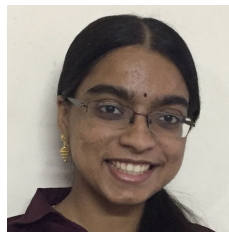
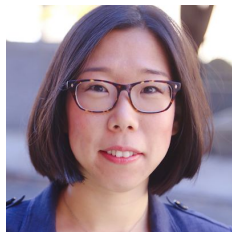


Whether to do a PhD and how to apply for and choose a PhD program

ACL 2020 mentor session

Steven Bethard, Wei Xu, Aishwarya Padmakumar



Outline

- Introduction
- How to apply for PhD Program?
- Whether to do a PhD?
- How to choose PhD program?

Steven Bethard



- 2020 - Associate Professor, University of Arizona
- 2016 - 2020 Assistant Professor, University of Arizona
- 2013 - 2016 Assistant Professor, University of Alabama at Birmingham
- 2011 - 2013 Postdoc, University of Colorado Boulder
- 2010 - 2011 Postdoc, KU Leuven
- 2009 - 2010 Postdoc, Stanford University
- 2009 - 2009 Postdoc, Johns Hopkins University
- 2008 - 2008 Postdoc, University of Colorado Boulder
- 2007 Ph.D. Computer Science & Cognitive Science
University of Colorado Boulder
- 2002 B.S./B.A. Computer Science, Mathematics, Linguistics
University of Arizona

Wei Xu



- Assistant Professor in CS at Georgia Tech (2020 Aug --)
- Assistant Professor in CS at Ohio State University (2016 -- 2020)
- Visiting Faculty at CMU LTI (summer 2019)
- Postdoc at University of Pennsylvania (2014 -- 2016)
- Visiting PhD student at University of Washington (2012 -- 2013)
- PhD in CS from New York University (2014)
- BS/MS in CS from Tsinghua University
- Internship at MSR, Amazon, ETS, France Telecom, Hong Kong PolyU ...

Aishwarya Padmakumar

- PhD candidate at University of Texas, Austin (2015 --)'
 - Expecting to join Amazon Alexa AI in 2020.
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- BTech from IIT Madras, India (2011-2015)
 - Internships at Google, Facebook



How to apply for PhD program?

- **CV** -- publications, industry/research experience (internship or gap year), ...
- **Transcripts** -- education background (school, major, Master/Bachelor, GPA, related coursework, ...)
- **Recommendation Letters** -- research capability, personal traits, communication skills ...
- **Personal Statement** -- your accomplishments, research interests, writing skills, career plan, ...
- GRE, TOEFL, and other standard testing scores ...

Whether to do a PhD?

- Master vs. PhD
- Software engineer vs. research scientist
- Get research experience (and take it seriously)

How to choose a PhD program?

- PhD advisor
- Research interests ...
- School, school visit ...
- Geolocation
- Career plan (which may change over time)

Useful resources:

- **Applying to Ph.D. Programs in Computer Science** by Mor Harchol-Balter:
 - <https://www.cs.cmu.edu/~harchol/gradschooltalk.pdf>
- **Student Perspectives on Applying to NLP PhD Programs** by Nelson Liu and many others:
 - <https://blog.nelsonliu.me/2019/10/24/student-perspectives-on-applying-to-nlp-phd-programs/>
- **How to choose a PhD program?** By Andrew Kuznetsov:
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1o2ZTrUQYDXKbMlcmSH8IE-MW5vOX77PR/view>
- **A Survival Guide to a PhD** by Andrej Karpathy
 - <http://karpathy.github.io/2016/09/07/phd/>