Results of the Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS)

for Goldfinch University

Administration: Sample Report

SAMPLE REPORT

Participating institutions receive a report similar to this one for each of their test administrations. Not all parts of the full report are included here.

Table of Contents

Not included in this sample report

1. THE TEST AND HOW IT IS SCORED

The Test

The Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS) is a knowledge test with multiple-choice questions targeting a variety of information literacy skills. Questions on the SAILS test are based directly on two documents authored by the Association of College and Research Libraries: (1) *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education: Standards, Performance Indicators, and Outcomes;* and (2) *Objectives for Information Literacy Instruction: A Model Statement for Academic Librarians* (see Appendix F). In those documents, each of five information literacy competency standards is expanded to include performance indicators, outcomes, and objectives. The SAILS test questions are derived from the outcomes and objectives.

ACRL Standard 4 is not included in the SAILS test. Some outcomes or objectives from the other standards are not tested because they are either covered by other outcomes or objectives or are not suitable for multiple-choice testing. Project SAILS has taken an additional step and rearranged the outcomes and objectives from the ACRL documents have been into eight skill sets. This report gives detailed results for the eight skill sets and more general results for the four ACRL standards.

The SAILS item bank has 157 items in American English. Each student answers 40 items from the item bank and 5 items that are in development. Appendix D contains all of the test items.

The items span the eight SAILS skill sets and the four ACRL standards targeted by the test. Students respond to different sets of items, with some common items shared across the individual tests. Figure 1.1 shows how many items are in each of the subscales. Appendix E presents the items in each skill set and standard.

Figure 1.1 Number of Items in Each Subscale

SAILS Skill Sets	Number of Items
Developing a Research Strategy	30
Selecting Finding Tools	17
Searching	27
Using Finding Tool Features	13
Retrieving Sources	15
Evaluating Sources	20
Documenting Sources	15
Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues	20

ACRL Standards	Number of Items
Standard 1: Determines the nature and extent of the information needed	37
Standard 2: Accesses needed information effectively and efficiently	73
Standard 3: Evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system	20
Standard 4: NOT USED	0
Standard 5: Understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally	27

Scoring

The measurement model used by SAILS is item response theory (IRT), specifically the one-parameter Rasch model. IRT calculates scores based on a combination of item difficulty and student performance. The process begins with merging data from all institutions into a benchmark file. Student responses to the items on the test are then used to determine the difficulty level of each item. Once that determination is made, student responses are analyzed to determine an average score for each group (or cohort). Scores in the report are placed on a scale that ranges from 0 to 1000.

The report gives results for several groups, including your institution overall, institutions of a similar type, and all institutions combined. Depending on the size of other cohorts and the variability of their responses, additional breakouts may be reported for class standing and majors. If you created any custom questions, breakouts for those may also appear in the report.

2. TEST-TAKER PROFILE

Figure 2.1 is a demographic profile of students who took the SAILS test at Goldfinch University, along with profiles for other institutions of the same type (Doctorate), and for all other institutions combined. The table reports the available demographic data; not all elements of demographic data were reported for all test takers.

Figure 2.1

Characteristics	Goldfinch		Institution Type: Doctorate		All Institutions	
	(n=204)		(n=15,241)		(n=25,296)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Class Standing						
Freshman	187	91.7	7,848	51.5	13,886	54.9
Sophomore	2	1.0	2,847	18.7	4,484	17.7
Junior	1	0.5	2,024	13.3	2,818	11.1
Senior	0	0.0	2,283	15.0	3,335	13.2
Other Year	14	6.9	193	1.3	664	2.6
Not reported	0	0.0	46	0.3	109	0.4
Student Major						
Agriculture/Environmental Studies	0	0.0	351	2.3	380	1.5
Architecture	0	0.0	86	0.6	145	0.6
Business	15	7.4	1,850	12.1	3,404	13.5
Communication/Journalism	0	0.0	740	4.9	994	3.9
Education	12	5.9	952	6.2	1,811	7.2
Engineering & Applied Sciences	26	12.7	1,961	12.9	2,527	10.0
General Studies	0	0.0	8	0.1	16	0.1
Health Sciences	8	3.9	1,255	8.2	1,900	7.5
History	4	2.0	206	1.4	314	1.2
Arts	29	14.2	1,311	8.6	2,795	11.0
Law	0	0.0	115	0.8	378	1.5
Military/Naval Science	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	0.0
Performing & Fine Arts	0	0.0	437	2.9	765	3.0
Science	40	19.6	1,128	7.4	1,508	6.0
Social Work	3	1.5	2,369	15.5	3,009	11.9
Other	22	10.8	1,445	9.5	3,477	13.7
Undecided	44	21.6	968	6.4	1,682	6.6
Not reported	1	0.5	15,182	0.4	184	0.7

