at the same time, since your grades are likely to be not as high due to the fact that your time is spent working for money rather than studying for your degree.

Youth Allowance rates apply to students that are under 25 as given in table 1 as of 2019. These rates are a guide only. You must also be:

- 18 to 24 and studying full time
- 16 to 24 and doing a full time Australian Apprenticeship
- 16 to 17 and independent or needing to live away from home to study
- 16 to 17, studying full time and have completed year 12 or equivalent.
- Must be an Australian resident
- Meet Income and assets tests

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/youth-allowance-students-and-australian-apprentices/how-much-you-can-get>

Your circumstances	Your maximum fortnightly payment
Single, no children, younger than 18, and live at your parent's home	\$249.20
Single, no children, younger than 18, and need to live away from your parent's home to study, train or look for work	\$455.20
Single, no children, 18 or older and live at parent's home	\$299.80
Single, no children, 18 or older and need to live away from parent's home	\$455.20
Single, with children	\$596.50
Member of a couple, with no children	\$455.20
Member of a couple, with children	\$499.90

Table 1: A guide to Youth Allowance rates that apply to students that are under 25 as of 2019

The basic Austudy rates that students get are given in table 2. These are the rates that apply to most people. You must also be:

- 25 or older, and
- studying full time in an approved course at an approved institution
- Australian resident and in Australia

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/austudy/payments/payment-rates>

Your situation	Highest payment per fortnight
Single, no children	\$455.20
Single, with children	\$596.50
In a couple, no children	\$455.20
In a couple, with children	\$499.90

Table 2: The basic Austudy rates that apply to most students as of 2019

Note that for both Youth Allowance and Austudy rates may only be given for the study semester (generally two semesters) and not necessarily for the entire year (depends on whether students are working, their assets and on parent's income). Also, up to \$100 per week extra may be given for Youth Allowance and Austudy as rental assistance, but this is again income and assets tested.

Table 3 gives the cheapest cost for each type of student accommodation available at Macquarie University for 2020. Note that only Herring Road Apartments are owned by Macquarie University and hence can set the rates. The other accommodation options are

owed independently of the university. Also, construction is underway for student accommodation within the campus for 1000 students and owned by the university. The completion of this project is due for 2020/2021 and 300 student residences will be initially available (as the first phase of the construction). The rental cost has not yet been announced.

Accommodation	Amount per week
Dayman Apartments	\$250
	\$310
Dunmore Lane College	\$495
	\$551
Herring Road Apartments	\$177
	\$233
Macquarie University Village	\$200.25
	\$270
Morling Residential College	\$268
	\$372
Robert Menzies College	\$372.40
	\$412.30

Table 3: Cheapest cost for each type of student accommodation available at Macquarie University for 2020

https://www.mq.edu.au/about/campus-services-and-facilities/macquarie-university-accommodation/booking-dates-and-rates?fbclid=IwAR2-n_9_tEhYdrOT72DvweDWdr8R5mo7-n7jXBgmtfGcwSnQZuG3NRgKRgY

A typical student living away from home will fall into the category for Youth Allowance of single, no children, 18 or older and need to live away from parent's home for an amount of \$455.20 per fortnight (or \$227.60/week). The cheapest accommodation at Macquarie University currently available is Herring Road Apartments at \$177/week. There are only 4 apartments available at this rate and is likely to book out very quickly due to being the cheapest. The Macquarie University Village at \$200.25/week is likely to be an option for availability due to 12 apartments available. Hence, if someone is getting Youth Allowance on \$227.60/week (and unable to get additional income from rent assistance due to income and other assets) and spending \$200.25/week on accommodation then they are only left with only \$27.35/week. Also, it is uncertain as to whether the student will be receiving Youth Allowance for the entire year or only during university semesters (although it may be possible for a student to obtain a job during the end of semester break). Hence, is it possible to study effectively at Macquarie University without accommodation?

