



# FMARC Outstanding Discussant Recognition

*Policy and Guidelines*

**13 May 2026**

## 1. Purpose

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The Financial Management & Accounting Research Conference (FMARC) values rigorous, generous, and intellectually strong discussion as a cornerstone of academic exchange. In keeping with the traditions upheld by leading scholarly bodies in finance and accounting, FMARC since 2023 has established the **Outstanding Discussant Recognition** to honor those whose contributions meaningfully advance the work of fellow scholars and the broader research community.

Although the role of the discussant is central to high-quality academic conferences, formal recognition of this contribution remains uncommon. By establishing a structured, multi-source evaluation framework that draws on the perspectives of session chairs, presenting authors, and the wider community of participants, FMARC affirms the importance of discussion as an act of scholarship in its own right, one that sharpens ideas, strengthens research, and enriches the intellectual life of the conference.

## 2. What constitutes an effective discussion

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Drawing on established norms across the leading finance and accounting associations, FMARC views an effective discussion as one that engages the audience as much as the authors, treats the paper with intellectual generosity, and leaves both the room and the research in a better place. In practice, the most valued discussions tend to share several qualities:

- Speak to the broader audience, not only to the authors, so that the session as a whole benefits from the exchange.
- Emphasize the paper's key insights and contributions rather than offering a lengthy recapitulation.
- Concentrate on a small number of substantive, high-impact points instead of an exhaustive list of minor remarks.

- Provide critique that is constructive, respectful, and oriented toward improving the work.
- Offer actionable suggestions that the authors can realistically pursue.
- Maintain a professional, collegial tone consistent with the scholarly traditions of the discipline.

**Particularly valuable contributions often include:**

- Clarifying the intuition behind the paper and articulating its broader implications.
- Assessing the underlying assumptions, methodology, and identification strategy.
- Proposing alternative interpretations, robustness checks, or natural extensions.
- Situating the paper within the wider literature and connecting it to adjacent strands of research.
- Identifying meaningful limitations, accompanied where possible by constructive paths forward.

### **3. Evaluation framework**

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The Outstanding Discussant Recognition is determined through a three-layer evaluation process designed to capture different, complementary perspectives on the quality and impact of each discussion.

#### **3.1 Session chair evaluation**

Session chairs, who observe each discussion in full context, provide the primary assessment. They complete a standardized rubric across seven dimensions, each rated from 1 (Poor) to 4 (Excellent):

- Understanding and concise summary of the paper.
- Contextualization within the relevant literature.
- Evaluation of the paper's claims, arguments, and identification.
- Insightfulness and originality of the discussion.
- Quality and feasibility of suggestions for improvement.
- Clarity, structure, and organization of the presentation.
- Professionalism and constructiveness of tone.

Chairs additionally provide an overall score together with brief qualitative comments to substantiate their assessment.

### **3.2 Presenter feedback**

Presenting authors are invited to share their reflections through a short post-session survey, capturing the perspective of those most directly affected by the discussion. The survey considers:

- The usefulness of the discussion in advancing the paper.
- The constructiveness and clarity of the feedback received.
- Whether, in the presenter's view, the discussant merits consideration for recognition.

### **3.3 Conference-wide peer nominations**

All conference participants, including authors, discussants, chairs, and attendees, are invited to submit a ranked nomination identifying up to three discussants whose contributions stood out. Participants are asked to list their selections in order of preference, with the first name representing the strongest nomination, the second the next strongest, and the third the following. Ranked nominations allow the committee to weigh community recognition more precisely, since a first-place ranking carries more informational value than a third-place ranking.

**Guidance for nominators.** Participants are encouraged to nominate discussants who:

- Delivered insightful, well-prepared, and memorable discussions.
- Showed strong analytical and critical thinking.
- Provided feedback that was both constructive and actionable.
- Contributed positively to the overall intellectual atmosphere of the conference.

**Ground rules.** To preserve the integrity of the process:

- Each participant may submit one ranked list of up to three nominations.
- Self-nominations are not permitted.
- Nominations should be based on direct observation of the discussion.
- Where possible, participants are encouraged to draw on more than one session when forming their rankings.

## **4. Aggregation and selection**

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**Final recognition is determined holistically rather than by any single metric.** The organizing committee considers all three streams of input together:

- Chair evaluations, which carry the primary weight given their structured and contextual nature.
- Presenter feedback, which validates the real impact of the discussion on the authors' work.
- Ranked peer nominations, which capture community-wide recognition of excellence and are aggregated using a positional scoring rule.
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**The committee will:**

- Aggregate quantitative scores and qualitative feedback across all sources.
- Review supporting comments in detail where appropriate.
- Identify discussants who demonstrate consistent excellence across multiple dimensions.

Recipients are selected on the basis of sustained quality across criteria and perspectives rather than on the strength of any individual score.

## **5. The Recognition**

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Selected scholars receive the FMARC Outstanding Discussant Recognition, an award that acknowledges exceptional contribution to:

- Scholarly discourse within finance and accounting.
- The development and improvement of ongoing research.
- The intellectual vibrancy and collegial spirit of the conference.

Recipients are announced after the conference and recognized publicly through FMARC's official channels.

## **6. Responsibilities of Participants**

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The credibility of the recognition rests on the good-faith engagement of the entire FMARC community.

### **Session Chairs**

- Complete the evaluation rubric thoroughly, objectively, and in a timely manner.
- Provide qualitative comments that support and contextualize the scores given.

### **Presenters**

- Offer candid, thoughtful, and respectful feedback on the discussant's contribution.

**All Participants**

- Engage actively across sessions to enrich the conference experience.
- Submit ranked nominations responsibly, fairly, and based on direct observation.

***End of Policy***