	Goldfinch (N=204)	
Custom Demographics	n	%
What is your age range?		
18	152	74.5
19 to 21	36	17.6
22 to 30	12	5.9
31 or over	4	2.0
Have you ever attended a library instruction class at Goldfinch Univ., either this semester or in a previous term?		
Yes	22	10.8
No	182	98.2

3. RESULTS BY SAILS SKILL SETS

Student performance is presented in this section by skill sets, which are regroupings of the ACRL objectives for information literacy instruction. See Appendix F for the full list of the original ACRL standards, performance indicators, outcomes, and objectives.

Figures and text are provided only for skill sets that have enough items and where enough data were collected to allow for analysis on the skill set.

The first part of this section reports findings from across the skill sets, with a Summary of Results followed by Detailed Results in a table. The second part of this section focuses on each of the individual skill sets.

A. Across the Skill Sets

Summary of Results

   Students at Goldfinch University performed about the same as the institution-type benchmark on the following SAILS Skill Sets:

   Using Finding Tool Features

   Students at Goldfinch University performed worse than the institution-type benchmark on the following SAILS Skill Sets:

   Developing a Research Strategy
   Selecting Finding Tools
   Searching
   Retrieving Sources
   Evaluating Sources
   Documenting Sources
   Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues

To identify which skill sets were easier and which were more difficult for Goldfinch University students, below are the skill sets ordered by performance, from best to worst.

   Best   Using Finding Tool Features
           Evaluating Sources
           Developing a Research Strategy
           Documenting Sources
           Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues
           Selecting Finding Tools
           Searching
   Worst   Retrieving Sources

Detailed Results - Data Table

Scores are placed on a scale that ranges from 0 to 1000. In the following table, the average score for each group is reported. Standard errors above and below the score are indicated with ±. The accuracy of the average score calculation is affected by sample size and variability. Small samples or large variability can reduce the accuracy of the score calculation. In those cases, the standard error is larger. (Standard error is the combination of sampling error and measurement error.) Where we are able to measure the score with a high degree of accuracy, the standard error is small.

The true group average score falls between two numbers. Those numbers can be calculated by adding and subtracting the standard error to the reported score. For example, a reported score of 525 with a standard error of ± 5 has a range from 530 to 520. The true group average score falls in the range of 530 to 520.

To determine whether two groups are significantly different from each other, see whether the ranges of scores overlap. Ranges of scores that do overlap are not significantly different from each other; those that do NOT overlap are significantly different.

Figure 3.1 Data Table Showing Overall Scores Across All SAILS Skill Sets

	Goldfinch University	Institution Type: Doctorate	All Institutions
SAILS Skill Sets			
Developing a Research Strategy	580 ±12	604 ±1	598 ±1
Selecting Finding Tools	540 ±13	566 ±2	561 ±1
Searching	539 ±13	559 ±2	551 ±1
Using Finding Tool Features	643 ±20	655 ±3	649 ±2
Retrieving Sources	512 ±20	585 ±3	573 ±2
Evaluating Sources	590 ±13	617 ±2	611 ±1
Documenting Sources	558 ±18	608 ±3	598 ±2
Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues	551 ±12	565 ±1	558 ±1

B. Within Skill Sets

This section reports in detail the performance of Goldfinch University students on the individual SAILS skill sets. For each skill set, the report includes: Summary of Results; Detailed Results - Data Table; Detailed Results - Chart; and ACRL Objectives Measured by the Skill Set.

