Data Modeling AutomationSystem Overview Document

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Overview

Building appropriate financial time series models are essential to financial institutions as those models can be used to forecast the firm's risk to changing economic environments. PNC bank, the sponsor of our project, has also been putting a significant amount of work to build the different types of models. While the data set is consistent across nearly every model, the modeling scripts written by different modelers differ drastically as each modeler has his or her own modeling methodologies. Therefore, there hasn't been an easy, simple way for the team to run multiple modeling scripts other than running different modeling scripts each time. Also, the results from each modeling script are stored in various excel files, word documents and png images, which made it harder for the modelers to analyze those results. In short, the legacy process of running models was very time-consuming.

For the master project, USF-PNC team built a web application that effectively automates and simplifies the process of building different models of financial time series. It brute forces through various modeling forms, performs all the data transformation independently, and generates the top N models for consideration subject to user defined constraints. The output of selected models would include the statistical diagnostics of each model and graphical representation of dynamic backtesting and sensitivity testing. The saved outputs would also serve as audit trails for Federal Reserve audits of the financial institution as they will be legitimate evidence of the financial time series modeling procedures. The application significantly reduces the amount of redundancy and provides controls which reduce the likelihood of human error. Furthermore, it may be used to find candidate models more quickly and accurately, which could be very useful for users in benchmarking models against existing candidate models.

Requirements

The project requirements were split into major sections: Data Science related requirements, Database related requirements, Web Application related requirements.

Data Science Related Requirements

Core Functionalities

- Writing data transformation script
- Writing model output to the database
- Saving data points for interactive graphs
- Implementing One Factor Regression model

Extra Functionalities

- Providing options to choose which statistical tests to be run
- Refactoring and parameterizing the model script to make it reusable

Database Related Requirements

Core Functionalities

- Creating database schema based on the sponsors' requests
- Saving all the input values that user puts in when a job is started
- Saving all the output values after each test
- Creating database migration that standardizes the table creation and editing progress

Extra Functionalities

- Creating additional tables to save data points of interactive graphs
- Saving intermediate outputs after the preliminary statistical testing

Web Application Related Requirements

Core Functionalities

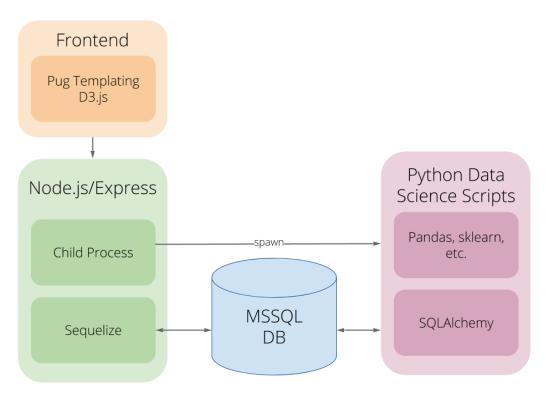
- Backend
 - Connecting the web application with database (MSSQL)
 - Connecting the web application with the data science python script
 - Handle saving and renaming of user uploaded files
- Frontend
 - **GET /** user can upload the dataset and configure tests
 - POST /jobs : handle form submission for new job by spawning the first child process for the preliminary data science script
 - o **GET /jobs** user can view the status of all jobs
 - GET /jobs/:id user can view models that passed/failed the preliminary statistical tests and select them to be included in shortlist
 - POST /shortlist handles form submission for selection of shortlist and spawn the script for additional testing such as backtesting, sensitivity tests, etc.
 - GET /model/:modelId user can view detailed results of each model with graphs

Extra Functionalities

- Spawning the second child process when the user select the models to be included in the shortlist
- Each backtest date input can take more than one date
- Interactive front end to add/remove fields
- Made the graphs interactive with d3.js

Design

Design Overview



The main components of the project interact with each other as shown in the diagram above. Whenever user uploads a data set and starts a job, the backend of the web application (node.js) will spawn a child process to run the python data science scripts with the preliminary statistical test. The intermediate output from the script will be stored to our MSSQL database, using SQLAlchemy ORM. Then, the web application will grab information from the database, using Sequelize ORM, to display relevant results such as statistical values and interactive graphs on the frontend to user.

Software Blocks

Database

In order for the python script to interface with the database, we utilized SQLAlchemy, we wrote a python class to access the database and handle the connection generated by SQLAlchemy.

