# Aida Afshar

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Curriculum Vitae

#### Research Interests

- Sequential Decision Making
- Reinforcement Learning
- Foundation Models

#### Education

**Boston University** 

PhD - Computer Engineering

Boston, MA, USA 2023-current

Sharif University of Technology

Bachelor of Science

 Major: Applied Mathematics - Minor: Computer Science

Tehran, Iran 2018-2023

#### Research Experience

#### DeLF: Designing Learning Environments with Foundation Models

Boston, MA

RL+LLM Workshop at AAAI 2024 Conference, Vancouver, Canada

Fall 2023

- We propose a method named DeLF: Designing Learning Environments with Foundation Models, that employs Large Language Models to design and codify the user's intended learning environment. We show in experiments that DeLF can obtain executable environment codes for the corresponding RL problems.
- Link to paper preprint §

#### A Reinforcement Learning Approach to Lightning Network Fee Policy

Tehran, Iran Fall 2021-Fall 2022

Bachelor Thesis at Sharif University of Technology

- Payment Channel Networks are decentralized transaction mechanisms among a large number of users. We proposed a dynamic fee-setting environment that can suggest a profitable fee policy for payment channel owners. This work facilitates the use of RL in novel crypto-economic applications.
- Link to paper preprint •
- Link to GitHub repo 😱

# Reward Design of user-in-the-box model for Trackpad Application

Espoo, Finland August 2023

Research Internship at Aalto University

- The ultimate goal of this project is to define rich behavioral data for training from an artificial agent with a human biomechanical model. We used a simulated skeleton named user-in-the-box, which is a Mujoco-based biomechanical model. We designed and added the scene for the trackpad application in the simulator, and proposed the reward function that successfully leads to the intended behavior.
- Link to presentation slides •

Link to Trackpad Application video demos •

#### Hierarchical Potential-based Reward Shaping from Task Specifications

Research Internship at Vienna University of Technology (TU Wien)

Vienna, Austria Summer 2022

- HPRS is a hierarchical, potential-based reward-shaping approach that tries to automate the reward definition by formalizing the task as a set of safety, target, and comfort requirements using temporal logic. In this project, we implemented this method for HighwayEnv, an RL environment for decision-making in autonomous driving.
- Link to HPRS GitHub repo 😱
- Link to HPRS paper preprint *§*

#### AWARDS

- Srinivasa Krishnamurthy PhD Fellowship
  - College of Engineering, Boston University
- Boston University Distiguished Computer Engineering Fellowship
  - Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Boston University
- Third place in !Optimizer Competition of SOAL Optimization Lab 🔗
  - Department of Mathematical Sciences, Sharif University of Technology

Fall 2023

Fall 2023

Summer 2021

#### Relevant Courses

- 1. Algorithmic Game Theory
- 2. Automata Theory
- 3. Machine Learning Theory
- 4. Advanced Programming
- 5. Data Structures
- 6. Cyber-Physical Systems

- 1. Advanced Linear Algebra
- 2. Convex Optimization
- 3. Semidefinite Programming
- 4. Linear Programming
- 5. Stochastic Processes
- 6. Bayesian Statistics

#### SKILLS

- Programming:
  - 1. Julia
  - 2. Python
  - 3. Java
  - 4. C++
  - 5. Matlab

- Optimization:
  - 1. JuMP
  - 2. MathOptInterface
- ML:
  - 1. PyTorch
  - 2. TensorFlow
  - 3. Keras

- Web:
  - 1. HTML/CSS (Basic)
- Tools:
  - 1. LaTeX
- Techs:
  - 1. Git

## LANGUAGES

• English: Proficient (TOEFL iBT: 107/120)

• Persian: Native

## REFERENCES

References are available upon request.