

# **UEC** Newsletter

Undergraduate Economics Council | Volume 1, Issue 3 | Jan. 1 - Jan. 31, 2021

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BUILT IN RWANDA
TO ACHIEVE SOCIAL
DISTANCING

UK Economy 'to Get Worse Before It
Gets Better'
Japan Aims tor Greater Engagement in
Latin America
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# 2021: A New Chapter?







Cover Prepared by: Nina Zi Wei Low

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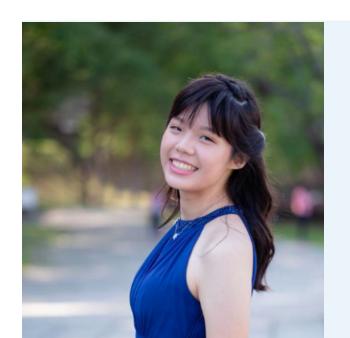












# A NOTE FROM OUR CO-EDITOR: NINA ZI WEI LOW

As part of UEC's mission to improve students' knowledge in fields relating to economic research, policy-making, and the financial industry, the UEC Newsletter aims to help UTM economic students to become well-informed global citizens. As a university student, being aware and knowledgeable of the world around you allows you to engage with well-respected conversations and make better-informed decisions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many countries into a new normal. In this January issue, we will be focusing on the recovery and building economic costs of the ongoing pandemic. Countries that weren't able to take the proper precautions are left with massive health and economic tolls. Seeing that the pandemic has raged on for nearly a year, governments and organizations are taking action to minimize this new normal's adverse impacts.

We hope you enjoy this issue. Keep reading and exploring!

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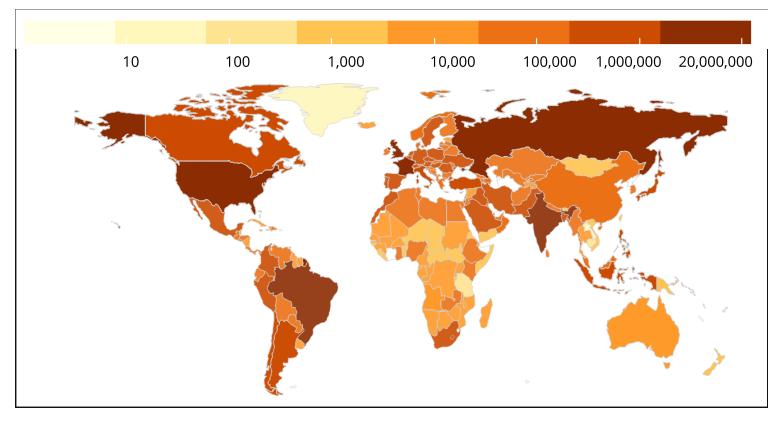
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# **COVID-19 Cases Updates**

### **Cumulative Cases Over Time Globally**

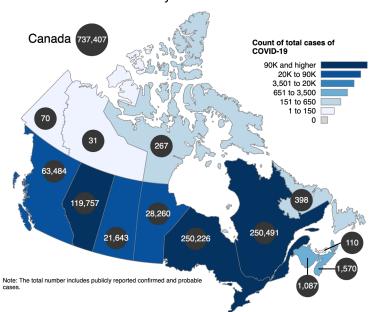
Source: John Hopkins University

Visualizing cumulative cases demonstrates the overall toll of coronavirus for each country as of January 23, 2021. The United States, Brazil, and India have particularly high rates of coronavirus cases in the millions.



#### **Domestic COVID-19 Cases**

Source: Government of Canada



The information is current as of January 23, 2021. For the most up to date data for any province, city, or territory, please visit their website.