The **idb.py** is the script that interacts with the database using SQLAlchemy

Code snippet from idb.py

If a new table is created in the database the following should be included in idb.py for inserting or updating any fields in the table

Example of the PACFPlots

```
class PACFPlots(Base):
    __tablename__ = 'PACFPlots'
    id = Column(Integer, primary_key=True)
    ModelId = Column(ForeignKey('ModelRunDetail.id'))
    Name = Column(String)
    PLOT = Column(MSVarBinary)
```

Things to remember

- 1. Here __tablename__ has to match the table name in the database.
- 2. There should always be a primary key and this is indicated as above for the field **id**
- 3. To include relationships between the tables, example each plot here corresponds to a model hence we include **ModelId** and indicate this relationship using the **ForeignKey** keyword and specify the table name where ModelId is primary key. Thus we give **TableName.columnName.**

Inserting a row in the table

```
# creates a new row in RunDetail and returns the id of the row
def newRunDetail(self, StartDate=None, ModelType=None):
    session = self.Session()
    if StartDate == None:
        date = datetime.datetime.now()
        run = RunDetail(StartDate=date)
    else:
        run = RunDetail(StartDate=StartDate)
    if ModelType != None:
        run.ModelType = ModelType
    session.add(run)
    session.commit()
    id = run.id
    session.close()
    return id
```

Updating a row in the RunDetail table

```
# updates a previously created row in RunDetail. StartDate is not editable

def updateRunDetail(self, id, EndDate=None, Status=None, EndTimeForTest=None):
    session = self.Session()
    # get modelOutput instance
    run = session.query(RunDetail).filter_by(id=id).first()
    if run == None:
        return False
    if EndDate != None:
        run.EndDate = EndDate
    if Status != None:
        run.Status = Status
    if EndTimeForTest!=None:
        run.EndDateTimeForTests = EndTimeForTest
    session.commit()
    session.close()
    return True
```

Example of RunId being foreign key:

```
class DummyVariable(Base):
    __tablename__ = 'DummyVariable'
    id = Column(Integer, primary_key=True)
    RunId = Column(ForeignKey('RunDetail.id'))
    Name = Column(String)
    Coefficient = Column(Float)
    Pval = Column(Float)
```

Example of querying to get details for shortlisted models

```
def getShortListedNames(self, RunId):
    candidateList = []
    session = self.Session()
    result = session.query(ShortlistedModels).filter_by(RunId=RunId).all()

for row in result:
    independentVariableResult = session.query(IndependentVariableResult).filter_by(ModelId=row.ModelId, RunId=RunId).first()
    candidateList.append(independentVariableResult.Name)
    return candidateList
```

The above query is to obtain

The RunID and ModelID for the shortlisted models are stored in the ShortlistedModels table, where as the details like the independent variable details (for a ModelId) and dependent variable name (for a RunId).

The details can be fetched for a Independent Variable Result table first by fetching the Modelld (or Independent Variables) for a RunID (i.e. the particular run).

Then for each Modelld we can obtain the details (in this case, the names of the shortlisted models) by querying the IndependentVariableResult table.

Web Application

Frontend

As the project is focused more on the data science and database aspects, the frontend portion is relatively basic. We envisioned to provide the users a simple user interface which automates most of the manual and time-consuming tasks such as data cleaning and uploading/selecting multiple data sets and comes back with the result. Frontend is built using JavaScript, HTML/CSS, PUG templating, Bulma CSS, and JQuery.

In terms of structuring the packages, we followed `node.js` convention: the pug templates are located in the /views folder, while the routes are located in the /routes folder. Front end specific javascript files are located in /public/javascripts.

Data Visualization

The data visualization code required to generate multiple instances of 7 graph types on the same page, and handle interactive events was written based on encapsulated chart code outlined here: https://bost.ocks.org/mike/chart/.

The seven types of graphs could be separated into two different types of charts with different configurations for each type. Allison wrote encapsulated, configurable and reusable chart code to dynamically generate each type of chart based on the data and configurations. Since the chart code is encapsulated, events on one chart don't interfere with events on other charts, and vice versa.

In more detail, the chart code is written in two different files and are split into "line chart" and "split line chart." In order to generate each chart, the javascript variable holding the json of data points is passed to the front end. The front end generated by pug templating generates the drop down menus and placeholder divs for each graph based on the json of datapoints. When the DOM is loaded, the chart.js script binds the data to each placeholder div, and calls the line chart or split line chart functions with configurations, depending on each type of chart.