Amenities on Macquarie campus

Firstly, showers are freely available at 4 Eastern Road - Rm 405. Lockers are freely available for the day at the Macquarie University Spatial Experience (MUSE) 8am-10pm, every day of the week. They are big enough to store a weekly set of clothes and you could always utilize say two lockers for extra space.

<https://students.mq.edu.au/on-campus/amenities/student-social-spaces/muse>

There is a coin operated laundrette at 2A Broughton Rd, Artarmon which is a short distance train journey from Macquarie University station and travelling on Sundays is a fixed flat rate of \$2.70. Cars are expensive and not necessary with the train line and abundance of buses from Macquarie Centre. There is a fridge (student can store food up to a week), microwave and hot water (obtain a tea/coffee) freely available at MUSE.

A lot of clubs on campus offer free food such as the Catholic Society (every Tuesday at 1-2pm), Navigators (every Thursday from 6pm) and Adventist (every Friday from 7pm). In any case the author spends a total of \$5/day and lives very healthily (as discussed below). The cost of food is expensive at Macquarie University – around \$10 for a meal and a coffee at \$3.50. Macquarie shopping centre is just down the road from Macquarie campus with Woolworths, Coles and Aldi. There is also a free medical service available to full-time students on campus. Students can access the many computers available throughout campus and free Wi-Fi is available for use on a laptop or mobile. Also, Macquarie Centre has free Wi-Fi and Macquarie University offer free IT support for students.

Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gita is a conversation between Arjuna, a supernaturally gifted warrior about to go into battle, and Krishna – the Supreme Personality of Godhead, his charioteer. In the course of giving Arjuna all manner of spiritual and material advice, Krishna explains karma, the self, the Supreme Self, the purpose of yoga, the difference between our self and our material body, how our environment affects our consciousness, and how to attain the perfection of life. The Gita appears as a central chapter in the Mahabharata, the history of greater India. It is the essence of Vedic knowledge and one of the most important books of Vedic literature. Lord Krishna spoke the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna about 5000 years ago and through disciplic succession the Bhagavad Gita As It Is gives commentary on the verses by Lord Krishna by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Pradhupada. Essentially the Bhagavad Gita As It Is is the highest authoritative text to explain the universe and the commentary is “almost” 100% accurate.

<https://vedabase.io/en/library/bg/>

The author’s spiritual advancement

The author has experienced psychosis, panic attacks, generalized anxiety disorder, depression as well as being suicidal in the years 2010-2019 as a result of workplace bullying. The first real sign of the author’s improvement in health occurred on the 11th Feb 2013, which was the day before enrolment for a course in a Bachelor of Social Science degree at Macquarie University. At this point in time the author was also undertaking regular Hatha yoga sessions at Macquarie Gym. The author’s health continued to improve throughout 2013. This was assisted by weekly attendance at the Macquarie University Bhakti Yoga club, weekly visits to the Hare Krishna temple, Sydney and reading books of spiritual knowledge available at the Hare Krishna Temple. Throughout 2013 the author also had regular chiropractic and remedial massage treatments. However, the most effective method for resolving mental health came from regular visits to the Hare Krishna temple and daily chanting of the Hare Krsna Mantra: Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. The author would continue the chanting of mantras by weekly visits to Govindas, Sydney in 2014. The author’s health significantly improved after reading the Bhagavad Gita

As It Is for the 3rd time in May 2019, where the depression disappeared completely, the anxiety significantly eased off; and thus the author successfully came off anti-depressant drugs. From the 26th May 2019, the author became strictly vegetarian and no consumption of alcohol but still enjoys one cappuccino a day. Further on the 26th June 2019 which coincided with the author's birthday, the generalized anxiety disorder disappeared completely and the anti-anxiety medication was reduced to very low doses.

<http://strategicgames.com.au/article67.pdf>

Based on reading and understanding the Bhagavad Gita As It Is, arguably the author qualifies as a spiritual master (even though is not a bona fide spiritual master – not being in disciplic succession from Lord Krishna).