Number of People Tested 16,996,450		Deaths 18,828
Total Cases <b>737,407</b>	Active Cases <b>65,750</b>	Recovered <b>652,829</b>

Global News: Domestic



## **Leading Experts Weigh In On Growing Canada's Economy In 2021**

Source: Forbes

The Covid-19 pandemic and the and employment figures. In emergence of the second wave December, Canada's Fall Economic have significantly impacted the economy. December, the OECD published its latest economic update that contracting by 5.4% in 2020 worse than the United States, which saw a 3.7% reduction in economic growth. The OECD forecasts that Canada's economy will grow by 3.5% in 2021 and perform better than the United States, which is expected to see a 3.2% growth next year. However, despite the positive recovery signals, the fallout from the Covid-19 crisis has negatively impacted Canada's fiscal balance

Statement 2020 reported that the Last federal government's deficit is expected to reach C\$381.6 billion in 2020-21 — the largest deficit in economy dollar terms on record — with the federal debt-to-GDP ratio rising from 31.2% in 2019-20 to 50.7% in 2020-21.

> Meanwhile, Statistics Canada's latest monthly update shows the unemployment rate steadily declining to 8.5% in November 2020, down from a peak of 13.7% in May 2020 — but comparatively, Canada's current unemployment rate still lags behind the OECD and G7 averages that stand at 7.1% and 6.1%, respectively.

As part of the economic recovery, Canada introduced has programmes to support individuals, families businesses facing hardship due to the Covid-19 downturn. The economic recovery measures have helped shore up short-term stability. However, given continued uncertainty structural economic changes caused by Covid-19, leading experts are recommending that the government continue to support small businesses to adopt new technologies, help upskill the workforce, and promote a green recovery by enabling cleantech companies to scale up.

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# Recession in Poland one of shallowest in Europe - MinFin

Source: The First News

- The Polish economy will have one of the "shallowest" recessions in Europe, the finance minister has claimed.
- In an interview for PAP, Tadeusz Kościński said that the relative strength of the public exchequer has helped the economy, and that Poland will soon get access to new EU funding.
- "Despite significant support for the economy, public finances are in relatively good shape, and our recession will be one of the shallowest in Europe," said the minister.
- According to the European Commission, the economies of the EU members will shrink, on average, by -7.4 percent, which is almost twice as much as in Poland, where it is expected to fall by -3.6 percent.
- The Polish government has so far allocated over PLN 212 billion (EUR 44.76 billion) for the protection of jobs and the economy, and a further PLN 100 billion (EUR 22.06 billion) has been added to a "financial shield" designed to protect firms from the worst of the recession, said Kościński.



# UK economy 'to get worse before it gets better'

Source: BBC

- The UK economy will "get worse before it gets better" as the country battles the pandemic, Chancellor Rishi Sunak has warned.
- The chancellor told MPs the new national restrictions were necessary to control the spread of coronavirus.
- However, he said they would have a further significant
   economic impact.
- "Even with the significant economic support we've provided, over 800,000 people have lost their job since February," he said.
- "Sadly, we have not and will not be able to save every job and every business.

- "But I am confident that our economic plan is supporting the finances of millions of people and businesses."
- The chancellor said "the road ahead will be tough", but maintained that the government was "taking the difficult but right long-term decisions for our country".
- He said that fiscal stimulus provided so far amounted to more than £280bn, while 1.2 million employers had furloughed almost 10 million employees.

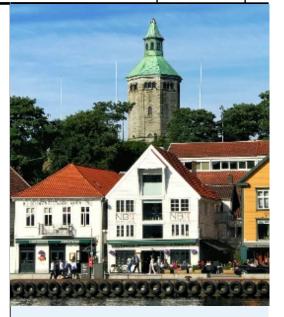
Global News: Europe

# Switzerland's economy forecast to recover 'from summer onwards'

*Source: The Local (Switzerland Newspaper)* 

- In November 2020, Switzerland's Federal Statistical Office indicated a downward trend for 2021.
- But economist Eric Scheidegger predicts a strong boom for this year, even though some sectors of the economy are still suffering the consequences of the health crisis.
- "We expect a strong recovery from the summer onwards", Scheidegger, who is head of the Economic Policy at State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), told NZZ newspaper on Sunday.