Backend

The backend of the web application was written using `node.js` with express to handle routing and handle file uploads with multer. We used the timestamp to generate a unique filename (in case of multiple files with the same name) and will associate that with a new job.

After a file upload and submission of a new job, a user will be redirected to a jobs page. When this happens, the child process will be spawned by `node.js` to run the relevant data science modeling script.

The backend of the web application uses `express` to handle routing, and `body-parser` to parse form elements for user inputs.

The backend queries the database with Sequelize and uses custom functions to parse the data and pass it on for presentation to the front end. The backend uses the `moment.js` library to handle parsing and formatting of dates and timestamps.

Data Science

The data science part provides three main functionalities: data transformation, model creation, and outputting updates to database. All the following steps are carried out in python.

Data Transformations

Once the dataset that is uploaded by the user and the config file created from the frontend become available, the dataset will be transformed depending on the model being run i.e. either ARDL or One-Factor. As the transformations are being done, invalid data and null values will be dropped.

Model Creation & Updates to database

The model code received from the PNC Bank team comes in the form of a set of functions in python. Each model run generated after performing regression is categorized based on whether the model is statistically viable depending on the thresholds set by the user input.

After performing the statistical tests, the reasons of failure of the models is also presented to the user. The user can examine the reasons for the models that are not statistically viable and take decision if the user/modeler wants to make it a candidate.

We have created a separate script 'afterShortlist.py' for running all the later tests on candidates and shortlisted models. The other tests (including backtesting, stress-testing

and sensitivity) are run after the user/modeler shortlists the models (either from candidate or rejected models).

In order to run the later tests (in 'afterShortlist.py'), the intermediate data-frames like the regs, dep and base dataframe are required. These data-frames are converted into json and stored in the database during the first script.

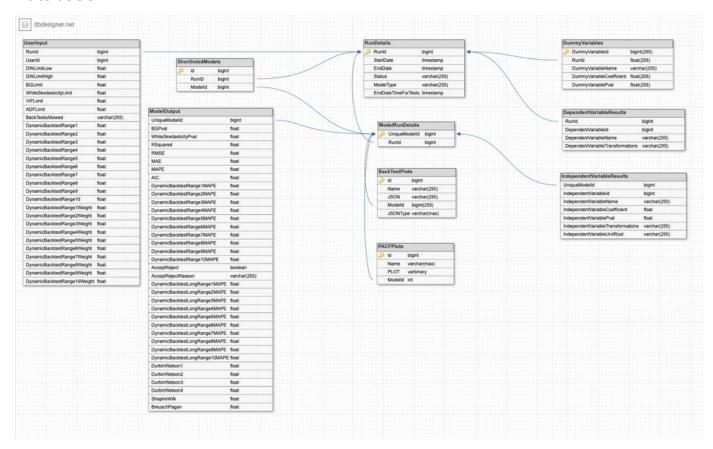
When the afterShortlist.py runs, these intermediate outputs are fetched from the database along with the candidate and shortlisted models and then the backtesting process is started.

The data-points for all the graphs being generated (Except PACF) are stored in the database in the form of json.

The PACF plot is stored in the form of a stream of bytes.

Data Flow

Database



The database needs to keep tracks of the inputs by the user and the output produced by each model in the run.

Basically the run is tied to a single user inputted file of a certain format. Each run has multiple model runs (a model determined by which independent variable(s)). A model run has outputs which are calculated and in the end is accepted or rejected based on the limits specified in the user input for different values. The output includes the coefficients and p-values of the independent variables, dummy variables and lag variables associated with a run of the model, the r-squared result and the result of various backtests.

The schema design is tied closely to not only how end result data is stored from each model, but also how the web application will programmatically keep track of user input(s).

To handle migrations, we are using built in sequelize migrations for node.js, and writing Sequelize models to match the migrations.

The database has tables to store the model output.

- 1) **RunDetail** Storing details for one run
- 2) **ModelRunDetail** Storing details for model in a run
- 3) **UserInput** Storing the user input for a particular run
- 4) **IndependentVariableResult** Details of Independent variable
- 5) **DependentVariableResult** Details of Dependent variable
- 6) **DummyVariable** Details of Dummy variable
- 7) **IntermediateOutput** Stores the intermediate output generated after statistical test and before shortlist. Stores 3 jsons for regs, dep and base dataframes.
- 8) ModelOutput Stores all the output values for a run
- 9) **ShortlistedModels** Stores the details of the shortlisted models for a run
- 10) **PACFPlots** Stores the PACF plots for each model
- 11) **BackTestPlots** Stores all the plots except for PACF.