1. SAILS Skill Set: Developing a Research Strategy

Summary of Results

Goldfinch University Compared to Other Doctorate Institutions, by Demographic Characteristics

   Students at Goldfinch University performed about the same as the institution-type benchmark on this skill set for the following demographic groups:

Class Standing:	Other Year
Major:	Business, Education, Engineering & Applied Sciences, Arts, Science, Other, Undecided

   Students at Goldfinch University performed worse than the institution-type benchmark on this skill set for the following demographic groups:

Class Standing:	Freshman

Demographic Groups within Goldfinch University Compared to the Goldfinch University Overall Performance on This Skill Set

   Within Goldfinch University, the following groups performed about the same as the Goldfinch-average-student benchmark:

Class Standing:	Freshman, Other Year
Major:	Business, Education, Engineering & Applied Sciences, Arts, Science, Other, Undecided

Detailed Results - Data Table

Scores are placed on a scale that ranges from 0 to 1000. In the following table, the average score for each group is reported. Standard errors above and below the score are indicated with ±. The accuracy of the average score calculation is affected by sample size and variability. Small samples or large variability can reduce the accuracy of the score calculation. In those cases, the standard error is larger. (Standard error is the combination of sampling error and measurement error.) Where we are able to measure the score with a high degree of accuracy, the standard error is small.

The true group average score falls between two numbers. Those numbers can be calculated by adding and subtracting the standard error to the reported score. For example, a reported score of 525 with a standard error of ± 5 has a range from 530 to 520. The true group average score falls in the range of 530 to 520.

To determine whether two groups are significantly different from each other, see whether the ranges of scores overlap. Ranges of scores that do overlap are not significantly different from each other; those that do NOT overlap are significantly different.

Figure 3.2 Data Table for Skill Set: Developing a Research Strategy

	Goldfinch University	Institution Type: Doctorate	All Institutions
Overall	580 ±12	604 ±1	598 ±1
Class Standing			
Freshman	579 ±12	596 ±2	591 ±1
Other Year	587 ±38	614 ±14	608 ±7
Majors			
Business	586 ±53	593 ±4	587 ±3
Education	555 ±56	607 ±5	597 ±4
Engineering & Applied Sciences	572 ±35	601 ±4	596 ±3
Arts	592 ±26	613 ±5	598 ±3
Science	600 ±32	613 ±5	610 ±4
Other	574 ±27	598 ±4	594 ±3
Undecided	575 ±21	594 ±5	600 ±4

CUSTOM DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONS

What is your age range?	
18	581 ±14
19 to 21	578 ±27
22 to 30	571 ±55
31 or over	Insufficient data
Have you ever attended a library instruction class at Goldfinch Univ., either this semester or in a previous term?	
Yes	581 ±37
No	580 ±13

Detailed Results - Chart

The chart on the following pages compare the average student performance at your institution to the average for your institution type, and the average for all institutions.

Charts may also include indicators of performance by class standing, major, and custom demographics.

