



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Electrical Engineering PhD Graduate Program Handbook

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Electrical Engineering PhD

Together, the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) and your graduate program handbook should serve as your main guide throughout your graduate career. The Graduate Student Handbook includes university information, policies, requirements and guidance for all graduate students. Your program handbook describes the details about graduate study and requirements in your specific program. While both of these handbooks are wonderful resources, know that you are always welcome to talk with faculty and staff in your program and in the Graduate College.

The central activities and missions of a university rest upon the fundamental assumption that all members of the university community conduct themselves in accordance with a strict adherence to academic and scholarly integrity. As a graduate student and member of the university community, you are expected to display the highest standards of academic and personal integrity.

Here are some resources to help you better understand your responsibilities:

- [Academic Honesty](#)
- [Academic Integrity Training](#) - Open to all graduate students at no cost
- [Plagiarism](#)

Introduction

This section describes the process for degree completion. Students must follow a prescribed, yet flexible path, achieving milestones along the way. Although there is no guarantee that each student will be able to complete all the requirements, if a student is hard working and diligent, and is a full-time graduate student, he or she should be able to complete a Master's program within 1 to 2 years and a PhD program within 4–5 years (typically 2 to 3 years beyond the MS). For non-thesis Master's students who are working full-time and going to school part-time, it may take 4 to 6 years to earn the degree.

A summary follows. Please visit the PhD EE Program for more detailed description. A current list of EE courses can be found at Graduate EE Courses. Typically, students can begin registering for Summer, Fall, and Spring of the following year in mid-late March. See UCF Registration Practices to get an idea of how to do this. Changes to a preselected schedule can be made up until a few days after classes in a particular term begin (the "add/drop" period). One exception is registration in one-on-one course – Independent Study, Doctoral Research and Dissertation. These require the submission of a form (see the graduate secretary), indicating an agreement and syllabus between the student and a faculty member, at least one week prior to the beginning of classes.

In all programs, students must maintain a 3.0 GPA or better in all coursework taken since admission into the program. Furthermore, a 3.0 GPA must be maintained on just the courses on the POS. In addition, there are specific GPA requirements on certain individual courses or sets of courses as detailed below. No course can be on the POS with a grade below a C (2.0) and at most two below a B (3.0). These and the stipulations outlined below cannot be waived.

PhD Degree

- At least 72 semester hours of credits at the 5000–7000 level, beyond the BS degree. At least one half of these must be 6000–7000 level and none can be undergraduate credit.
- A total of at least 36 credit hours of coursework and excludes Independent Study/Doctoral Research/Dissertation credits.
- At least 15 credit hours of Dissertation and no more than 24 credit hours of Dissertation (EEL 7980).

Although there are no required courses in the EE PhD program, a PhD student must have his Plan of Study Approved by the Graduate Coordinator, before the completion of 9 credit hours into the program.

Curriculum

Please visit the [Graduate Catalog](#) to see the current curriculum for our program.

Timeline for Completion

A typical PhD degree program (once all 72 hours are completed and the above requirements are met the student can defend their Dissertation defense, and graduate upon the dissertation committee's approval):

1st Year of Graduate Training

Fall	Spring	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEL 5542: Random Processes I EEL 5513: SP Applications EEL 7919: Doctoral Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEL 6530: Communication Theory EEL 6502: Adaptive Digital Signal Processing EEL 7919: Doctoral Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEL 6918: Independent Study EEL 6918: Independent Study
Semester Total: 9 credit hours	Semester Total: 9 credit hours	Semester Total: 6

2nd Year of Graduate Training

Fall	Spring	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEL 5630: Digital Control Systems EEL 6504: Communication Systems Design EEL 7919: Doctoral Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEL 6616: Adaptive Control EEL 6812: Introduction to Neural Networks EEL 7919: Doctoral Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEL 6918: Independent Study EEL 6918: Independent Study
Semester Total: 9 credit hours	Semester Total: 9 credit hours	Semester Total: 6