- "Switzerland could achieve growth of around 4 percent in both 2021 and 2022", he added.
- Even though Switzerland lost about 72 billion francs during the pandemic, the country still fared better than its neighbours, Scheidegger pointed out.
- Swiss economy dwindled 3 percent in 2020, while Germany and Austria shrunk by 6 percent, and France and Italy by 9 percent.

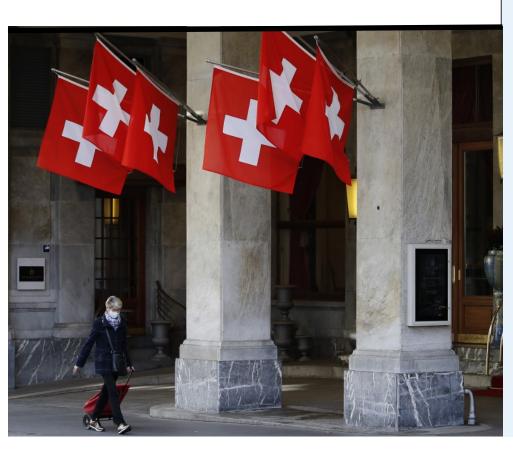


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# Norway's housing market improving

Source: Global Property Guide

- Nationwide house prices up 2.89% during the year to Q3 2020
- After a lacklustre performance in the past three years, Norway's housing market growth is now gathering pace. The inflation-adjusted nationwide house price index rose by 2.89% in Q3 2020 from a year earlier, an improvement from a y-o-y growth of 0.69% in Q3 2019 and its best performance since Q2 2017. Quarter-on-quarter, house prices rose slightly by 0.62% in Q3 2020.
- The housing market's slower growth in recent years can be partly attributed to the implementation of stricter mortgage rules on January 1, 2017, which were focused on restraining house prices in Oslo.



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## Maradona's goals and Argentina's economic instability

Source: Mint

The demise of Diego Maradona last month incidentally brought to the fore the topic of monetary policy in Argentina. The governor of Bank of England in 2005, Mervyn King, in a lecture staunchly supporting inflation targeting, had used Maradona's (invisible) 'Hand of God' goal, and his unexpected tactics in his second goal in Argentina's spectacular 1986 win against England, to elucidate concepts related to inflation expectations. Lord Mervyn King's comments were alluded to in newspaper editorials, and in Mint too, last month.

Since India embarked upon inflation targeting in 2016, it is worthwhile to follow the twists and turns in Argentina's economy over decades, and draw vital lessons from it. Argentina, an economic powerhouse and huge agricultural exporter prior to World War II, was known for its elegant café culture. Buenos Aires before World War II was often compared to Paris.

#### Still-Contained Inflation in U.S. remains below goal of Federal Reserve policy make ■ Change in consumer-price index (YoY) -2.50



## **U.S. Economy in Spotlight Amid Optimism on More Aid: Eco** Week

Source: Bloomberg

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome enough. Still, Fed Vice Chair Powell, who speaks Thursday, is Richard Clarida said Friday he in the spotlight as optimism over doesn't expect the central bank additional pandemic aid lifts to begin tapering its asset hopes for the economy later this purchases in 2021. year. Officials have signaled interest rates will stay near zero through at least 2023 and vowed to keep buying bonds at a pace of \$120 billion a month until "substantial further progress" is seen toward their employment and inflation goals. Exactly how long that takes is not spelled out, though a few policy makers, including Chicago Fed President Charles Evans and Atlanta's Raphael Bostic, said last week they might support reducing the pace of buying by year-end if the economy bounces back strongly

A government report at the end of the week is expected to show increased Covid-19 infection rates continued to take a bite out of retail sales. Economist project a third straight decline in purchases at retailers excluding motor vehicle dealers.

**UEC** Newsletter | 6 Global News: Americas



Source: The Diplomat

Japan's outreach to the region comes amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which seemed to affect China's global image to a certain extent as Wuhan, China was the original epicenter of the outbreak. However, Beijing strategized its international image rehabilitation through medical diplomacy, infrastructure technological investments, advancement, and vaccine trials several nations. China's outreach to the region has been done on a much larger scale and more coherently than Japan's. Tokyo provided 20 Latin with \$73 American nations worth of medical million equipment, \$8 million for

medical capacity building through institutions like Fondo Fiduciario de Japón, a special fund of the Inter-American Development Bank, and a \$2.7 million contribution to the Pan American Health Organization.