On the left side of each chart (the vertical axis), the scale ranges from 0 to 1000. Average scores for each group (cohort) are shown on the chart. Use the color key to identify each group.
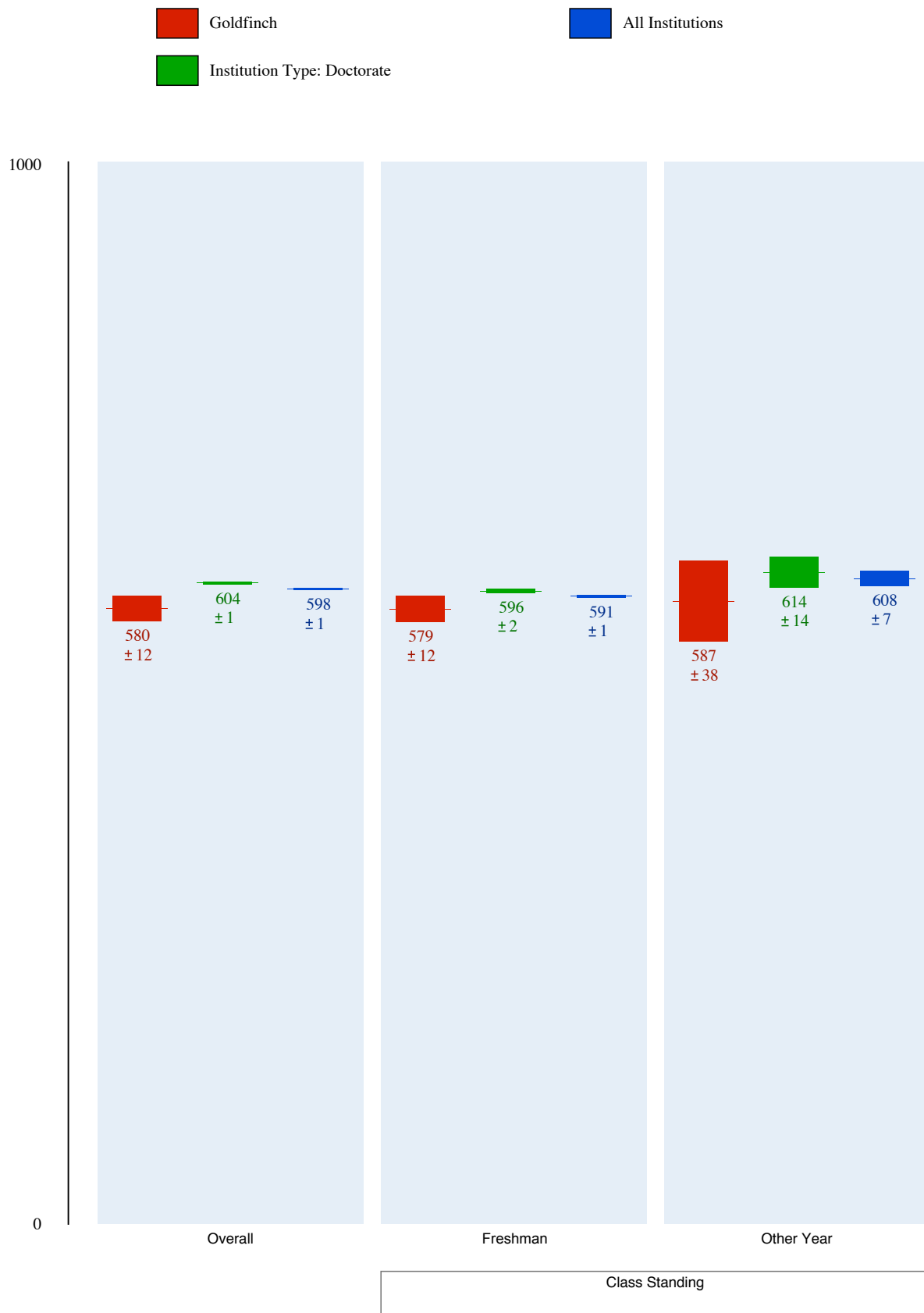
Each box on the chart shows the average score for that group plus the standard error. The accuracy of the average score calculation is affected by sample size and variability. Small samples or large variability can reduce the accuracy of the score calculation. In those cases, the standard error is larger. (Standard error is the combination of sampling error and measurement error.) Where we are able to measure the score with a high degree of accuracy, the standard error is small.

On the chart, the bigger boxes show larger standard error. The upper and lower boundaries of each box can be calculated by adding and subtracting the standard error to the score. For example, a score of 525 with a standard error of ± 5 has a box that ranges from 530 to 520. The true group average score falls in the range of 530 to 520.

To determine whether two groups are significantly different from each other, see whether the ranges of scores, represented by the boxes, overlap. Ranges of scores (boxes) that do overlap are not significantly different from each other; those that do NOT overlap are significantly different.