Useful database queries:

To display output from table DependentVariableResult

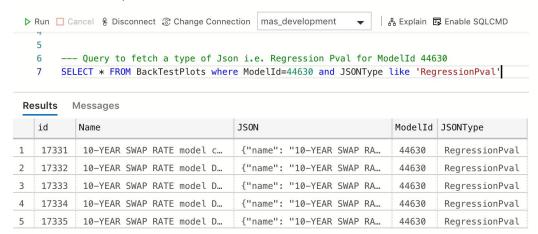
SELECT * FROM DependentVariableResult

Here '*' is a special character indicating all the columns.

To display output for ShortlistedModels table where the RunId is 557

SELECT * FROM ShortlistedModels where RunId=557

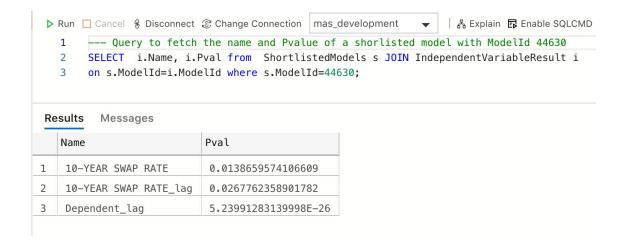
One more example:



To delete rows from ShortlistedModels table for RunId is 565.

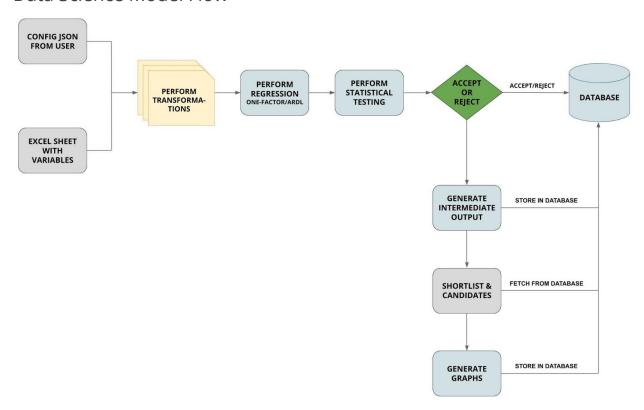
DELETE from ShortlistedModels where RunId= 565

Some queries including joins between tables



Further reference for the database queries the following link will be helpful https://www.w3schools.com/sql/default.asp

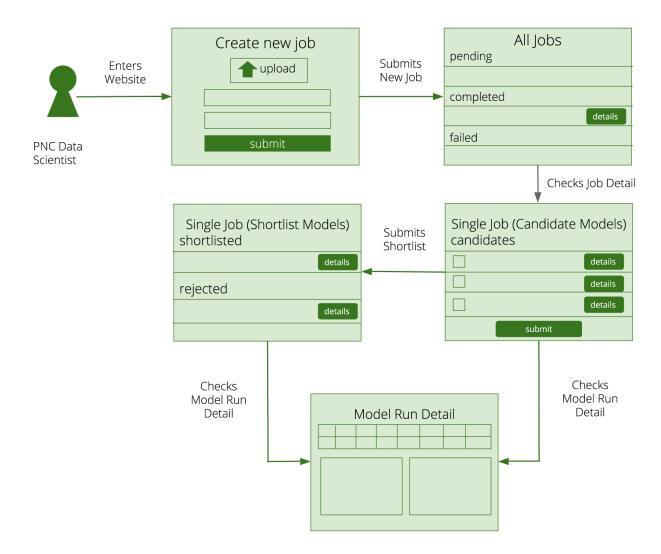
Data Science Model Flow



The diagram above describes the flow of data science modeling script. When config json file and dataset are uploaded by a user and the data science script is spawned by the frontend, data transformation will be performed. After the transformations are completed, the regression and statistical tests will be performed and the intermediate outputs of the tests will be stored in the database. The user will be able to view the output of each model with

the data of which tests passed or failed from the web application frontend. Then, the user will select which model runs to be included in `shortlist` and those model runs selected will under-go further testing including backtests, stress test, and out-out-time tests, and then generate additional outputs to be stored in database, including the json data points to generate interactive graphs.