3rd Year of Graduate Training

Fall	Spring	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEL 5820: Image Processing EEL 5825: Pattern Recognition EEL 7919: Doctoral Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEL 6823: Image Processing II EEL 6617: Fundamentals of Multivariate Digital Control EEL 7919: Doctoral Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEL 7980: Dissertation
Semester Total: 9 credit hours	Semester Total: 9 credit hours	Semester Total: 3 credit hours

4th Year of Graduate Training

Fall	Spring	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">EEL 7980: Dissertation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">EEL 7980: Dissertation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">EEL 7980: Dissertation
Semester Total: 3 credit hours	Semester Total: 3 credit hours	Semester Total: 3 credit hours

5th Year of Graduate Training

Fall	Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none">EEL 7980: Dissertation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">EEL 7980: Dissertation
Semester Total: 3 credit hours	Semester Total: 3 credit hours

Examination Requirements

Qualifying Review

To better ensure that PhD students have acquired the requisite background and are prepared to make a successful transition into the research phase of their academic career, the Schools Graduate Committee requires students to prepare a portfolio containing evidence of their academic performance, their research progress to-date, and an evaluation of this and related intangible evidence as provided by the students research advisor. The portfolio should contain a complete record of their coursework (SASS Audit), a resume, particularly listing publications and submissions of conference and journal papers, and any related information the student believes bolsters their case of being ready to embark upon a research career.

An initial evaluation must occur prior to entering the student's 19th credit hour of graduate work in the program. In most cases a second review will take place prior to beginning the 37th credit hour. In rare cases (some students enter the program "better prepared" than others), a single review may be sufficient. At the other extreme, again hopefully rare, students can be removed from the program for poor academic performance and/or inadequate performance in their assigned GTA/GRA responsibilities. Review files must contain an evaluation and recommendation by the research advisor.

The Graduate Committee will entertain qualifying review portfolios after each Fall and Spring term. Students can avail themselves of the reviewing process at most twice. While a student may resubmit an updated portfolio in consecutive terms, this is not recommended. The main reason a student is asked to resubmit a second time is that the research component has not sufficiently emerged in either the advisors opinion or that of the committee. That is something that normally takes more than an additional term to establish.

Students who have not successfully navigated their way through the review by the 37th credit hour will be removed from the program. As with many decisions of this type, there is a degree of subjectivity in judging whether there is a sufficiently high probability that the student can, in fact, finish the PhD degree. To err is costly, to both the student and the program. We believe, in addition to a good academic record, one of the strongest indicators of success is the relationship forged between the student and advisor that has arisen from the advisor watching the student "in action" in a research environment and which has resulted in the advisors belief that the student has the drive and ability to make a significant contribution to the discipline.

Technically, students admitted to the PhD program are initially given "Pre-doctoral" Status. After successfully completing the qualifying review, they are officially placed in "Doctoral" status.

Candidacy

A student must demonstrate his or her readiness for the PhD program in Electrical Engineering by authoring an accepted journal article or high quality conference paper. This should occur by the time the student is nearing the end of their coursework. The appropriateness of the work and venue will be judged by the student's dissertation advisory committee and, if deemed satisfactory, will result in a recommendation that the student be given Candidacy status. Admission to candidacy requires the approval of the program director and the college coordinator and is forwarded to the UCF College of Graduate Studies for status change. Only after admission to candidacy may a student register for doctoral dissertation hours (EEL 7980).

External members of dissertation advisory committee are not appointed until after the student has entered candidacy. By general University guidelines, a student and his or her dissertation advisory committee must formally convene for the committee to appraise the student's progress at least once per calendar year.

All transfer of credits, grade changes, and incomplete grades must be resolved prior to entering candidacy status.

Upon entering candidacy status, students must be registered continuously (including summer) as full-time students until graduation. Students in candidacy status are considered "full-time" when enrolled in 3 credits of EEL 7980, Dissertation.

Dissertation Requirements

The following can be found in the UCF [Graduate Catalog Dissertation Requirements](#) section and is worthy of repeating here.