For example,

Not significantly different   Significantly different

539
±5

530
±8

574
±8

535
±1
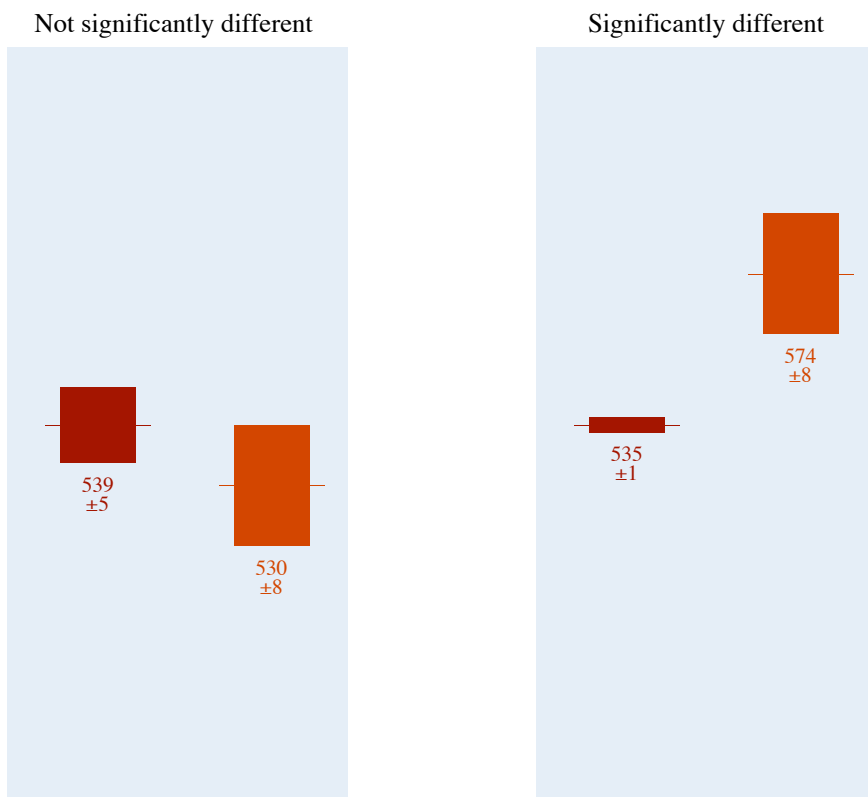
Figure 3.3 Chart for Skill Set: Developing a Research Strategy

Figure 3.3 (continued) Chart for Skill Set: Developing a Research Strategy

	Goldfinch		All Institutions
	Institution Type: Doctorate		

Business
- 586 ± 53 (Goldfinch)
- 593 ± 4 (Doctorate)
- 587 ± 3 (All Institutions)

Education
- 555 ± 56 (Goldfinch)
- 607 ± 5 (Doctorate)
- 597 ± 4 (All Institutions)

Engineering & Applied Sciences
- 572 ± 35 (Goldfinch)
- 601 ± 4 (Doctorate)
- 596 ± 3 (All Institutions)

