

Contemporary Accounting Research **Editor's Report for January 1 to December 31, 2020**

Overview of 2020

Contemporary Accounting Research (CAR) enjoyed continued strong submission volume in 2020, with regular submissions exceeding 450 manuscripts and total submissions (including conference submissions) exceeding 600 manuscripts. We maintained our broad reach in attracting submissions that continue to reflect diversity in topics, methods and author location. We also maintained a highly rigorous and selective review process. A later section of this report provides detailed statistics.

In 2020 the *CAR* conference went virtual for the first time. The also virtual Craft of Accounting Research workshop and PhD and junior faculty consortium furthered *CAR*'s outreach to young Canadian scholars.

In the remainder of this report, I discuss the following topics:

- Personnel & process changes
- External recognition of the journal
- Conferences and meetings
- Manuscript statistics
- Update - 2021 events

Personnel & process changes

Carina Hackett along with Judith Russell of Queen's University continue to manage the back-office functions that keep the peer-review process flowing smoothly. As Managing Editor, Sylvia Siemens oversees accepted manuscripts through the production process up to compilation of each issue.

During 2020, we continued to work on improving our systems and procedures to maintain high standards of academic integrity, and to acknowledge reviewers and editors for their support of the journal. Please see the section "Update – 2021 events" for details.

COVID-19

From late-March to December 2020, in response to COVID-19, we temporarily extended reviewer deadlines from 30 to 45 days. We also extended author deadlines by 90 days for revisions due before July 1, 2020, and extended the suggested time for Editors to issue decisions by two weeks. Follow-up on manuscripts during this time was also extended. In addition, the *CAR* conference submission deadline was moved from April 3 to April 14, and the conference review deadline was extended.

"Bundling" of discussions with the discussed article

In 2018 we began to "bundle" accepted articles from the *CAR* conference with the related discussion. The first bundled discussion appeared in the journal in the second issue of 2019. We are currently reviewing this process with Wiley to ensure it is functioning effectively.

Data Integrity and Code Sharing Policy

Effective May 1, 2020 authors of all new submissions are required to comply with [CAR's data integrity and code sharing policy](#). Details of the policy can be found on CAR's webpage. Our policy is consistent with the practices of other top academic journals in accounting and related disciplines. Overall, we believe that adherence to the requirements of our data integrity and code sharing policy benefit the authors of the research and the accounting research community more generally.

External recognition of the journal

Over the years, *CAR* has earned international recognition as one of the world's top accounting journals. In 2016, *CAR* was one of six accounting journals in the *Financial Times* Research Rank of 50 business journals.¹ *CAR* merited an A* in the 2019 ranking by the Australian Business Deans' Council, and a score of 4 from the UK Chartered Association of Business Schools' *Academic Journal Guide 2018*. Currently, Google Scholar ranks *CAR* fourth among accounting and taxation journals on its h5-index, and h5-median. According to the most recent Impact Factor information (2019), *CAR*'s two-year ISI impact factor is 2.026, and its five-year impact factor is 3.409, both of which are down slightly from 2018.

Conferences and meetings

Craft of Accounting Research workshop

The goal of this annual one-day event, held in conjunction with the CAAA annual meeting, is to enhance the quality of research carried out in Canada. The workshop allows doctoral students and junior faculty members to learn about important aspects of research design and the publication process, in a supportive environment. Participants discuss issues and problems involved in planning and performing research, preparing manuscripts for submission to a journal, and responding to peer-review comments. We offer subsidies to Canadian PhD students, to help defray their costs of attendance.

The 2020 workshop was held virtually on June 4 and July 30. It was organized by *CAR* Editors Alex Edwards and Scott Liao, along with Stephanie Grant (University of Washington), Tim Bauer (University of Waterloo) and Adam Presslee (University of Waterloo). The workshop featured faculty presentations on June 4. On July 30, six students had the opportunity to present and get feedback on their research. The 25 participants included nineteen students and junior faculty members from Canadian colleges and universities, along with six students and junior faculty members from elsewhere in the world.

CAR conference

The journal holds the annual *Contemporary Accounting Research* conference to provide a forum where the global accounting research community can engage and interact, in Canada. The invitation-only conference attracted roughly one-fifth of the total number of new submissions to the journal in 2020.

¹ At the time this report was written we are still awaiting the results of the *FT*'s most recent review of its business journal list, which commenced in late 2020.

We held the 2020 *CAR* conference virtually on November 5th and 6th and thanks to the financial support of CPA Canada, we were able to offer the event without charging a registration fee.