China has emerged as an alternate source of financial and infrastructural support in the region, with Beijing providing over \$140 billion loans in the past 15 years to Latin American states and China-Latin America trade estimated to be \$500 billion in the next five years. Support for the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative in Latin America with 19 nations in the region signing on — is viewed with

concern by the United States, which sees the region as its own strategic backyard. Despite that, the Trump administration never put together a comprehensive and coherent Latin America policy, even as the region drew increasing Chinese investments in key infrastructure projects.

Global News: Africa



Source: The East African

- On December 21, when President Kagame presented the 2020 State of the Nation address, it was with a more sombre tone.
- This year, he warned against complacency, saying that the sacrifices and gains made amidst the coronavirus pandemic need to be viewed with cautious optimism.
- He noted some important government achievements in 2020, including the construction of over 22,000 the classrooms across country, which enabled to restart while schools social-distancing observing measures.

- Agricultural productivity maintained a good pace regardless of the pandemic, and more than \$400 million was earned from agricultural exports.
- From the country's reserves, over 5,000 tonnes of food were distributed to impoverished families during the total lockdown.
- Also, about 500 post-harvest facilities were built across the country to help reduce farm losses.
- Some 200,000 new households were connected to electricity, and "soon all sectors in the country will have access", the president promised.

- In the health sector, the government built three new hospitals, established emergency heart treatment facility, and acquired a new MRI machine.
- The national referral hospital, King Faisal Hospital, is also undergoing significant upgrading at a cost of about \$20 million.
- "We have also invested a lot of resources in upgrading King Faisal Hospital, looking for doctors with skills in treating different kinds of illnesses, and having highly knowledgeable personnel. We were able to find some but we are also still looking for others.

Global News: Asia and Oceania

- Those illnesses and diseases that are hard to treat will be amongst those treated at King Faisal. We will also have the capacity to help treat our fellow East Africans who will be able to come in Rwanda instead of travelling to other nations far away, which is very expensive," President Kagame said.
- His biggest frustration was with regional neighbours and cross-border trade.
- · Efforts to improve bilateral ties with Uganda, and Burundi are still not fruitful due to lingering disagreements over espionage and support to rebels.
- Rwanda's borders with Uganda have been closed to travellers for two years: Ugandan goods have also not been allowed to cross into Rwanda.
- Borders with Burundi have also been inactive for over five years, with mushrooming rebel activities affecting border communities in both countries.





## Why Africa's animation scene is booming

Source: BBC

- Despite the scarcity of formal training opportunities, locally-made productions are already starting to take off.
- Chris Morgan of Fundi Films was able to draw on a pan-African talent pool for his recent production, My Better World.
- The educational series aimed at African schoolchildren and young teenagers involved a team of creatives working remotely across the continent.
- "We had over 100 producers working in seven different countries, and this was pre-Covid," he says, speaking from Mpumalanga, South Africa.
- The end result is a series made up of 55 short animated films that are available in English, Swahili, Hausa and Somali.

Covid boosts demand-"There is an incredible demand for animated content right now. This was true even before the pandemic because the streaming networks are really hungry for new content; and animation is a great way to get viewers from all different audiences," he says.



Source: The Jakarta Post

- Indonesia's gross domestic product (GDP) may grow 3 percent next year, driven by a gradual improvement in household spending and loan growth as well as the availability of a coronavirus vaccine, Institute for Development of Economics and Finance (Indef) executive director Tauhid Ahmad said during a virtual discussion on Monday.
- "The pandemic is expected to continue holding up middle class spending and will still haunt household spending [next year]," he told the discussion.
- "We project credit growth to reach 6 percent, below the 11 percent growth [common] in normal times, as economic activity will remain subdued."

