

MS and Off-Campus Ventures

Vilas Bhat

About me:

- Final Year Computer Science
- CGPA: 9.43
- Explored topics: Parallel Computing, Deep Learning, Cloud (AWS) etc.
- GRE: 327 (169 (q) + 158 (v) + 4.0 (a))
- TOEFL: 117 (30 (r) + 30 (l) + 28 (s) + 29 (w))
- Internships: Samsung R&D (2nd year), Intuit (3rd year)
- Publications: 2 (minor)

Why masters?

- Decided in June last year
- Better projects in US offices
- Was not ready for a job right away
- Time to explore and improve profile



Should I do a masters after work exp?

Typical reasons vs My take on those:

- Better profile - Depends on project-profile compatibility
- Financial help for masters - Loans available, Earn higher in the US
- Getting callbacks in the US - Does not matter for top univs

Where did I apply (MS) ?

- CMU - MS CS
- CMU - Masters in Computational Data Science (MCDS)
- CMU - MS in Information Networking (MSIN)
- GeorgiaTech (MS CS)
- UIUC (MCS)
- UCLA (MS CS)
- UCSD (MS CS)
- Columbia (MS CS)
- UPenn (MS CIS)

Speculative Reasons for Admits/Rejects

For admits:

- A balanced profile with low number of red flags
- High GPA
- Decent GRE/TOEFL
- Compact, honest SOP

For rejects:

- No research internships
- History of NITK at the institute
- (Probably) GRE did not become a selection factor

Where did I get my LORs and why?

- Prof. Manu Basavaraju (4 courses, TA, good rapport)
- Prof. Mohit Tahiliani (3 courses, open source + research projects, conference paper drafts, Google Code-In mentor, good rapport)
- Prof. Shashidhar Koolagudi (4 courses, 1 accepted paper, Web Club Fac Ad)

Why not from internship managers?

- LOR recommended from PhDs
- Known professors for 2 years
- Felt I had enough diversity
- Did not want to risk PPO offer

How to ask for LORs

- Ask early, ask for a **strong recommendation letter**
- Back out if they hesitate!
- Ask seniors for reviews on letters
- If they write on their own, provide a packet to the recommender:
 - Your GPA, Class rank, grades in their courses
 - Your interactions with them (Be specific)
 - Projects under them, outcomes
 - Your fields of interest (Better, send your resume/SOP!)
 - Your other recommenders (Avoid repetitions)
- If going for a job, ask profs to write LORs before leaving college

Statement of Purpose (MS)



©2018 by King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.



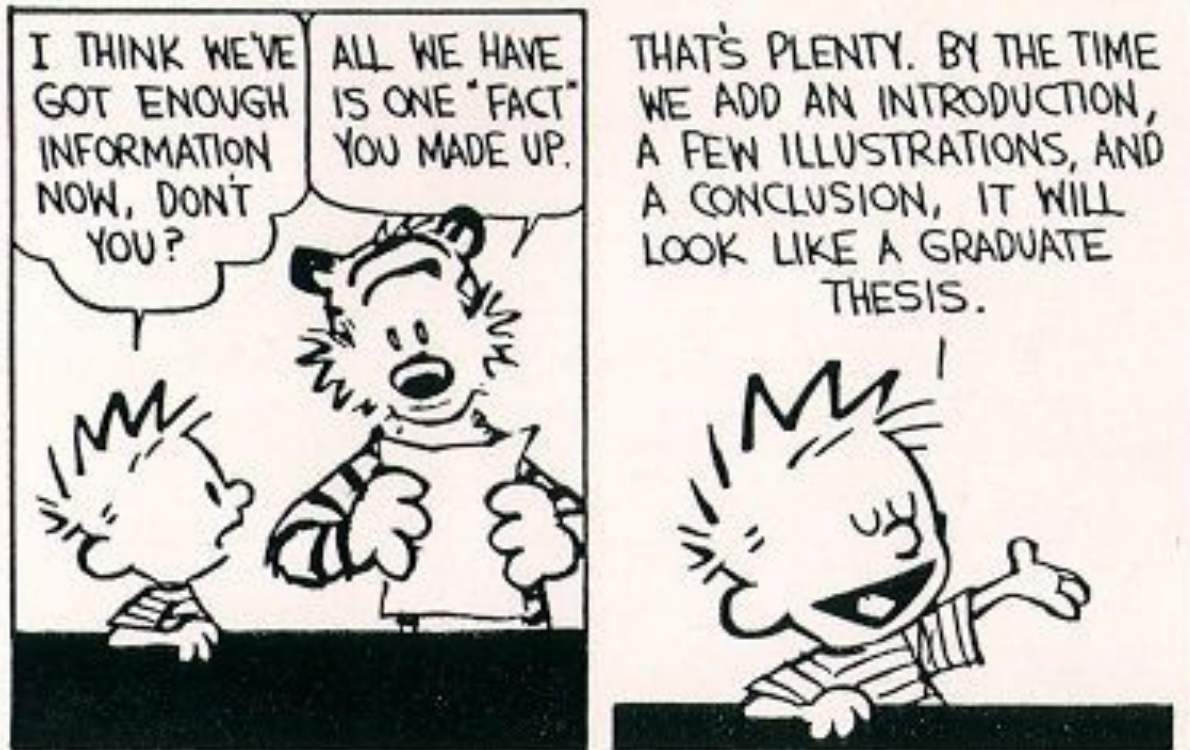
Statement of Purpose (MS)