Jeff Pittman and Partha Mohanram shared responsibility as co-editors for the conference with me, including organizing the program, and selecting papers and discussants. The conference attracted 135 submissions (see Table 1 in the Manuscript statistics section), which are peer-reviewed as regular journal submissions. With the aid of Editors' recommendations, Jeff, Partha and I chose six manuscripts that reflected a wide range of topics and methods, in keeping with *CAR* conference tradition. As always, conference sessions consisted of presentations by authors and discussants, followed by an open discussion with attendees. CPA Canada also organized two 45-minute 'perspectives from practice' sessions that were held at the end of each day of the conference; both sessions were well-attended and generated lively discussion. The conference received positive feedback and because of the virtual format we had a record number of registrants. In total 703 individuals registered for the conference including 195 members of the CAAA.

PhD and junior faculty consortium

Each year a consortium precedes the *CAR* Conference. The consortium allows faculty experts to present their ideas and insights about research to Canadian doctoral students and junior faculty members. The main objective is to broaden junior scholars' appreciation and understanding of accounting research with respect to the methods employed and the topics examined.

The 2020 consortium was held October 30, and began with a CPA Canada session hosted by Gord Beal (CPA Canada). This was followed by an open Q&A session with a panel of three successful researchers possessing expertise in different methodological areas: Vishal Baloria (University of Alberta), Chris Chapman (University of Bristol) and Cassandra Estep (Emory University). The final session of the day included brief presentations by four new *CAR* Editors on future research directions in their area of expertise. John Campbell (University of Georgia), Clara Chen (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Ingrid Jeacle (University of Edinburgh) and Phil Lamoreaux (Arizona State University) provided participants with insights regarding recent research trends in their respective fields and identified emerging areas of interest.

In total, 62 doctoral students and junior faculty members attended the 2020 consortium, 39 (63%) of them from Canadian universities. Attendees at the Consortium also participated in the *CAR* conference.

Manuscript statistics

Each year, we present statistics that illustrate *CAR*'s national and international reach, the selectivity of the review process, the timeliness of manuscript processing, and the topical and methodological diversity of submissions.

Canadian mandate and global reach of the journal

Table 1 shows continuing strong submission volume in 2020, with a record number (622) of total submissions. In 2020, 16% of submissions involved a Canadian author, consistent with recent

experience. Another 46% of submissions involved at least one author working outside of Canada and the US.

Table 1: New submissions 2016-2020 by submission type, with annual changes and region of origin

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Regular	487	503	436	413	390
Conference	135	104	121	119	97
TOTAL	622	607	557	532	487
<i>% increase over prior year</i>	2%	9%	5%	9%	-7%
<i>% of Total with a Canadian author</i>	16%	15%	18%	14%	18%
<i>% of Total with an author from outside Canada and the U.S.</i>	46%	44%	39%	40%	44%

Table 2: Publications 2016-2020, with region of origin

	2020**	2019*	2018	2017	2016
Volume	37	36	35	34	33
Pages	2695	2694	2261	2182	1751
Articles, including discussants' comments	86	86	78	74	61
<i>% of articles with a Canadian author</i>	19%	19%	21%	12%	13%
<i>% of articles with an author from outside Canada and U.S.</i>	20%	22%	24%	23%	21%

*In 2019, Wiley began publishing bundled conference articles & discussions with a single DOI. Of the 86 articles published in 2020, there were 9 discussions published as part of bundled articles. One bundled article had two discussions and the rest had one.

***For bundled articles, the manuscript geographic region of origin for the conference paper was used.

The publication information in Table 2 shows an upward trend in the page count and the number of articles through time, consistent with increasing submission volume.

Comparing the regional percentages in Table 2 with those in Table 1 confirms that the journal generally publishes papers by Canadian scholars at rates similar to their submission percent, and those by non-US international authors at rates below their submission percent. Please note that it is misleading to compare publication numbers year-by-year with submission numbers, because papers vary in the time period from initial submission to publication, generally taking from two to three years. Almost no papers are published in the year of submission.

Selectivity

Table 3 reports on first-round decisions, demonstrating *CAR*'s highly selective peer-review process. The "withdraw" decision indicates papers that were not suitable for the journal, either because they did not fit within the journal's Aims and Scope (e.g., lacked 'accounting' content), or because they did not merit reviewers' time (e.g., insufficient care taken by authors in preparing the manuscript). First-round rejections are those where, after peer-review, the Editor determines that the paper does not meet *CAR*'s standards, and is highly unlikely to do so with

revision. Papers are rarely accepted on the first round, so the sum of rejections and withdrawals indicates that about 20% of submitted papers receive a “revise” recommendation in the first round.