Major

Figure 3.3 (continued) Chart for Skill Set: Developing a Research Strategy

Figure 3.3 (continued) Chart for Skill Set: Developing a Research Strategy
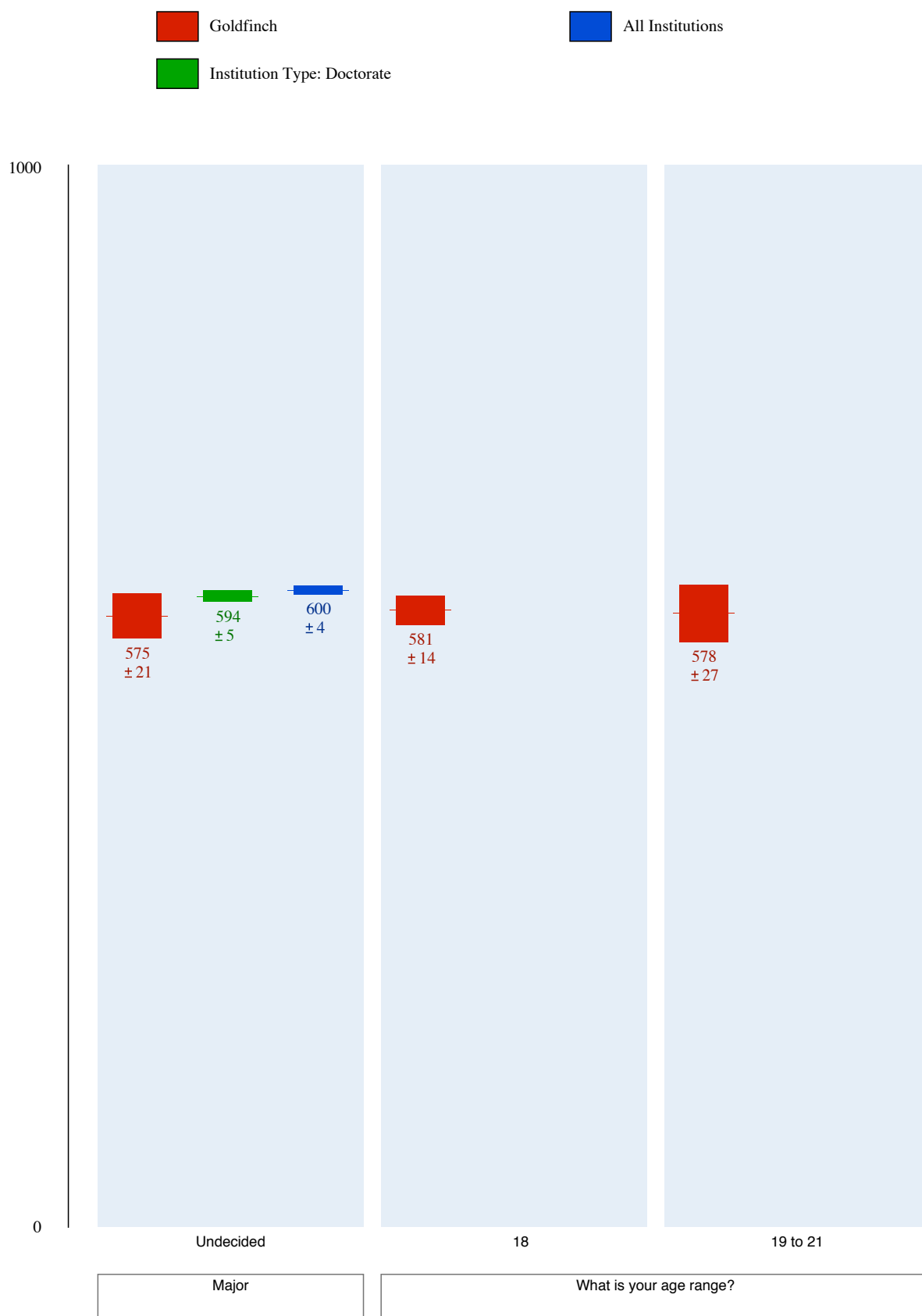
Figure 3.3 (continued) Chart for Skill Set: Developing a Research Strategy
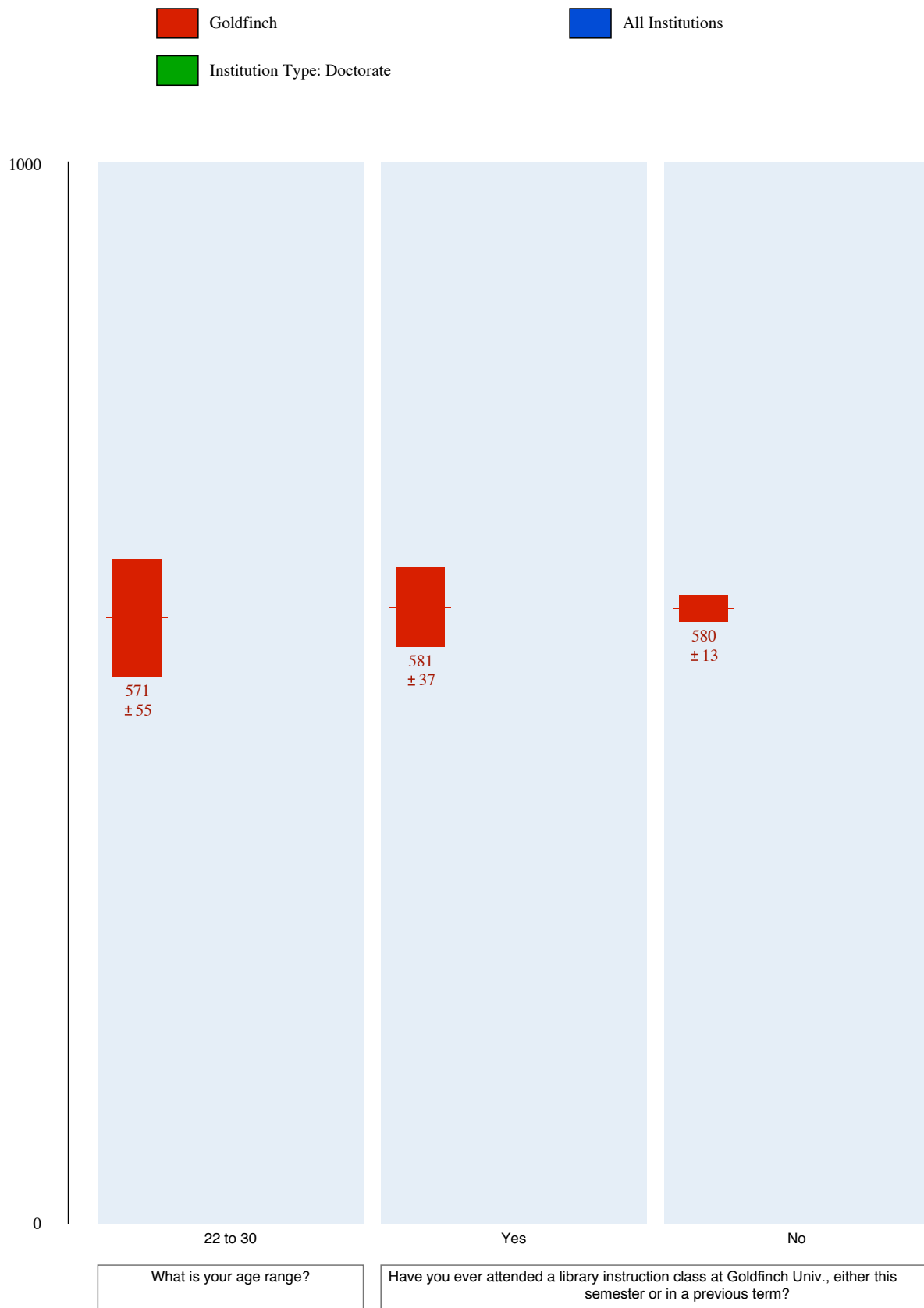
Figure 3.4 Objectives and Outcomes for Skill Set: Developing a Research Strategy

