



**McLAUGHLIN
LIBRARY**

Cyclical Program Review Library Report: Economics & Finance

- BA Economics
- BCOMM Management Economics & Finance
- BA Mathematical Economics
- BCOMM Public Management
- MA, PhD Economics

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Summary

The library provides **strong** support for University of Guelph's Economics & Finance programs.

Recommendations

- Consider including some information literacy support to students in the first year course, ECON*1050. At the graduate level, consider a library orientation for entering graduate students. This orientation could include many library services including research, writing, learning, data, and publishing support. In our experience, building in academic skills support at the curriculum level is most effective for students.
- Consider incorporating writing skills workshops in core courses with a major writing component. More Economics and Finance students could be referred to writing consultations for support with writing in their discipline.
- Consider collaborating with the library to develop a workshop or information guide on sharing and preserving secondary and tertiary data and their derivatives to benefit student researchers and faculty.

Part 1: Collections

Journals

The library invests heavily in online journal subscriptions that support the University of Guelph curriculum. Currently, the library subscribes to approximately 55,000 online journals, most of which are discoverable at the article level through the library's central academic search tool, Omni. The library subscribes to nearly complete collections of journals from major scholarly publishers, including Springer, Elsevier, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, SAGE, Oxford University Press, and Cambridge University Press. In the areas of economics and finance, the library subscribes to the publications of the American Economic Association, the University of Chicago Press, and the Academy of Management.

Data from Clarivate's *Journal Citation Reports* (JCR) database (2019) demonstrate the library's coverage of the literature for economics and finance by subject category:

Agricultural Economics & Policy: 17/17 of the top journals

Business: 23/25 of the top journals

Economics: 30/30 of the top journals

Finance: 30/30 of the top journals.

Books and E-books

The library offers a broad collection of books and e-books in many disciplines. We compared the University of Guelph's monograph coverage to Queen's University, a peer institution as identified by the U of G's Department of Economics and Finance. Title counts were collected from both institutions' library catalogues for core subject areas (e.g., Finance – Canada, International Trade, Macroeconomics, etc.). The analysis shows similar coverage at the two institutions.

Highlights from the economics and finance collections include the following:

- The library maintains up-to-date access to all monograph output from all Canadian University Presses (University of Toronto Press, McGill–Queen's University Press, etc.), entirely as e-books. This provides important coverage of the Canadian scholarly record

and is especially important in providing access to Canadian research in the fields of economic history, commercial policy analysis, and general business books.

- In 2020, the library secured access to Springer's *Business & Management* e-book collection (approximately 1,200 new titles), to ensure robust access to online book content even during the uncertainty of library access during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The library maintains front-list e-book access to subject collections from academic and trade publishers with strengths in economics and business, including Edward Elgar, Emerald Publishing, and Business Experts Press.

Search Tools to Access the Literature

Omni is the library's core academic search tool which lets users simultaneously search the University of Guelph library collections plus the library collections of most of the other university libraries in Ontario. Omni facilitates access to full-text books, articles, streaming media, and much more by linking to library subscriptions and open access scholarly works.

Additionally, access to the broad literature in economics and finance is best achieved through a systematic search of the many indexes and full-text databases to which the library purchases access, including:

Scholarly Research

- EconLit
- Web of Science
- ABI/INFORM
- Business Source Complete
- CABI

Financial data and business news

- Factiva
- Canadian Business & Current Affairs
- Canadian Newsstream
- CFMRC TSX Database
- Mergent Online
- Conference Board of Canada
- Canadian Census Analyzer
- CANSIM
- EIU.com
- Hoover's Company Records
- IMF eLibrary (International Monetary Fund eLibrary)
- Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research
- NBER Working Papers
- Odesi
- UNWTO Elibrary

Curriculum Resources

The E-Learning & Reserves unit makes resources readily available to students with integrated links in the course management platform, CourseLink, and with access points in Omni. Where possible, course reserves resources are made available online.

To ensure that all students have access to required textbooks for their courses, the library purchases at least one copy of the required textbook for most undergraduate courses via the Course Reserve service. Instructors are notified via email when the required textbook(s) for courses they are teaching have been placed on reserve and are available for students to use.

This program is an initiative of the Open and Affordable Course Content Task Force (OACC). Over the past three years, the library has made 748 course readings available to students enrolled in economics courses and invested a total of \$8,408.72 into these collections through textbook purchases and copyright permissions fees.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the E-Learning & Reserves unit has undertaken significant efforts to ensure that students continue to have affordable access to their course readings, even if they aren't able to access the in-library course reserves collection. This team has worked with library colleagues, faculty instructors, and publisher partners to find new access models or alternative course materials that ensure students can access their readings even if they can't access the library.