UI Flow



The previous diagram goes over the flow of the front end for the web application. The target user is a PNC Data Scientist.

- 1. **Create New Job** User can upload an excel sheet with a time series and set parameters such as what exclusion dates and what statistical tests to run
- 2. **All Jobs** shows all jobs sorted by status
- 3. **Single Job (candidate models)** Shows all the candidate models and failed models for a job. The user can choose to keep (shortlist) one or more models

- Single Job (shortlisted models) Shows the shortlisted and rejected models for a single job
- 5. **Model Run Detail** Shows the details for a single model run. Shows graphs and calculated outputs.
- For further details on web application, please refer to Build Instructions the Web Application User Guide section.

Technical Stack

Project Management/Planning

• dbdesigner.net

Data Cleaning/Modelling

• Python (pandas, statsmodels, scipy.stats, numpy, sklearn)

Back End Development and Database

- SQL
 - ORM Node: sequelize https://sequelize.readthedocs.io/en/v3/
 - ORM Python: sql alchemy https://www.sqlalchemy.org/
- Node.js
 - Multer: https://www.npmjs.com/package/multer
 - Express
 - Body-parser: https://www.npmjs.com/package/body-parser
 - Child processes

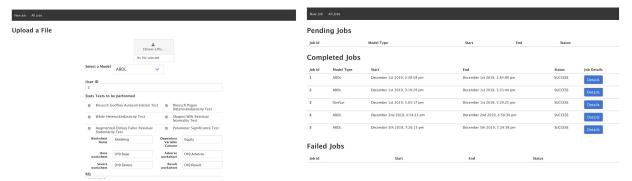
Front End Development

- D3.js for visualizations
- Pug Templating
- HTML/CSS
- Bulma CSS
- jQuery

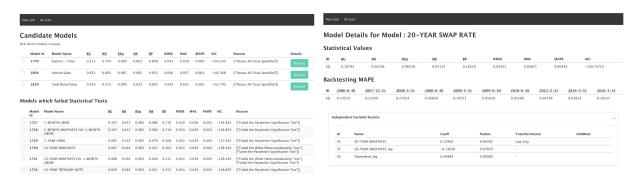
Results & Next Steps

Result of the Project

USF-PNC team was successfully able to build a web application where a user can upload a time series excel file and select a model to run (of two: ARDL and One-Factor Regression) and set various parameters. Below are the screenshots of the application.



Left: Landing page where user can input dataset and configure statistical tests and parameters. **Right**: All jobs page which lists the jobs by their statuses

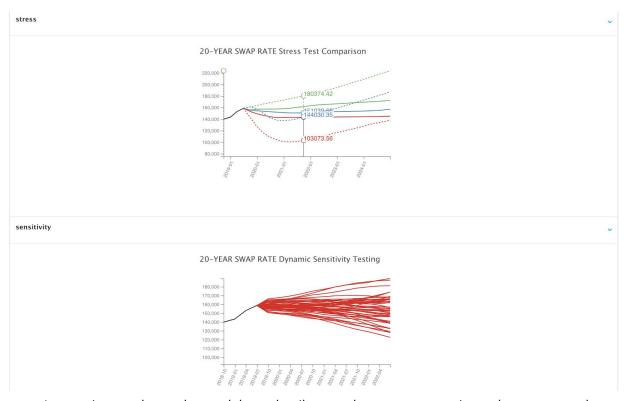


Left: After a job is complete, a user can view the model run intermediate outputs and select model runs to shortlist (run further testing on).

Right: User can view an individual model run's details.



• Interactive graphs on the model run detail page where a user can compare different instances of the same type of graph.



Interactive graphs on the model run detail page where a user can view values on a graph

Next Steps

Improvements

- Finalization One Factor Regression Model
- Improvement on the UI
 - On the Job Detail page allowing the user to filter by the reasons of failure for the Failed Models.
 - Include a page showing all the Candidate Models.
- Comprehensive testing and documentation for all the testing
- Adding support for concurrency (multiple users running multiple runs at once)
 - Not using config.json, but storing the user input in the database. As there can be a situation, if different users run the job simultaneously, the config parameters can be replaced.
 - Locking a row or table while updating the database. This will not allow concurrent modifications to the same row.