 "As vaccines may only become available in the second half of 2021, COVID-19 will continue to slow the economic recovery," Tauhid went on to say. "Extraordinary government efforts will be needed to curb the virus spread."

unemployment to remain high

- Indonesia plunged recession for the first time in two decades as the economy shrank 3.49 percent year-on-year (yoy) in the third quarter after plunging 5.32 percent yoy in the second quarter. Household spending and investment, which together account for more than 88 percent of GDP, fell by 4.04 percent and 6.48 percent yoy, respectively, in the third quarter.
- As the outbreak disrupts business activity, 2.67 million people have lost their jobs,

according to Statistics Indonesia (BPS), bringing the unemployment rate to 7.07 percent in August, the highest level since 2011. Meanwhile, around 1.63 million Indonesians fell into poverty in March, raising the poverty rate to 9.78 percent or 26.4 million people from 9.22 percent in September last year, with more people expected to fall into poverty.

Global News: Asia and Oceania

# India set to expand ties with Taiwan; focus on trade and investments, says envoy

Source: The Economic Times

- India has signalled widening of ties with Taiwan amid the ongoing border crisis with China with its envoy indicating expanding scope of trade and investments ties and people-to-people contacts.
- "India presents opportunities for sustained Taiwanese growth to investors, who in turn can impart their world-renowned manufacturing skills and know-how necessary for India's rapid transformation," Gourangalal director-general of the India Taipei Association or embassy, told Taiwan's Central News Agency.
- India was Taiwan's 17th largest trading partner and Taiwan India's 31st largest trading partner in 2020.
- Though nearly 3,000 Indian students are pursuing Masters and PhD programs in Taiwan, they represent only a section of the more than 750,000 Indian students seeking higher education globally, Das pointed out.
- The 10,000 Taiwanese tourists visiting India annually represent only a small proportion of the over 15 million outbound trips a year by Taiwan's leisure travellers

### China Finishes Off a Wild Year With More Manufacturing Growth

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Source: Wall Street Journal

Beijing's official gauge of factory activity finished the year at 51.9, in line with expectations and remaining above the 50 mark that separates expansion from contraction, extending a streak that dates back to March. The reading was slightly lower than November's 52.1 reading.Beijing's official gauge of factory activity finished the year at 51.9, in line with expectations and remaining above the 50 mark that separates expansion from contraction, extending a streak that dates back to March. The reading was slightly lower than November's 52.1 reading.

The Chinese economy also showed strength outside its factories. China's non-manufacturing PMI, which covers services like retail, aviation and software as well as the real estate and construction sectors, came in at 55.7 in December, the National Bureau of Statistics said Thursday. Though that reading was down from 56.4 in November, it marked a 10th month of expansion and remains near the highest levels in more than a decade.



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## Australia's economy is set to boom in 2021 as average income earners receive \$2160 in early tax cuts

Source: Daily Mail

- Tax cuts were due in July 2022 were backdated to July 2020 in October budget
- AMP Capital chief economist Shane Oliver said economy would to boost in 2021
- Retail sales in November surged by 7.1 per cent as Melbourne's lockdown ended(Top three pointers) Australia's economy expected to bounce back from the Covid recession in 2021 as generous tax cuts of \$2,160 for average-income earners are brought forward.
- AMP Capital chief economist Shane Oliver said the backdating of tax relief to July last year, from July 2022, was set to help boost consumer spending as borrowers had more left over after paying down their mortgage.
- 'As people use it to pay down their mortgage faster it helps reduce the risk of debt servicing problems,' he told Daily Mail Australia on Monday.



## **New Zealand jobs market** bounces back close to pre-pandemic levels

Source: The Guardian

Job vacancies are booming in New Zealand stands by 'travel New Zealand since the country bubble' plan despite Covid contained an outbreak of the outbreaks in Australia coronavirus with a hard lockdown in early 2020.

The country's biggest job advertising site, Seek, has reported a 19% national growth in jobs advertised in the final quarter of 2020, and the number of job ads on the website has bounced back to nearly pre-pandemic levels.