"The dissertation consists of an original and substantial research study designed, conducted, and reported by the student with the guidance of the Dissertation Committee. The written dissertation must include a common theme with an introduction and literature review, details of the study, and results and conclusions prepared in accordance with program and university requirements. The dissertation is expected to represent a significant contribution to the discipline. Since this work is original, it is very important that care is taken in properly citing ideas and quotations of others. Failure to do so is academic dishonesty and subject to termination from the program without receiving the degree. An oral defense of the dissertation is required."

Dissertation Proposal

All PhD students must write a dissertation. This must be preceded by an oral presentation of a written dissertation proposal, which, in turn, cannot occur until a term after admission into candidacy status. The purpose of the written proposal, given to members of the research committee at least two weeks prior to the presentation, is to show the student has sufficiently explored the literature of a significant research problem in electrical engineering to be able to embark upon solving that problem. The written proposal should also detail a proposed methodology and plan for undertaking the research work, and its completion. Rules governing the proposal announcements, scheduling and committee attendance can be found in the [UCF Graduate Catalog](#).

The oral presentation of the proposal is open to the public and must be announced at least two weeks prior to its occurrence. The presentation should last approximately 45 minutes to an hour, and it should show the student is aware of the background, has a good idea of the problem being addressed, and has a reasonable plan for carrying out the research. The committee's role is to assess the significance of the proposed problem, the feasibility of the proposed solution, and to offer advice.

The proposal is not to be interpreted as "cast in stone." It is a proposal. The research may change direction as new information is uncovered. That is perfectly acceptable and expected. Of course, if the direction of the research becomes too "off target" a new proposal should be considered. This is at the discretion of your advisor, committee, and the graduate coordinator.

University Dissertation Requirements

The College of Graduate Studies [Thesis and Dissertation page](#) contains information on the university's requirements for dissertation formatting, format review, defenses, final submission, and more. A step-by-step completion guide is also available on [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) Site.

All university deadlines are listed in the [Academic Calendar](#). Your program or college may have other earlier deadlines; please check with your program and college staff for additional deadlines.

The following requirements must be met by dissertation students in their final term:

- Submit a properly formatted file for initial format review by the format review deadline
- Submit the Thesis and Dissertation Release Option form well before the defense
- Defend by the defense deadline
- Receive format approval (if not granted upon initial review)
- Submit signed approval form by final submission deadline
- Submit final dissertation document by final submission deadline

Students must format their dissertation according to the standards outlined in [Thesis and Dissertation Webcourse](#). Formatting questions or issues can be submitted to the Format Help page in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. Format reviews and final submission must be completed in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. The Dissertation Approval Form is also available in the Thesis and Dissertation Services site.

The College of Graduate Studies offers several thesis and dissertation [Workshops](#) each term. Students are highly encouraged to attend these workshops early in the dissertation process to fully understand the above policies and procedures.

The College of Graduate Studies thesis and dissertation office is best reached by email at editor@ucf.edu.

Defense

As with the proposal, the defense is announced and open to the public. Furthermore, the defense cannot be scheduled in the same term as the proposal.

Annual Review

Information projected to be entered in 2019-2020.

Graduate Research

UCF has three fundamental responsibilities with regard to graduate student research. They are to (1) support an academic environment that stimulates the spirit of inquiry, (2) develop the intellectual property stemming from research, and (3) disseminate the intellectual property to the general public. Students are responsible for being informed of rules, regulations and policies pertaining to research. Below are some general policies and resources.

Research Policies and Ethics Information: UCF's Office of Research & Commercialization ensures the UCF community complies with local, state and federal regulations that relate to research. For polices including required Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval when conducting research involving human subjects (e.g. surveys), animal research, conflict of interest and general responsible conduct of research, please see the website research.ucf.edu/ > Compliance.

UCF's Patent and Invention Policy: In most cases, UCF owns the intellectual property developed using university resources. The graduate student as inventor will according to this policy share in the proceeds of the invention.

Please see the current UCF Graduate Catalog for details: ucf.catalog.acalog.com/index.php?catoid=4 > Policies > General Graduate Policies.

