

To the EE grads:

As grad reviews approach, here is a reminder about why we do grad reviews and how you should prepare. We want to emphasize that your main evaluation comes from your committee; evaluation is only one small component of reviews. Students are strongly encouraged to prepare carefully (to make the best use of all of our time), but to not worry too much.

What are grad reviews?

Over the course of two days each EE student meets with the EE faculty (as many of us as can be there, given other commitments). Each student is allotted 15 minutes.

1st 5 minutes: student summary of research activities (or introductions for new students).

2nd 5 minutes: questions/discussion

3rd 5 minutes: student leaves, faculty discussion.

A few weeks later the student gets a letter from the faculty indicating if the student is making good progress, and whether there are any issues of particular concern.

Why grad reviews?

Grad reviews serve many purposes.

1. Faculty meet students outside their own labs.
2. Students reflect on past progress and future plans, and practice describing their research interests clearly and concisely.
3. Faculty discuss grad teaching/mentoring.
4. Faculty estimate the number of TA positions needed for next year
5. Students (especially finishing students) provide feedback to the faculty on the program – what works, and what we should consider changing.
6. Faculty assess each student's progress. If a student is having some difficulty the faculty offer suggestions; the very rare cases where a student seems not to be making adequate progress towards their degree are discussed.

How students should prepare for grad reviews:

1. Your Gradbeta page and Ben Miller inform you of what requirements should be taken care of at each stage of grad school. Make sure you are up to date – if you aren't sure ask Ben. We will discuss what has been completed in each review. Please "get right" with Ben BEFORE your review so we can all focus on your work, not "check-offs".
2. PREPARE a brief presentation (no visuals required). This should include a pithy statement of your research interests (what you would say at a meeting when someone asks "so what do you work on?"), a summary of your activities for the last year, and a brief mention of your plans for next year. This is both for faculty who don't know you well, and for you to practice presenting your research concisely.
3. Discuss your source of support for next year (TA, RA, etc.) with your advisor.
4. If you are unsure about whether you are making sufficient progress, ask your advisor BEFORE grad reviews. Your best feedback will come from your advisor; there should be no surprises at reviews.

What happens after reviews:

Each student gets an electronic letter, which usually confirms that they are making sufficient progress and are therefore eligible for TA support. Sometimes the letter will contain suggestions or concerns raised during faculty discussion or will indicate that the student is not making sufficient progress; talk to your mentor and/ or committee for detailed feedback. Feedback from grad reviews is the opinion of all assembled faculty.