Table 3: First-round rejection and withdrawal decisions, as a percent of submissions, 2016-2020

	2020*	2019	2018	2017	2016
First-round rejections	73%	68%	67%	65%	53%
First-round withdrawals	8%	<u>12%</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>11%</u>	<u>26%</u>
Sum of rejections & withdrawals	81%	80%	79%	76%	79%

* The 2020 numbers represent the 620 submissions that had a first-round decision on April 12, 2021, out of 622 total 2020 submissions.

Turnaround time

Turnaround time, reported in Table 4, is the time from an author’s submission until a decision is issued by the Editor. *CAR*’s goal is that 90% of manuscripts should be turned around within 100 days. The 2020 numbers reflect the COVID-19 measures discussed in Personnel & process changes. We continue to closely monitor manuscripts that approach or exceed the 100-day mark, and follow up with Editors and reviewers as needed, in an effort to maintain timeliness without sacrificing the quality of reviewer feedback. The median time to provide an initial decision on a regular submission was 72 days in 2020.

Table 4: Timeliness of first-round feedback to authors, 2016-2020

	2020*	2019	2018	2017	2016
# under 100 days	497	527	488	452	354
Total new ms.s	620	603	557	532	487
% under 100 days	80%	87%	88%	85%	73%
Median turnaround time (days):					
Regular	72	61	60	63	78
Conference	88	76	69	82	83

* The 2020 numbers represent the 620 submissions that had a first-round decision on April 12, 2021, out of 622 total 2020 submissions.

Topics and methods

From its inception, *CAR* has taken pride in being open to all forms of accounting research. It is difficult to convey the breadth of the research we publish in tabular form: many papers use multiple methods or span more than one topic area. In keeping with tradition, Table 5 below summarizes authors’ self-reports of topic areas and methods for 2020 submissions. If an author identified more than one topic or more than one method, Table 5 reports the first topic mentioned.

Table 5: New submissions 2020, by topic area and method

Topic	Audit	Manag'l	Fin'l	Tax	AIS	Other	Row Total	Row %
Method								
Analytical	6	10	13	2	0	1	32	5%
Experimental	28	26	19	4	0	0	77	12%
Empirical/Archival	114	53	274	23	2	12	478	77%
Case/Field Study	12	6	2	1	0	4	25	4%
Other	3	3	3	1	0	0	10	2%
Column Total	163	98	311	31	2	17	622	100%
Column %	26%	16%	50%	5%	0%	3%	100%	

Tables 6 and 7 below summarize the mix (percentages) of topics and methods for new submissions over the past five years. Overall, the mix of methods and topics reflected in new submissions during 2020 is largely consistent with that of the preceding four years.

Table 6: Submission mix by method, 2016-2020

Method	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Analytical	5%	7%	5%	7%	6%
Experimental	12%	11%	14%	14%	12%
Empirical/Archival	77%	76%	73%	74%	75%
Case/Field Study/Other	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%
Other	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 7: Submission mix by topic area, 2016-2020

Topic Area	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Auditing	26%	26%	27%	27%	24%
Managerial	16%	17%	20%	16%	18%
Financial	50%	46%	43%	48%	47%
Taxation	5%	7%	5%	5%	6%
AIS*	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	3%	5%	4%	4%	5%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Rounded down to 0% given the very small number of AIS submissions (e.g., 2 in 2020).

Update - 2021 events

Below I report on a few details from the first months of 2021.

In January 2021, we sent thank you letters to all members of the *CAR* editorial board for their service during 2020. We also launched a new social media strategy in January with Krista Fiolleau leading the development of content for our weekly *Linkedin* and *Twitter* posts.

We also sent an annual update to reviewers in January, continuing the practice of offering a waiver of a future submission fee as a gesture of appreciation to reviewers who provide two prompt reviews. The practice is now supported by a formal process for tracking who has earned a waiver and an expiry policy. Our sustainable fee waiver process will help retain the goodwill of our reviewers, a resource that is critical to the continued success of *CAR*.

During the early part of 2021 we compiled the first of what will be a series of virtual issues featuring recently published *CAR* articles in research areas of broad interest. The first issue focused on corporate governance research. We also held our first virtual (non-conference) event on May 12 focused on methodological issues in qualitative research. These ‘free-of-charge’ events are each being organized by one or more *CAR* Editors with doctoral students and junior faculty as the target audience. Two more events are being planned for 2021.

In closing, I acknowledge and thank all members of *CAR*’s community including authors, reviewers, Editors and staff members, for their continued enthusiastic support of the journal. Together, they create and maintain the strong reputation the journal enjoys. I am particularly grateful for the dedication of my Deputy Editors-in-chief, Partha Mohanram and Jeff Pittman, the team of Editors and reviewers, and Carina Hackett. Their support allowed for a smooth transition as I settled into my duties as EiC during a year which was anything but business as usual!

Sincerely,



Editor-in-chief
Contemporary Accounting Research

13 May 2021