ECE Research Overview

For an overview of ECE research including information on research labs, grants and projects, research seminars and a publication listing visit the ECE Research Overview webpage on the Department of ECE [website](#).

Financial Support

Financial support is a major concern for graduate students, especially since many rely on financial support from the university to pursue graduate study. In combination, the college, the university, and the department provide financial assistance to graduate students in several ways:

- Fellowships and Scholarships are available to academically outstanding students
- Graduate Teaching Assistantships – GTAs (for grading, recitation instruction, or laboratory teaching) are available for most newly arriving PhD students
- Graduate Research Assistantships – GRAs (for participating in sponsored faculty directed research) are available depending on the current funding levels of the faculty.

The department generally commits to some form of funding for at least the first two years of a PhD student's academic career. Rapid progress by the student, especially in completing the qualifying review and publishing research results, aids in further commitment from the student's faculty mentor. Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress (earning good course grades, registering and completing a full course load and passing qualifiers), and do acceptable research or grading or teaching work to maintain their financial support.

- All students must maintain a 3.0 GPA in their Plan of Study, as well as overall courses taken since entering the program. They must not receive more than two grades below B (3.0), and those must be balanced to maintain the 3.0 overall. Students on contract are expected to work 10 to 20 hours per week on their assigned tasks (whether it be grading, teaching, or research), while they are maintaining satisfactory progress in completing their academic courses. Note that satisfactory progress for a supported student is not the same as maintaining the minimum grades, or of just barely performing at research. Support is a privilege not a right.
- All GTAs who have any contact with undergraduate students must take all training required by Graduate Studies. These training modules include:
 - UCF GTA Training for Graders, Assistants, and Associates
 - UCF SPEAK Exam (required for international students who will be Assistants or Associates)
- Students must meet their obligations to continue to receive their financial support. Students on assistantship agreements must maintain satisfactory work as defined by their supervisor. Also, being on an assistantship agreement requires that the students register for the proper number of hours of classes in time to process tuition remission and so forth.
- The duration of financial support may vary from one semester at a time to up to a 4-year renewable fellowship.
- International students are expected to be here as full-time students, and may not work off campus except under very strict conditions. For information about the types of employment available to international students, and the requirements and restrictions based on visa type, see the International Services Center's website: global.ucf.edu/ > Students > Employment.
- Graduate students may receive financial assistance through fellowships, assistantships, tuition support, or loans. For more information, see the [Office of Student Financial Assistance](#), which describes the types of financial assistance available at UCF and provides general guidance in planning your graduate finances. The [Financial Information](#) of the Graduate Catalog is another key resource.

Key points about financial support:

- If you're interested in financial assistance, you're strongly encouraged to apply for admission early. A complete application for admission, including all supporting documents, must be received by the priority date listed for your program under "Admissions." However, no explicit application is needed for consideration for Graduate Teaching Assistantships, Graduate Research Assistantships or Fellowships. That is, all applicants accepted to the EE PhD program are automatically considered for such forms of financial assistance. The primary source of support for the MS students are research assistantships.
- You must be admitted to a graduate program before the university can consider awarding financial assistance to you.
- If you want to be considered for loans and other need-based financial assistance, review the UCF Student Financial Assistance website at finaid.ucf.edu and complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form, which is available online at studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa. Apply early and allow up to six weeks for the FAFSA form to be processed.
- UCF Graduate Studies awards university graduate fellowships, with most decisions based on nominations from the colleges and programs. All admitted graduate students are automatically considered in this nomination process. To be eligible for a fellowship, a student must be accepted as a graduate student in a degree program and be enrolled full-time. University graduate fellowships are not affected by [FAFSA](#) determination of need.
- Please note that select fellowships do require students to fill out a fellowship application (either a university fellowship application, an external fellowship application, or a college or school fellowship application). For university fellowship applications, see graduate.ucf.edu/funding/.

Graduate Student Associations

Women in EECS at UCF

Women in EECS are undergraduate, graduate, and faculty women in the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science affiliated with IEEE Women In Engineering (WIE). For more information on how to get involved visit the [Women in EECS webpage](#).

