

FARs and Supplemental Materials – Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose of the FAR and supplemental material?

The FAR (Faculty Activity Report) is the official mechanism for faculty to document their work on an annual basis. The FAR contains both a listing of professional activities and reflection on these activities. The supplemental materials are an opportunity to provide further reflection (up to 3 pages) or a class visit report conducted by a tenured or tenure-track member of the department.

Annual merit evaluations are based on evidence provided in the FAR, supplemental materials, and student evaluations. The following excerpt from our approved annual evaluation process is particularly relevant:

All faculty are expected to reflect on their teaching in their FARs. One purpose of the supplemental material is to allow a mechanism for faculty to (1) highlight evidence of teaching excellence in support of a rating of Exceeds Expectations in the area of teaching; or (2) to provide additional reflection on and/or context from which to interpret critical trends in student evaluations.

In other words, the supplemental material affords an opportunity for faculty to communicate with the chair and Merit Review Committee (MRC), provide context from which to interpret critical student perceptions from student evaluations, and highlight evidence in support of an Exemplary evaluation. Submission of supplemental material is optional. However, faculty are strongly encouraged to submit supplemental material if they are unable to sufficiently address potential concerns or provide adequate evidence of excellence in their FAR.

2. Who is the audience for my FAR and supplemental materials?

FARs are read by the Merit Review Committee and the Dean. They must be included in portfolios for personnel actions. Supplemental materials are for department use only and do not need to be included in personnel portfolios.

3. How do I create my FAR and supplemental materials?

You must create your FAR using Digital Measures. Supplemental materials may be created using any program. Both the FAR and supplemental materials must be submitted in PDF format.

4. When are FARs due?

FARs and all supplemental materials must be submitted **electronically** to Jan Kuzee (kuzeej@gvsu.edu) by **5 p.m. on January 15. There are no exceptions to this deadline.** In addition, **you must submit a current CV with your FAR.**

5. What should I include in my FAR and supplemental materials?

As you write your FAR and/or supplemental materials, you may wish to consider the following questions:

- What accomplishments am I most proud of in each of the three areas of evaluation (teaching, scholarship, and service)? What achievements do I want make sure the MRC takes into account when considering my evaluation?
- What evidence can I highlight that would demonstrate that I have exceeded expectations in one or more areas of evaluation?

- Are there trends in my student evaluations that could be *perceived* (by the unit head or members of the MRC) as negative or problematic? What context do I need to provide to the MRC in order to interpret these trends?

6. How do the chair and Merit Review Committee distinguish between meeting and exceeding expectations in each area of evaluation?

Our approved annual evaluation process states that “a rating of Meets Expectations indicates that baseline expectations have been met. A rating of exceeds expectations is reserved for work that is of higher quality and rises significantly above baseline expectations.” Baseline expectations vary with rank and significant focus. (See Appendix A in our policy document for more details.) If you believe that you have exceeded expectations in any area of evaluation, it is your responsibility to make the case and provide evidence to the MRC to support this distinction. The ultimate determination of whether work meets or exceeds expectations involves a professional judgment on the part of the unit head, based on the materials provided by the faculty member and in consultation with the MRC.

7. To what extent do I need to reflect on my student evaluations in my FAR and/or supplemental materials?

It is essential that you reflect on your student evaluations in your FAR and/or supplemental materials. Students provide their perspective on your teaching via student evaluations, and the MRC depends on you to use your FAR and/or supplemental materials to interpret and respond to perceived trends in student evaluations.

Our policy states that “faculty members who demonstrate thoughtful reflection on their teaching in their FAR and/or supplemental materials—including an appropriate response to critical trends raised in student evaluations—will generally be deemed to have met expectations in the area of teaching.” Moreover, “a faculty member may be rated as not meeting expectations for teaching if trends in student evaluations and/or other information available to the Unit Head (and shared with the MRC) provide evidence of either (1) significant concerns pertaining to teaching effectiveness that are not adequately addressed in the FAR and/or supplemental material; and/or (2) concerns pertaining to teaching effectiveness that have been raised in one or more past merit evaluations and have not been resolved.”

The CLAS Standards state the following: “teachers of all ranks value the student voice, [and] *effective teachers* develop feedback mechanisms that monitor the effectiveness of teaching and demonstrate the ability and confidence to adjust their teaching styles to achieve a more productive learning experience for their students.”

While it is impossible to reflect on every comment in student evaluations, your reflection should provide evidence that you have met this standard. In reflecting on your student evaluations, you may want to consider the view of the CLAS College Personnel Committee, which is articulated in the document posted at <http://gvsu.edu/s/vZ>.