Reference:

https://groups.google.com/forum/?fromgroups=#!topic/sqlalchemy/8WLhbsp2nls

- Converting the web application to a containerized application for easier deployment
 - Advantages of Containerization :
 https://tsa.com/top-5-benefits-of-containerization/
 https://hackernoon.com/what-is-containerization-83ae53a709a6
 - Reference / starting point :
 https://sysally.com/blog/deploy-node-js-and-mysql-in-docker-container/
- As the size of the database and hence tables will grow with respect to data, using joins to get the results from the database (example for Candidates, which involves querying different tables) will take larger time.

Additional Features

- Converting last static image graph to interactive data visualization
- Adding more models, such as two-factor regression and moving average model

Build Instructions

Github repository: https://github.com/azywong/mas-project instructions to setup to run locally

Setting up MSSQL database

Installation

- Node.js and npm https://nodejs.org/en/
- Run the following commands to install packages

```
    npm install -g mssql
    npm install -g tedious
    npm install -g sequelize
    npm install -g sequelize-cli
```

• Make sure you have your mssql database setup

Setup

- After cloning the code from github
- Create config file at mas-webapp/config/config.json
 - o Follow format of exampleconfig.json in that folder
 - Copy the contents of exampleconfig.json to a new file named config.json
 - At minimum replace the username and password in the example with the credentials for the database

- These credentials are how the node.js and the python scripts communicate with the database
- In the terminal, navigate to the mas-project/mas-webapp directory and run
 - o sequelize db:migrate
 - o This runs the migrations to create the tables in the database

Setting up the web application environment

Installation

- navigate to the mas-project/mas-webapp directory
- Run the following to install necessary packages
 - o npm install

Setup

- Run the following to start the web application normally
 - o npm start
- Run the following to start the web application in development/debug mode (this listens for changes in the code)
 - O DEBUG=mas-webapp:* npm run devstart

Integrating python modeling code to web application

- The python modeling script will be spawned whenever a new job is submitted.
- The user input from the main page will be saved as
 - "../mas-ds/mas-ardl/config.json" and the code for spawning the child process from node.js will be triggered (located in runScript() function of "POST new job" in ../mas-webapp/routes/jobs.js).
- Based on the model type of in config.json file created, the type of data script to be run will be determined.
- The addition of the new python modeling script will be similar to the following snippet from ../mas-webapp/routes/jobs.js

```
154
        // //spawn the child process - python script
155
       const {spawn} = require('child_process')
        const path = require('path')
156
158
159
       function runScript() {
160
         if(configjson['model'] === 'OneVar') {
           console.log('1FACTOR MODEL Started')
162
            return spawn('python3',["../mas-ds/mas-ardl/testOneVar.py",
                      '../mas-webapp/config/config.json',
164
                      'development'])
         } else if(configjson['model'] === 'ARDL') {
166
           console.log('ARDL MODEL Started')
            return spawn('python3',["../mas-ds/mas-ardl/testARDL.py",
                      '../mas-webapp/config/config.json',
168
                      'development'])
         }
170
171
        }
        const subprocess = runScript();
173
       // print output of script
174
        subprocess.stdout.on('data', (data) => {
                console.log(`data:${data}`);
175
176
       });
        subprocess.stderr.on('data', (data) => {
177
178
               console.log(`error:${data}`);
179
       });
180
        subprocess.stderr.on('close', () => {
                   console.log("Ending stat script");
181
182
       });
```

Setting up data science python script

To set up the python script:

- Create a folder "uploads" folder in mas-ds folder.
- For running the python script with the web application give the path as in line 13 and 17 in the below screenshot.

• For running the script from the terminal uncomment the line 14 and 18 instead of 13 and 17.

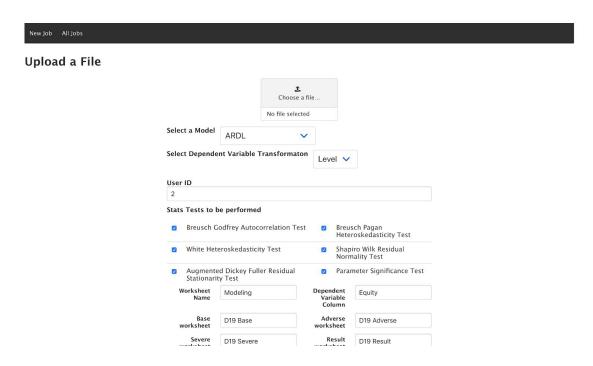
For running the scripts individually from the terminal the command line arguments required are as follows:

- 1. python3 testARDL.py config/config.json development

Here **config.json** is the json for configuring the database and **development** is the name of the database from config.json where the user/modeler wants the output to be stored.