IEEE UCF Student Branch

The Institute for Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of technical achievement, scholarly pursuit, and civic involvement. Currently, IEEE has over 350,000 members in 150 different countries. For more information on how to get involved visit the [IEEE UCF chapter website](#).

UCF Programming Team

The UCF Programming Team competes in the Association for Computing Machinery's International Collegiate Programming Contest. As a student organization within UCF's School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, we compete regionally each fall and usually internationally each spring. For more information on how to get involved visit the [UCF Programming Team website](#).

Association for Computing Machinery at UCF

The Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) is an international scientific and educational organization dedicated to advancing the arts, sciences, and applications of information technology. With a world-wide membership, ACM is a leading resource for computing professionals and students working in various fields of Information Technology and for interpreting the impact of information technology on society.

The local student chapter is open to all interested students, please visit the [ACM at UCF website](#). Weekly meetings include guest lecturers from the industry, UCF, and other universities.

Graduate Student Association

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is UCF's graduate organization committed to enrich graduate students' personal, educational and professional experience. To learn more or get involved, please visit facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/. For individual department or graduate program organizations, please see program advisor.

Professional Development

In this section, we identify university resources available to students for professional development. A graduate student's professional development goes beyond completing course work, passing exams, conducting research for a thesis or dissertation, and meeting degree requirements. Professional development also involves developing the academic and non-academic skills needed to become successful in the field of choice.

- UCF has an active professional development program for graduate students, including the Professoriate Program, sponsored by Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, the GTA Certificate Program, sponsored by FCTL, the Pathways to Success program, the Graduate Research forum, sponsored by the Division of Graduate Studies, and special award recognitions such as the Award for Excellence by a Graduate Teaching Assistant, the Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching, the Award for the Outstanding Master's Thesis, and the Award for the Outstanding Dissertation (see below for additional information).
- The university has active student chapters of the ACM and the IEEE. The cost for student membership in the national organizations is subsidized by professional memberships. This is a "bargain" that no student should pass up.
- ECE sponsors regular colloquia talks by leading researchers in the discipline. All students are strongly encouraged to attend as many as feasible within the constraints of their courses and other academic obligations. In fact the School of ECE sets a minimum number of attendances for PhD students supported by the School or its faculty members – all PhD students will be apprised of how to sign up for colloquia (a zero-credit course) and how to report attendance.
- Various research groups hold their own seminars in which students present their research in front of other members of their research group.
- Doctoral students have the opportunity to develop grant-proposal writing skills by working closely with faculty mentors.
- Students are expected to publish the results of their research. In fact, the ECE PhD requires publication to enter candidacy.
- Graduate students in ECE are encouraged to present papers at conferences. Often their faculty mentor will be able to fund one or more such opportunities. The School of ECE and the Student Government Association are other sources of such support.
- Graduate students in ECE are also encouraged to participate in summer research internships when this is compatible with their research agendas – see your research advisor for more information and guidelines.

Instructor Training and Development

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) promotes excellence in all levels of teaching at the University of Central Florida. To that end, they offer several programs for the professional development of Graduate Teaching Assistants at UCF.

- **GTA Training** (mandatory for employment as a GTA)
This training provides information and resources for students who will be instructors in a two-day workshop. The seminars cover a variety of topics, including course development, learning theories, lecturing, and academic freedom. Those interested in additional training can also attend an optional training session that normally follows the mandatory training.
- **Preparing Tomorrow's Faculty Program**
This certificate program (12-weeks for domestic students, 16-weeks for international students) consists of group and individualized instruction by Faculty Center staff and experienced UCF professors. Textbooks and materials are provided, and a stipend is offered to current UCF students who complete the certificate. International students are provided the same training as well as information regarding language immersion and tricks and cultural awareness as a way of knowing what to expect from American students.

For more information: fctl.ucf.edu/ > Events > GTA Programs or call 407-823-3544.