The sectors posting the most vacancies included IT communications, manufacturing, transport & logistics and trades & services. Jobs in customer-facing roles have taken the hardest hit.

The news follows a surprise economic recovery for the country, with finance minister Grant Robertson in December reporting the economy grew 14% in the third quarter of 2020. "The economic bounce back is a result of our decision to go hard and early during the Covid-19 pandemic," Robertson said at the time, referring to the seven-week lockdown that began in March.

Financial News

### **Canadian Stock** Market Mar 2020 - Jan 2021

Source: Microsoft News

Data from Jan. 23, 2021

For those interested in more in-depth analysis, please check:

https://www.msn.com/en-ca/ money/markets



### Malaysian stocks, currency fall as country declares state of emergency to curb surging **Covid cases**

Source: CNBC



- Malaysia's stocks and currency fell after the country's king declared a state of emergency that will last until Aug. 1 to curb the spread of Covid-19.
- The U.S. dollar-Malaysian ringgit pair jumped 0.54%, while the benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI Index fell around 1.45% from the previous day. Following the announcement, the U.S. dollar-Malaysian ringgit pair hit a high of 4.072 or around 0.54% higher than the previous close. The currency pair has since traded around 4.061, or 0.27% higher than Monday's close.
- Meanwhile, the benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI Index fell around 1.45% from the previous day.

#### **European markets close lower** as investors focus on U.S. stimulus and virus

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Source: CNBC



- Sweden's Tele2 gained 4.7% after partnering with Finnish giant Nokia on a new 5G core network in Sweden and the Baltics.
- British retailer JD Sports gained 3.8% after a strong trading update.
- Anglo-German travel operator Tui fell 12%, furthering last week's steep losses after announcing a capital raise. Stocks are coming off a solid start 2021 as investors look past a violent siege of the Capitol and focus on the prospect for additional fiscal stimulus after a Democratic sweep of Congress. President-elect Joe Biden pledged Friday a hefty economic stimulus rollout, which he said will be "in the trillions of dollars."



# **FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions**)



Source: UTM Economics Dpt https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/economics/undergraduate-studies/faqs

#### | Can I take a course for "CR/NCR" cannot be used towards program (credit/no credit) for a course in entry; however, there is an my ECO program?

Normally, a "CR/NCR" course Winter 2020 term ONLY. cannot be used towards program Students who choose the "CR/NCR"

| Can I use "CR/NCR" (credit/no requirements. credit) for a course that has a Program entry example: minimum grade requirement for program entry or pre-requisite?

Normally, a "CR/NCR" course

exception to this policy during the

completion; however, there is an option are still required to meet the exception to this policy during the minimum grade requirement for Winter 2020 term ONLY for all program entry or a course undergraduate Y and S courses prerequisite. The "CR" does not (including courses with no final bypass the grade requirement. exams). With the exception, Although there is no numeric grade students can use the "CR/NCR" on the transcript, University staff option for any course(s), and they still have access to the numeric will be counted towards programs. grade and will use it to verify

For the Eco Major program, a minimum grade of 63% is needed in ECO100Y5. Normally students



**UEC Newsletter** 

### **Recap of UEC** Know the **Difference Panel:**

The Student panel, held on the 21st of January hosted accomplished students from their respective programs. Panelists discussed their programs, UTM journey, and personal advices for students in regards to graduate schools and the professional world. Thanks to our engaging audience, the second half of discussion involved panelists answering some intriguing questions posed by the participants and sharing their valuable experiences!

Overall, this hour and a half of the panel was filled with productive discussions. sharing of experiences and genuine advice for all students, that made this event a success!

other two panel discussions: Professor Panel (28th January) and Professional Panel (4th February) are coming up, and we highly recommend you attend them to discover about your programs, learn from accomplished individuals and make lasting connections!

cannot use "CR" for this course if | When can I request program course (not the Department of they request program entry to entry? Economics. However, for Winter 2020, due to the exception, students can still select the "CR/NCR" option for ECO100Y5; the Department of Economics will be verifying numeric Registrar's website: grades for each student, to ensure they meet the minimum 63% grade requirement. Students who do not meet the minimum requirement, regardless of the "CR/NCR" option, | How many students are accepted will not be invited to the Eco Major into Economics programs? program.

