

Jan Sobotka

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EDUCATION

Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL)

Sep. 2024 – ongoing

M.S. in Computer Science

Lausanne, CH

- Weighted grade average: **5.89** (scale of 1.0 to 6.0, 6.0 is the best)
- Anticipated graduation date: 07/26

Czech Technical University, Faculty of Information Technology

July 2021 – July 2024

B.S. in Informatics, Specialization in Artificial Intelligence

Prague, CZ

- Weighted grade average: **1.05** (scale of 1.0 to 4.0, 1.0 is the best)
- Ranked among the **top 5%** of students in the majority of courses.

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

AI/ML Engineer Junior

June 2021 – June 2023

Generali Česká pojišťovna

Prague, CZ

- Prepared a machine learning pipeline that improved the accuracy of product recommendations by 35%.
- Built computing infrastructure for the company's internal data science community with over 90 members.
- Applied deep learning to product and text recommendation, client departure prediction, email classification, and unsupervised customer segmentation.

IT Generalist

Feb. 2020 – June 2021

Startup Disrupt

Prague, CZ

- Led the development of a web application for ticket sales.
- Deployed several websites and cloud services on AWS.
- Prepared IT setup for over 30 offline/online events.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant at the Autonomous Systems Group

July 2025 – ongoing

University of Texas at Austin, Oden Institute for Computational Engineering and Sciences

Austin, US

- Analyzing large language models in strategy games using game theory and interpretability tools.
- Supervised by Prof. Ufuk Topcu.

Research Assistant at the MLBio Lab

Aug. 2024 – July 2025

Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL)

Lausanne, CH

- Designed a framework to improve model robustness against distribution shifts by learning how to weight an ensemble of weak supervisors, outperforming baselines by 40% (joint first-author at NeurIPS 2025).
- Evaluated the in-context learning capabilities of multimodal foundation models on computer vision tasks.
- Supervised by Prof. Maria Brbić.

Research Intern at the Computational Systems Neuroscience Group

Sep. 2023 – Aug. 2024

Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University

Prague, CZ

- Developed a state-of-the-art method to decode high-fidelity images from small neural activity datasets, resulting in a first-author publication at NeurIPS 2025.
- Supervised by Mgr. Ján Antolík, Ph.D.

Research Assistant at the Data Science Lab

Apr. 2023 – Feb. 2024

Faculty of Information Technology, Czech Technical University

Prague, CZ

- Investigated the inner workings and applicability of optimization methods known as *Learning-to-Optimize* (meta-learning) and *fractional gradient descent* in the context of deep learning.

Computational Neuroscience Research Intern

July 2023 – Sep. 2023




Biozentrum, University of Basel

Basel, CH



- Designed computational models of spiking neural networks and analyzed the role of bistable dendrites in memory (research project: *Bistable Dendrites Matter: Auto-Associative Memory in Networks of Neurons*).

PUBLICATIONS

* DENOTES EQUAL CONTRIBUTION

- Jan Sobotka**, Luca Baroni, Ján Antolík (2025). Accepted
MEIcoder: Decoding Visual Stimuli from Neural Activity by Leveraging Most Exciting Inputs.
Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS 2025).
- Myeongho Jeon*, **Jan Sobotka***, Suhwan Choi*, Maria Brbic (2025). Accepted
Weak-to-Strong Generalization under Distribution Shifts.
Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS 2025).
- Jan Sobotka**, Auke Ijspeert, Guillaume Bellegarda (2025). Accepted
Reverse-Engineering Memory in DreamerV3: From Sparse Representations to Functional Circuits.
Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS 2025, CogInterp workshop).
- Jan Sobotka**, Petr Šimánek, Pavel Kordík (2024). Submitted
Enhancing Fractional Gradient Descent with Learned Optimizers.
Optimization Letters.
- Jan Sobotka**, Petr Šimánek, Daniel Vařata (2024). DOI  | arXiv 
Investigation into the Training Dynamics of Learned Optimizers.
The 16th International Conference on Agents and Artificial Intelligence (ICAART 2024).
- Jan Sobotka**, Petr Šimánek (2024). DOI 
Investigation into the Training Dynamics of Learned Optimizers (Student Abstract).
The 38th Annual AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AAAI-24).



SELECTED PROJECTS

- Auxiliary Training Objectives in Reinforcement Learning** Sep. 2024 – Feb. 2025
• Investigated the impact of auxiliary training objectives on representations of recurrent RL agents.
- Deep Reinforcement Learning for Optimal Experimental Design in Biology** Jan. 2023 – June 2023
• Open research project focused on the efficient estimation of biological system parameters [OpenBioML .
- Generative Models of Regulatory DNA Sequences Based on Diffusion Models** July 2022 – Dec. 2022
• Open research project investigating the application of diffusion models to genomics data [OpenBioML .

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Organizer of the Traion Community of Student Entrepreneurs** June 2020 – Feb. 2021
• Organized offline meetings, educational seminars, and workshops for student entrepreneurs.
- Volunteer for an Entrepreneurship Education Program for Students** Dec. 2019 – Aug. 2020
• Organized events and wrote a technology/entrepreneurship blog for the Soutěž and Podnikej organization.
- Pitcher at the Czech Republic National Baseball Team U-15** Jan. 2017 – July 2017
• Secured third place at the U-15 European Baseball Championship 2017.

HONORS AND AWARDS

The Bakala Foundation Scholarship: Awarded to 12 out of 165 applicants | The Bakala Foundation  | 2024
Merit-Based Scholarship for Academic Achievements: Czech Technical University | 2021, 2022, 2023
National Benchmark Exam in Mathematics: Scored higher than 97% of the 875 test takers | SCIO  | 2021
Algorithms & Programming Competition FIKS: 4th out of 107 contestants | Czech Technical University | 2020
TOP25 Czech High School Students of the Year 2020: Selection based on extracurricular activities | 2020

SKILLS

Programming languages: Python, C, C++, Julia, JavaScript, Go
Other selected technologies: PyTorch, Scikit-learn, NumPy, Pandas, Matplotlib, Azure, AWS, Git, Docker, Bash
Languages: Czech (native speaker), English (C1, TOEFL iBT 105), German (A2)