Other Library Resources

The library has worked closely with the Department of Economics and Finance to ensure access to the financial data products required for teaching and graduate research. The library and the department have shared costs, support, and resource access points. In recent years, the library has expanded access to financial data through a subscription to the Eikon data product and facilitated a shift to online-only models of access during the COVID-19 pandemic. The library provides funding or in-library workstations and support for the following tools:

- Bloomberg
- Eikon, which includes access to:
 - Datastream
 - I/B/E/S
 - ESG data

This complements the department-funded access to several WRDS datasets, for which the library also provides training support to students via the Data Resource Centre (further discussed below under Scholarship and Data Services).

In spring 2021, the library will be working with the Department of Economics and Finance to investigate improved access to the Eikon suite of data products, which include Datastream, ESG and IBES datasets. There may be a possibility of gaining web-based access to these research resources via the WRDS platform. This would be a major improvement over our current access model of 3 licenses/seats. However, the cost of this web-based access may be considerably more, so improved funding models must be explored between the two departments to ensure stable, sustainable access to these important resources.

Part 2: Academic and Professional Skills

Research & Information Literacy Skills

Information Literacy (IL) librarians support students by providing:

- Individual appointments.
- In-class guest lectures.
- Co-curricular workshops such as Dissertation Boot Camp and Brain Food for thesis management.
- Customized digital learning objects, such as online course guides.

The IL team takes a broad view of research skills and provides instruction and support on:

- developing a research question

- doing preliminary research or researching around a topic
- search and retrieval of scholarly and non-scholarly sources, such as data, company information, and market and industry reports
- knowledge synthesis projects, such as literature, systematic or scoping reviews
- evaluating information for bias, authority, reliability, and other indicators of suitability.

The IL team prioritizes support to large required and core courses that have research skills or digital media literacy assignments. IL librarians aim to scaffold information literacy instruction throughout the curriculum to provide students with the opportunity to build on their skills year over year.

Over the past few years, there has been very little uptake for information literacy and research skills support in the Economics & Finance undergraduate or graduate programs, with the exception of consistent research support to students in ECON*2720. We think it would benefit students to include even a brief overview of information literacy support to students in their first year via ECON*1050. This overview could be a short in-class visit from a librarian, and/or information about information literacy support in the course outline or on the course website. At the graduate level, we could offer a library orientation for entering graduate students. This orientation could broadly include research, writing, learning, data, and publishing support.

Writing Services

Writing specialists support students by providing:

- Individual writing appointments.
- In-class guest lectures.
- Curricular support and resources for instructors and graduate student supervisors.
- Co-curricular programming such as Dissertation Boot Camp, Brain Food for thesis management, Writing Tune-Up for grammar, and Academic Writing Style.
- Academic integrity support through Academic Integrity at the University of Guelph www.academicintegrity.uoguelph.ca and by helping students understand and prevent academic misconduct.

Writing Services saw between 130-400 Lang School students per year for individual appointments. Of these, there were fewer than six students per year from each of the Economics & Finance programs under review. There was one exception in 2018-2019 when we saw 30 students from the BCOMM Management, Economics and Finance for writing appointments. More Economics and Finance students could be referred to writing consultations for support with writing in their discipline

In-class guest lectures

Year	Course	# sessions	# students
2017-2018	MGMT* 3020	1	160
2017-2018	MCS* 3600	2	90
2018-2019	MGMT* 4050/60	1	50
2018-2019	MGMT* 4060	1	40

From Summer 2019 to Winter 2020, Writing Services received no requests from instructors for in-class workshops for Economics and Finance. Students could benefit from in-class workshops on writing skills in core courses with a major writing component.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

English language programming supports students to develop skills in English communication, pronunciation, presentation, reading, and writing skills. Support is offered through:

- Individual appointments.
- Co-curricular workshops and short courses such as EAL Graduate Writing Camp, Pronunciation Groups, Talk like an Academic, and Write like an Academic.
- Curricular support and resources for instructors and graduate student supervisors.