The numbering refers to the ACRL documents: the first digit is the ACRL standard, the second is the ACRL performance indicator, the third is the ACRL outcome, and the fourth is the ACRL objective.

1.1.4.5   Uses background information sources effectively to gain an initial understanding of the topic.

1.1.4.6   Consults with the course instructor and librarians to develop a manageable focus for the topic.

1.1.5.3   Decides when a research topic has multiple facets or may need to be put into a broader context.

1.2.2.1   Names the three major disciplines of knowledge (humanities, social sciences, sciences) and some subject fields that comprise each discipline.

1.2.2.4   Describes how the publication cycle in a particular discipline or subject field affects the researcher's access to information.

1.2.3.1   Identifies various formats in which information is available.

1.2.5.1   Describes how various fields of study define primary and secondary sources differently.

1.2.5.2   Identifies characteristics of information that make an item a primary or secondary source in a given field.

1.4.1.1   Identifies a research topic that may require revision, based on the amount of information found (or not found).

1.4.1.2   Identifies a topic that may need to be modified, based on the content of information found.

2.2.1.1   Describes a general process for searching for information.

2.2.2.4   Identifies keywords that describe an information source (e.g., book, journal article, magazine article, Web site).

2.3.3.3   Identifies the appropriate service point or resource for the particular information need.

2.3.3.5   Uses the Web site of an institution, library, organization or community to locate information about specific services.

In the full report, results for each of the remaining seven skill sets are presented next:

Selecting Finding Tools
Searching
Using Finding Tool Features
Retrieving Sources
Evaluating Sources
Documenting Sources
Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues

These are followed by results for each of four ACRL standards:

1. Determines the Nature and Extent of the Information Needed
2. Accesses Needed Information Effectively and Efficiently
3. Evaluates Information and Its Sources Critically and Incorporates Selected Information Into His or Her Knowledge Base and Value System
5. Understands Many of the Economic, Legal, and Social Issues Surrounding the Use of Information and Accesses and Uses Information Ethically and Legally).

Results for the ACRL Standards are presented for the average student performance at the institution, along with the average for the institution type, and the average for all institutions. There are no breakouts by class standing, major, or custom demographic.

The final section of the full report are six appendices.