Course prerequisite example:

ECO375H5 is ECO220Y5 (70%). For full details on program entry If you are repeating or retaking a Students can still select "CR/NCR" for requirements see the Academic course, it is a good idea to book an ECO220Y5 if they choose, but it does Calendar: not bypass the requirement.

Although there is no numeric grade nomics/undergraduate-studies/pro on the transcript, University staff still grams have access to the numeric grade and will use it to verify requirements.

#### | Can I take a course without the prerequisites, or take it as a co-requisite?

No. Students must meet the minimum of 63% in ECO100Y5. prerequisites and/or co-requisites as There are no exceptions to this listed in the Academic Calendar requirement. If you did not achieve before the first day of the term. The this requirement, you may need to Department of Economics verifies consider pre-requisites in all courses and options. students who do not meet the requisites will be removed.

If you have a specific circumstance and need assistance with developing an academic plan for ECO courses, please contact the Economics Academic Advisor (see below for email).

NOTE: ECO100Y5 has prerequisites

Students can request program entry during Round 1 (spring) or Round 2 (summer). For the schedule and details, see the https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/reg

https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/re gistrar/office-registrar-publication s/program-selection-guide

entry requirements are accepted do not require special permission One of the prerequisites for into Economics Programs.

https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/eco

#### I did not obtain a grade of 63% in ECO100Y5. What are my options now?

In order to continue studies in in second students need to achieve a alternate program

#### | Can I repeat ECO100Y5?

If you completed the ECO100Y5 credit but did not achieve 63% (i.e. achieved 50-62%), then you must request permission to repeat the course, by submitting an online request to the UTM Registrar (Course Enrolment Exception no Form). The Registrar decides which students are eligible to repeat a

Economics). For more information on repeating courses, and Second attempt for credit, see the Registrar's website:

If you did not complete the ECO100Y5 credit (i.e. achieved 0-49%, "NCR" or "LWD"), and you have decided you want to retake the course to attempt to complete the course and achieve 63%, you All students who meet the program can enroll as usual on ACORN. You to enroll in the course.

appointment at the RGASC (Robert



Gillespie Academic Skills Centre), in order to address skills such as study habits, time management, and test writing, before you begin a second enrollment in the same course.

Departmental News

https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/ undergraduate-students

#### | If I take a course at St. George campus, will it count towards my ECO program at UTM?

Courses taken at STG (St. George campus) and UTM will both count towards your ECO program at UTM as long as they are not exclusions (see note below).

ECO100Y5(63%) is equivalent to ECO101H1(63%) ECO102H1(63%). Note: Minimum grade is required in EACH course not an average.

Most 200-level courses are equivalent, including ECO200Y1, ECO220Y1, ECO202Y1 and ECO206Y1, ECO208Y1, and

ECO227Y1.

Note on Exclusions: some UTM courses at the 300/400-level have exclusions with different course numbers at STG, so it is a good idea to check with the Economics Academic Advisor before taking a 300/400 level course at STG.

#### | I have a question that is not answered in the above FAQs. Who can I contact for assistance?

If you have read these FAQs, and still have questions about ECO programs or courses, you can contact the Economics Academic Advisor, Ferzeen Sammy at

ferzeen.sammy@utoronto.ca

# A Guide to Course **Delivery 2020-2021**

For Fall 2020, Economics courses will be delivered either online or using an in-person rotation (i.e. in-person classes mixed with online delivery). For details on what to expect with each delivery mode, view the Registrar's website.

#### **Choosing a Program of Study**



Includes in-depth information, tips, and resources to help guide a more informed decision.

#### **Choosing a MAT Course for Economics**



Provides a background of all introductory MAT courses and other resources.

#### **Guide to Second Year Courses**



Analyzes the different routes to choose from the array of 2nd year courses for economics specialist, economics major, commerce, and management students.

published by:
Undergraduate Economics Council