As stated in the Bhagavad Gita As It Is; animals typically sleep, eat, mate, defend. Animals do not have the intelligence to understand God, that humans are capable of (which distinguishes humans from animals). 6 hours sleep maximum is recommended. The author currently sleeps 4 hours per night and could even reduce that to 2 hours of sleep (by further spiritual advancement). The author has been strictly vegetarian from the 26th May 2019 (and now finds the smell of meat off putting). The cost of meat is very expensive and all vegetarian food is kosher/halal. The author spends \$5 a day in total on food and lives very healthily with all the iron and protein that is typically obtained from meat.

<http://strategicgames.com.au/article77.pdf>

Essentially, you can sleep during the daytime on the grass at Macquarie University (maybe with a yoga mat for extra padding) and Macquarie campus has a lot of quiet space with well-maintained grass (particularly near the lake). However, where do you go at night time? Macquarie University library is open 7am-1am Mon-Fri, 9am-1am Sat and Sun. If the library was open 24/7 (all year round) then one could study effectively at Macquarie University without accommodation – however it would be unlikely that the university would agree to this. Also, one has to advance spiritually in order to function effectively on say 2-4 hours sleep per day. The author could teach students this knowledge (from the Bhagavad Gita As It Is).

Other Essentials

Mobile phone plans are expensive and unnecessary. Students could be spending up to \$60/month on data with unlimited calls/text messaging. A reasonable phone costs around \$200 and through Telstra, \$60/year prepaid enables you to send text messages and the occasional phone call. Skype and Messenger can be used for phone calls and Macquarie Centre/University offer free Wi-Fi. A reasonable TV tuner for a laptop costs around \$50 and there are multiple TV screens available at the university bar. For the social dynamic there are many clubs available at Macquarie university catering for many religions, political groups, cultural backgrounds and hobbies. The university bar has many weekly activities including bingo and trivia, and some clubs participate in these activities as a group. Daily exercise is important. Although there is a gym on campus and relatively cheap for students is still charges as of 2019, \$710 per year membership. Walking is just as effective for exercise and there is a nearby Lane Cove National Park bordering on Macquarie University.

The Venture Café at 58 Waterloo Rd (short walk from the main university campus) is open every Thursday 3-8pm, available to students and offers free food and drinks. Venture Cafe

Sydney is the eighth and newest member of a Venture Cafe Global network founded in 2009 by the Cambridge Innovation Center (CIC) in Boston, USA. Championed by Macquarie University and Venture Cafe Sydney founding partners include; City of Ryde, EY, Konica Minolta, NAB, NSW Department of Industry, ORIX, Stockland and Visionary Group. Our goal is to build an innovation community and to accelerate innovation within the regional ecosystem. The foundation does that by offering programming and connections that build relationships between students, startups, entrepreneurs, corporates, investors and other organisations.

<https://venturecafesydney.org/>

As previously mentioned, travelling on a Sunday is a fixed all-day rate on trains and buses at \$2.70. Students could travel to the spectator beaches of Sydney such as Bondi Beach and Manly. There is also the Hare Krishna Temple in North Sydney (ten-minute walk from North Sydney station) which offers free spiritualized vegetarian food, Arati and Kirtan (chanting of sacred mantras to sound vibration) and talks on the Bhagavad Gita As It Is. It also gives students the opportunity to speak with Bhakti Yoga monks and possibly bone fide spiritual masters as a form of spiritual counselling (which is an effective method to prevent and resolve mental health disorders including depression and anxiety, and students could advance spiritually). Also, students can access Krishna Consciousness books freely written by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (in disciplic succession from Lord Krishna) and a copy of the Bhagavad Gita As It Is (for a cost of \$10).

<https://www.iskcon.com.au/home>

There is another Hare Krishna Temple currently under construction located at 217 Windsor Road, Vineyard NSW expected for completion by 2022 and currently takes about 1.5 hours by public transport from Macquarie Centre.

If someone could actually get a degree by studying effectively and live healthily by simply living at Macquarie University without accommodation would be quite remarkable, however it would require the university library to be open 24/7.