Learning Services

Learning Specialists support students' academic skill development through:

- Individual appointments.
- In-class guest lectures.
- Working with faculty to develop assignments, assessment, and in-class workshops on topics such as working in groups, presentation skills, poster presentations, and exam preparation, and customized student resources (such as an error analysis worksheet for midterms).
- Co-curricular programming such as Brain Food (thesis management), Presentation Boot Camp, and Control Academic Stress.

Learning Services did not provide any in-class lectures to courses in Economics and Finance over the past four years.

Supported Learning Groups

Supported Learning Groups (SLGs) are weekly student-led study groups designed to help undergraduate students taking historically challenging courses to:

- Meet and study with students from their class in a small group format.
- Test their knowledge prior to tests and exams.
- Develop problem-solving strategies, critical thinking, and time management skills.
- Share learning strategies.
- Leave with something tangible to review later.

We have correlated student grades with SLG attendance and found that, on average, students who participated in the SLG program obtained higher final grades in the course and had a lower failure rate.

SLG participation data is gathered for each course but does not collect students' program major. The following tables show how many students in the course attended SLGs, but some of these students may not be in an Economics & Finance program major. Please note that SLGs services were suspended early in the Winter 2020 semester due to COVID-19. SLGs were redesigned for online delivery via CourseLink Virtual Classroom from May 2020 to present.

Student participation in SLG for ECON* 1050

Semester	# total attendance	#unique students participating
Fall 2017	364	155
Winter 2018	77	22
Fall 2018	474	295
Winter 2019	Not offered	Not offered
Fall 2019	415	177
Winter 2020	Not offered	Not offered

Student participation in SLG for ECON* 1100

Semester	# total attendance	#unique students participating
Fall 2017	Not offered	Not offered
Winter 2018	227	57
Fall 2018	Not offered	Not offered
Winter 2019	289	184
Fall 2019	Not offered	Not offered
Winter 2020	276	111

Student participation in SLG for MATH* 1030

Semester	# total attendance	#unique students participating
Fall 2017	Not offered	Not offered
Winter 2018	Not offered	Not offered
Fall 2018	76	29
Winter 2019	27	8
Fall 2019	Not offered	Not offered
Winter 2020	Not offered	Not offered

Student participation in SLG for MATH* 1080

Semester	# total attendance	#unique students participating
Fall 2017	808	434
Winter 2018	93	24
Fall 2018	539	286
Winter 2019	116	41
Fall 2019	526	190
Winter 2020	37	14

Student participation in SLG for STAT* 2040

Semester	# total attendance	#unique students participating
Fall 2017	161	69
Winter 2018	442	105
Fall 2018	219	58
Winter 2019	182	71
Fall 2019	323	99
Winter 2020	84	34

Scholarship and Data Services

The Research & Scholarship (R&S) team provides support for students' data and research activities, especially at the senior undergraduate and graduate levels, through:

- Individual appointments.
- In-class guest lectures.
- Co-curricular programming such the Data Skills Workshop Series, the Scholarly Communications Workshop Series, workshops on acquiring, analyzing, and visualizing data, using research software, cleaning, coding, depositing data into Dataverse, and data management plans.
- Customized digital learning objects such as instruction sheets, videos, and tutorials.
- The library's Data Resource Centre which provides access to statistical data resources and software and specialist support for the use of GIS data, statistical software, and survey software.
- The library has installed ArcGIS, Excel, R, SPSS, SAS, and Matlab on all library workstations.
- Administration of the University's institutional repositories:
 - The Atrium for institutional open access research.
 - Dataverse for research data from all disciplines created by researchers at the University of Guelph.
 - The Agri-Environmental Research Data Repository to preserve and provide access to agricultural and environmental data produced during University of Guelph research projects.

In-class guest lectures in 2019-2020

Course	# students
ECON*3660	45
ECON*3740	45
ECON*6820	15

Although we do not collect program level data about students in our one-on-one consultations, most are graduate students with a large proportion of those students seeking statistical support, data analysis, data cleaning and visualization services.

In many cases, the data used in Economics and Finance scholarly work comes from secondary or tertiary sources. Researchers may not be able to share or preserve these data or any derivatives of these data through the U of G Research Data Repositories depending on the data use agreements or contracts. The library would like to engage with Economics & Finance instructors to develop a workshop or information guide on sharing and preserving secondary and tertiary data and their derivatives to benefit student researchers and faculty.

Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD)

The University of Guelph Institutional Repository, the Atrium, houses University of Guelph student theses and dissertations.

Economics & Finance theses and dissertations added to the Atrium (2019-2020):
2 graduate theses/dissertations