The database connection can be initiated by calling the getDatabaseConnectionObject1() method from the database.py.

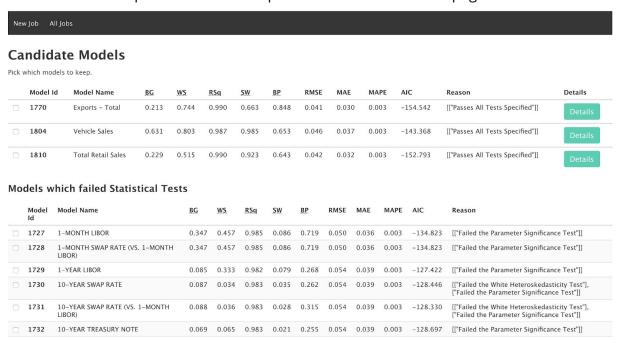
The Web Application User Guide



1. When a modeler enters the main page of the web application, he or she will be able to upload the dataset, select the model and statistical tests to be run, and configure other inputs related to the uploaded excel file.

New Job All Jobs						
Pending Jobs						
Job Id		Model Type	Start	End	Status	
Completed Jobs						
Job Id	Model Type	Start	End		Status	Job Details
1	ARDL	December 1st 2019, 2:39:58 pm	December 1st 2019, 2	::44:00 pm	SUCCESS	Details
2	ARDL	December 1st 2019, 3:19:29 pm	December 1st 2019, 3	:23:44 pm	SUCCESS	Details
3	OneVar	December 1st 2019, 5:03:17 pm	December 1st 2019, 5	:29:25 pm	SUCCESS	Details
4	ARDL	December 2nd 2019, 4:54:23 pm	December 2nd 2019,	4:58:30 pm	SUCCESS	Details
5	ARDL	December 5th 2019, 7:26:15 pm	December 5th 2019, 7	7:29:38 pm	SUCCESS	Details
Failed Jobs						
Job Id		Start	End	Stat	tus	

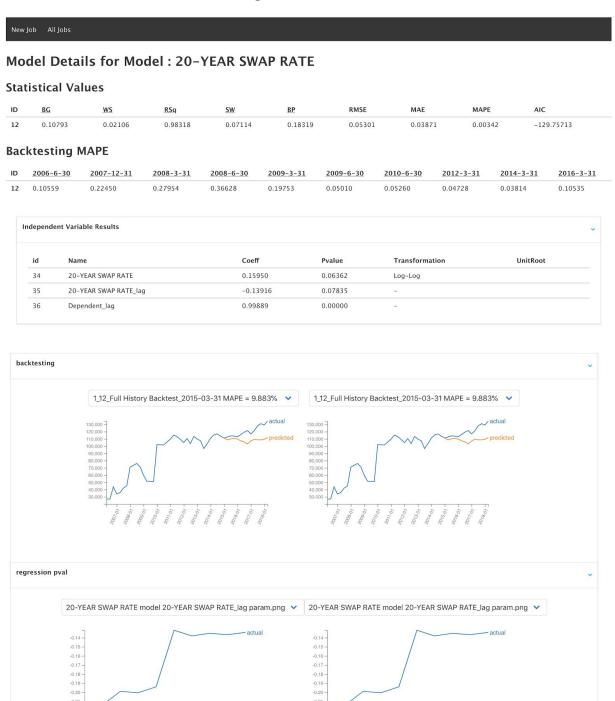
- 2. Once the submit button is clicked, it will be redirected to `All jobs` page where the modeler will be able to see the statuses of all the job (including the one which he/she submitted).
 - a. Note: Each job takes some time to complete (5-10 min). The job will be shown as completed after the script is finished AND the web page is refreshed.



3. When the user clicks on `Details` button from `Completed Jobs` section, s/he will be directed to a page that shows the list of each model's preliminary statistical values and pass/fail log. Here, the user can select which models to be included in

the shortlist. Once the models are selected and `Keep this` button is clicked, the second batch of tests will be spawned.

a. Note: The second data science script may take longer than the preliminary tests as it will be running more tests.



4. Once the second round of tests are finished, the user will be able to click on `Details` on /jobs/:id page. Once `Details` button is clicked, the user will be able to

see detailed results of each model, including statistical test outputs, backtesting outputs, and interactive graphs.