Faculty Activity Report (Merit) Use Guide

This guide is for unit leaders and assistants that are involved in administering faculty annual reviews using Digital Measures.

Differences between the Promotion & Tenure and Merit versions of the Faculty Activity Report (FAR)

There are two versions of the FAR: Promotion & Tenure and Merit. The reports are identical except for the amount of historical data included. The Promotion & Tenure version generally includes 10 years of historical data, while the Merit version typically includes data from the date range selected when running the report.

These differences reflect the purposes of each process. Promotion and tenure reviews typically require examining data over several years, while annual merit reviews focus on a specific time period.

In general, unit leaders are encouraged to use the Merit version for annual reviews. They may contact the DM Administrator for additional guidance as needed.

Benefits of using the Faculty Activity Report (FAR) for annual reviews

In addition to providing a comprehensive, one-stop snapshot of faculty activity using a format common to all users, the FAR levels the playing field by providing a consistent representation of activity that does not depend on individual interpretations of submission requirements.

Using the FAR for annual reviews also encourages faculty to keep their data complete and accurate, which provides several benefits:

- University-wide benefit: Data stored in Digital Measure is used for many purposes beyond faculty reviews. Some of the university's most important data comes directly from faculty. Faculty are more likely to keep their data current and accurate when they know it will be reviewed regularly. As a result, we see higher rates of faculty activity entry in units that use the FAR for annual reviews.
- Department/college benefit: Data stored in Digital Measures is also available to unit leaders for assessment, annual reports, and other reporting needs. Using the FAR for annual reviews encourages faculty to update their data regularly, improving its accuracy and reliability whenever it is needed.
- Faculty benefit: When faculty know their FAR will be used for annual reviews, they are more likely to keep their data current and accurate. Having an up-to-date FAR makes preparing for promotion and/or tenure much less stressful by eliminating the need to enter a backlog of data. Faculty also benefit from receiving annual feedback on their FAR from their chair or dean, giving them opportunities to address gaps or inaccuracies well before the promotion and/or tenure review process begins.

How to select the date range when running the Faculty Activity Report (FAR)

Date range refers to the start and end dates selected when running a report in Digital Measures.

For the FAR (Promotion & Tenure), the date range is prescribed: September 1 through August 31 of the current academic year. This report is designed for reviewers who need to examine a candidate's activity over an extended period of their career. It automatically includes 10 or more years of historical data beyond the selected date range.

The FAR (Merit), on the other hand, is designed to capture activity that occurred during the review period, typically one year. Therefore, the date range selected when running this report should match the exact period being reviewed.

For example:

- 2026–2027 academic year: Use July 1, 2026–June 30, 2027, or September 1, 2026–August 31, 2027, depending on the academic calendar used by the unit.
- Calendar year 2027: Use January 1, 2027–December 31, 2027.

The FAR (Merit) will include activity recorded in DM that falls within the selected date range.

Some unit leaders may want to review activity and statements from previous years as well. In these cases, they can select a longer date range when running the FAR (Merit) or use the FAR (Promotion & Tenure) to view a broader history of activity.

Report date range and the summary tables found within the Faculty Activity Report (FAR)

The FAR reports include three summary tables:

- Graduate Student Advising
- Publications, Presentations, and Intellectual Property
- Sponsored Research

These tables provide reviewers with a high-level overview of activity in each area, followed by more detailed information in list form. When interpreting the tables, it is important to understand how the date range selected when running a report affects the data displayed.

Cells labeled "Last 1, 5, or 10 Years" are intended to show activity that occurred within the corresponding time period. However, the logic used to calculate these summary values differs between the Promotion & Tenure and Merit versions of the report.

Because the Promotion & Tenure report is designed to support review cycles that span an extended period, its summary table calculations are based on the **start date** of the selected report date range. In contrast, the Merit report's summary table calculations are based on the

end date of the selected report date range. As a result, running both versions of the report using the same date range may produce different summary values.

Units that choose to use the Promotion & Tenure version for annual reviews may therefore see higher activity totals in these summary tables than expected for the review period. Units can continue to use this version for annual reviews, provided they understand how the date range affects the summary values.

To make these calculations more transparent, the tables now display the actual dates covered by each summary value. Unit leaders who are unsure which report version best meets their needs are encouraged to contact the DM Administrator for guidance.

Tips for increasing faculty buy-in

Faculty are busy, and it can be difficult to find time for non-urgent tasks such as updating activity data in Digital Measures. The longer updates are delayed, the more time-consuming and difficult the task can become. Faculty are encouraged to update their data at least once per semester, and more frequently if they have a high level of activity.

Unit leaders can encourage regular updates in several ways:

- Require the FAR for annual reviews. This encourages faculty to review and update their data each year.
- Communicate upcoming data needs. When planning to use unit-wide data from Digital Measures, notify faculty in advance and ask them to update their records by a specified date.
- Offer unit-wide workshops. Work with the DM Administrator to provide sessions on efficient ways to enter and update data.
- Promote “Preparing Your Packet” sessions. Encourage faculty to attend these annual sessions well before they begin preparing for promotion or tenure.
- Communicate reporting needs early. Share upcoming reporting deadlines well in advance so faculty can plan their data updates accordingly.
- Promote Digital Measures as a useful tool, not a burden. Emphasize that keeping data in Digital Measures current is part of faculty responsibilities. Digital Measures is currently the only campus repository for certain types of activity data, which are often needed for purposes that benefit faculty, including successful accreditation reviews and accurate tracking of key metrics.

Other reporting options to access data

There are many ways to access and report data stored in Digital Measures. Unit leaders may want to explore data beyond what is available in the FAR reports. Data can be exported to sortable spreadsheets or presented in customized formats, such as formatted lists and tables.

Units are encouraged to contact the DM Administrator for assistance in exploring reporting options that meet their needs, including those related to annual reviews.

Who should run the Faculty Activity Report (FAR) for annual reviews?

There are two basic options for collecting FAR reports for annual reviews: faculty can run and submit their own reports, or someone within the unit can run reports for all faculty members. Although both approaches are acceptable, it is generally recommended that one person run all reports for a unit at the same time for two reasons:

- **Maintain data accuracy.** Reports should reflect the data stored in Digital Measures without post-run alterations. If data needs to be corrected, the correction should be made at its source, either by the faculty member in Digital Measures or in the university database from which the data originates. Changing data directly in a report leaves the underlying Digital Measures data incorrect, which can affect other reports and reporting needs.
- **Ensure consistency and fairness.** Running all reports together helps ensure that they use the same date range and report version. If reports are run separately, someone might accidentally select the wrong version or use a different date range, potentially giving some faculty an unfair advantage or disadvantage. Running all reports as a batch helps prevent these inconsistencies.