Instructional Strategies and Resources

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning provides classes and programs designed to assist graduate students with the educational issues they face in the classroom as teaching assistant or as instructors. These resources include assistance in course design and syllabi development, learning theories, and the use of different technologies in the classroom or on the internet. Further information on these resources is available at fctl.ucf.edu/TeachingAndLearningResources/.

Pathways to Success Workshops

Coordinated by the College of Graduate Studies, the Pathways to Success program offers free development opportunities for graduate students including workshops in Academic Integrity, Graduate Grantsmanship, Graduate Teaching, Personal Development, Professional Development, and Research. For more information and how to register, please visit graduate.ucf.edu/students/.

Graduate Research Forum

The Research Forum will feature poster displays representing UCF's diverse colleges and disciplines.

The Research Forum is an opportunity for students to showcase their research and creative projects and to receive valuable feedback from faculty judges. Awards for best poster presentation in each category will be given and all participants will receive recognition.

The College of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Student Association invite all UCF students, community, and employers to attend the Graduate Research Forum. For more information, contact researchweek@ucf.edu.

Graduate Excellence Awards

Each year, the College of Graduate Studies offers graduate students who strive for academic and professional excellence the opportunity to be recognized for their work. The award categories include the following:

Award for Excellence by a Graduate Teaching Assistant – This award is for students who provide teaching support and assistance under the direction of a lead teacher. This award focuses on the extent and quality of the assistance provided by the student to the lead instructor and the students in the class. (Not intended for students who are instructor of record)

Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching – This award is for students who serve as instructors of record and have independent classroom responsibilities. The focus of this award is on the quality of the student's teaching and the academic contributions of those activities.

Award for the Outstanding Dissertation – It recognizes doctoral students for excellence in the dissertation. The focus of this award is on the quality and contribution of the student's dissertation. Excellence of the dissertation may be demonstrated by evidence such as, but not limited to: publications in refereed journals, awards and recognitions from professional organizations, and praise from faculty members and other colleagues in the field.

For the nomination process and eligibility criteria, see graduate.ucf.edu/awards-and-recognition/.

Other

Students should take opportunities to present a poster or a topic of research at a conference. To obtain financial support to present at a conference (other than through your program) or to engage in comparable creative activity at a professional meeting, visit the Travel Support section at graduate.ucf.edu/.

For information about the Council of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) thesis and dissertation awards, see their website: csgs.org/ > Awards.

For grant-proposal writing resources: uwc.cah.ucf.edu/.

Job Search

UCF's Career Services department offers a wide range of programs and services designed to assist graduate students. These services include evaluation and exploration of career goals, preparation for the job search and job search resources. To learn more, visit their website at career.ucf.edu/.

For specific services or resources provided by the academic program, please visit the [Career Services webpage](#) on the [Electrical and Computer Engineering website](#).

Forms

- [College of Graduate Studies Forms and References](#)
A complete listing of general forms and references for graduate students, with direct links, may be found here.
- [Graduate Petition Form](#)
When unusual situations arise, petitions for exceptions to policy may be requested by the student. Depending on the type of appeal, the student should contact his/her program adviser to begin the petition process.
- [Traveling Scholar Form](#)
If a student would like to take advantage of special resources available on another campus but not available on the home campus; for example, special course offerings, research opportunities, unique laboratories and library collections, this form must be completed and approved.

Useful Links

- [Electrical Engineering PhD](#)
- [College of Engineering and Computer Science](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Campus Map](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)

- [Financial Assistance](#)
- [Golden Rule Student Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Student Association](#)
- [Graduate Student Center](#)
- [Housing and Residence Life](#)
- [Housing, off campus](#)
- [Knights Email](#)
- [Library](#)
- [NID Help](#)
- [Pathways to Success](#)
- [Recreation and Wellness Center](#)
- [Shuttles Parking Services](#)
- [Student Health Services](#)
- [Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\)](#)
- [UCF Global](#)
- [University Writing Center](#)

Grad Faculty

Asterisk = has previous committee experience, which qualifies the person to serve as vice chair

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Mikhael, Wasfy *

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