- **Do not neglect.** Start early. Do your research well.
- What do you bring to the admissions table? Make it stand out!
- Avoid cliches, red flags at all cost (Family, Childhood stories, Want to work in US etc)
- Tell something off your resume, do not repeat it.
- Knit experiences into a nice story, having a good flow
- Use grammarly (Get the premium version)

Statement of Purpose (MS)

- Reviews, reviews and reviews! (That being said, listen to yourself too)
- Keep it short. Show some mercy on them :P
- Show growth, passion, eagerness to learn
- Tailor it to the university - Mention genuine reasons for choosing the program, professors/labs/projects you would like to work on
- Be honest! Fake SOPs are always easy to spot
- Don't just state things, demonstrate!

Statement of Purpose (MS)



Statement of Purpose (MS)

- Balance between technical & personal information
- Beginning and Concluding Paragraphs - **MOST IMPORTANT**
- Check for what each university expects in their application SOP
- Take breaks between writing, get fresh perspectives
- Use simple words as much as possible

Where did I apply/get offers? (Industry)

- **Microsoft Research (Careers Portal)**

Application Materials: Resume, SOP, 1 LOR

- **Intuit (PPO)**

- **Google Warsaw, Poland (Referral)**

Application Materials: Resume

Tips for resume

- Keep it compact. Use bullets!
- Strike off information about high school if irrelevant (Remove even class 10, 12 grades if no space)
- Use a good, clean template (Ex: CareerCup, Overleaf templates)
- Refer to resumes of successful people online
- Use numbers wherever possible (Ex: Rank X out of Y candidates)
- For projects, use the template “Achieved X by doing Y, as measured by Z”
- For co-curriculars (Ex: Club posts), highlight your activities rather than title

Microsoft Research - The Process

- (One of the) best and recognised places in India for industrial research
- Ideal if you have a low GPA or/and no research internships but want to get into top universities for Masters/PhD
- 2 year program - Stipend of 16 (14+2) lpa
- Applied through Microsoft Careers Portal with 1 LOR and SOP in September
- Response in Mid-December from 2 teams i.e, projects
- 9 interviews altogether: 1 screening round + 3 online + 5 onsite
- All interviews were of 1 hour duration: 20 min each of questions on DSA, Resume and System Design

Google - The Process

- Referral from a senior - Applied in January
- Got response in 2 days (Can go up to a month depending on time)
- Interview Process : **1 resume screening + 1 online DSA** + 4 onsite DSA + 1 online team matching interview(s)
- Each interview is of 45 minutes duration - Usually one question (2 if time permits), coding on google docs or whiteboard (onsite)
- Ported application process for an internship next year

Some tips to apply for off-campus jobs/internships

- Look out for coding contests which they recruit from (Ex: CodeAgon, Kickstart etc)
- Ask NITK Alumni/other employees for referrals
- Apply for non-Indian offices too!
- Mail recruiters via LinkedIn/Look out for job posters
- Apply for as many places as possible



**KEEP
CALM
AND
SPRAY
N' PRAY**

Thank you :)

E-mail: vilasbhat97@gmail.com

Phone: 8971234787