

# ABDUL MUNTAKIM RAFI

LinkedIn: 

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## CURRENT RESEARCH INTEREST

Deciphering gene regulatory logic using Machine Learning

## EDUCATION

### DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

2021 - PRESENT

University of British Columbia

Vancouver, Canada

SUPERVISOR: Carl de Boer, Assistant Professor, School of Biomedical Engineering

### MASTER OF APPLIED SCIENCE IN ELECTRICAL AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING

2019 - 2021

University of Windsor

Windsor, Canada

SUPERVISOR: Jonathan Wu, Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

### BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING (EEE)

2014 - 2018

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET)

Dhaka, Bangladesh

SUPERVISOR: Md. Kamrul Hasan, Professor, Department of EEE

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- Graduate Research Assistant, de Boer Lab** [\[website\]](#) May 2021 - present  
*School of Biomedical Engineering, The University of British Columbia.*  
 Pursuing my Ph.D. in biomedical engineering in this lab under the supervision of Professor Dr. Carl de Boer. We are a mixed computational/experimental group. I apply machine learning to understand how the genome is regulated.
- Graduate Research Assistant, Centre for Computer Vision and Deep Learning** [\[website\]](#) Aug 2019 - Mar 2021  
*Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Windsor.*  
 Pursued my Master's in Applied Science degree from this lab under the supervision of Professor Dr. Jonathan Wu. I worked on digital image forensics, biomedical image processing, and social media data analysis. During this time, I published four papers.
- Research Assistant, Digital Signal Processing Research Laboratory** [\[website\]](#) Oct 2018 - Mar 2019  
*Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, BUET.*  
 Did my undergrad thesis under the supervision of Professor Dr. Md. Kamrul Hasan from this lab. After graduation, I joined the lab as a Research Assistant. I worked on digital image forensics and biomedical image processing. During this time, I published a paper and participated in two international signal processing competitions organized by IEEE.

## JOB EXPERIENCE

- Graduate Teaching Assistant, Master of Data Science, UBC** Sep 2021 - present  
 Joined UBC's Master of Data Science program as a full-time teaching assistant in Fall 2021 and continued working here. Courses I TAed here are Supervised Learning II, Statistical Inference and Computation II, Web and Cloud Computing, Data Science Workflows, Algorithms and Data Structures, and Computing Platforms for Data Science.
- Graduate Teaching Assistant, Biology Program, UBC** May 2022 - June 2022  
 Joined UBC's Biology program as a full-time teaching assistant for the Summer 2022 term in the course Fundamentals of Genetics.
- Mitacs Accelerate Intern, Lanner Electronics Inc.** [\[lanner\]](#) Nov 2020 - Mar 2021  
 Joined Lanner through the Mitacs Accelerate, which is Canada's premiere research internship program. I worked on the efficient inference of different AI-driven applications in edge devices.
- Graduate Teaching Assistant, ECE Department, University of Windsor** Jan 2020 - Dec 2020  
 Worked as a graduate teaching assistant for the courses Engineering Software Fundamentals and Computational Intelligence.
- Deep Learning Engineer, IFIVEO** [\[i-50\]](#) Oct 2019 - Apr 2020  
 Joined IFIVEO through the Mitacs Accelerate. Here, my task was to perform activity recognition to measure and improve manufacturing floor production processes using deep learning based vision systems. I collected data from manufacturing floors, supervised the annotation process, and deployed deep learning models using Amazon Sagemaker.
- Machine Learning Engineer, REVE Systems Ltd.** Mar 2019 - July 2019  
 Worked on designing a real-time Sign2Text translator for Bangla Sign Language.

## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

- **Abdul Muntakim Rafi**, Dmitry Penzar, Daria Nogina, Dohoon Lee, Eeshit Dhaval Vaishnav, Danyeong Lee, Nayeon Kim, Sangyeup Kim, Georgy Meshcheryakov, Andrey Lando, Payman Yadollahpour, Arsenii Zinkevich, Dohyeon Kim, Yeojin Shin, Il-Youp Kwak, Byeong-Chan Kim, Juhyun Lee, **Random Promoter DREAM Challenge Consortium**, Sun Kim, Aviv Regev, Jake Albrecht, Wuming Gong, Ivan V. Kulakovskiy, Pablo Meyer, Carl de Boer, “Evaluation and optimization of sequence-based gene regulatory deep learning models”. [\[preprint\]](#)
- Ishika Luthra, Xinyi E Chen, Cassandra Jensen, **Abdul Muntakim Rafi**, Asfar Lathif Salaudeen, Carl G de Boer, “Biochemical activity is the default DNA state in eukaryotes”. [\[preprint\]](#)
- Dmitry Penzar, Daria Nogina, Georgy Meshcheryakov, Andrey Lando, **Abdul Muntakim Rafi**, Carl de Boer, Arsenii Zinkevich, Ivan V Kulakovskiy, “LegNet: resetting the bar in deep learning for accurate prediction of promoter activity and variant effects from massive parallel reporter assays”. [\[preprint\]](#)
- Nicholas Mateyko, Omar Tariq, Xinyi E Chen, Will Cheney, Asfar Lathif Salaudeen, Ishika Luthra, Najmeh Nikpour, **Abdul Muntakim Rafi**, Hadis Kamali Deghan, Cassandra Jensen, Carl de Boer, “GIL: A Python package for designing custom indexing primers”, published in **Bioinformatics** 2023. [\[PubMed\]](#)
- **Abdul Muntakim Rafi**, Thamidul Islam Tonmoy, Uday Kamal, Q.M. Jonathan Wu, Md. Kamrul Hasan, “RemNet: Remnant Convolutional Neural Network for Camera Model Identification”, published in **Neural Computing And Applications** 2021. [\[SpringerLink\]](#)
- Uday Kamal, **Abdul Muntakim Rafi**, Rakibul Hoque, Jonathan Wu, Md. Kamrul Hasan, “Lung Cancer Tumor Region Segmentation Using Recurrent 3D-DenseUNet”, accepted at The Second International Workshop on Thoracic Image Analysis in conjunction with **MICCAI 2020**, October 2020. [\[SpringerLink\]](#)
- **Abdul Muntakim Rafi**, Shivang Rana, Rajwinder Kaur, Jonathan Wu, Pooya Moradian Zadeh, “Understanding Global Reaction to the Recent Outbreaks of COVID-19: Insights from Instagram Data Analysis”, accepted at **IEEE International Conference on Systems, Man, and Cybernetics, 2020**, October 2020. [\[IEEEExplore\]](#)
- **Abdul Muntakim Rafi**, Jonathan Wu, Md. Kamrul Hasan, “L2-Constrained RemNet for Camera Model Identification and Image Manipulation Detection”, presented in Image Manipulation workshop and challenges on image and video manipulation in conjunction with **ECCV 2020**, August 2020. [\[SpringerLink\]](#)
- **Abdul Muntakim Rafi**, Uday Kamal, Rakibul Hoque, Abid Abrar, Sowmitra Das, Robert Laganier, Md. Kamrul Hasan, “Application of DenseNet in Camera Model Identification and Post-processing Detection”, presented in **The IEEE Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition (CVPR) Workshops, 2019**, pp. 19-28, Long Beach, CA, USA, June 2019. [\[CVPR 2019 open access\]](#)
- **Abdul Muntakim Rafi**, Nowshin Nawal, Nur Sultan Nazar Bayev, Lusain Nima, Celia Shahnaz, Shaikh Anowarul Fattah, “Image-based Bengali Sign Language Alphabet Recognition for Deaf and Dumb Community”, presented in **2019 IEEE Global Humanitarian Technology Conference (GHTC)**, Seattle, WA, USA, October 2019. [\[IEEEExplore\]](#)

## WORKSHOPS CONDUCTED

- **Stem Cell Network (Canada)** Jun 2023  
I covered two things in the workshop. (i) How to utilize publicly available machine learning models to aid in genome editing experiments, and (ii) how to train a neural network on sequence-to-expression measurements from Massively Parallel Reporter Assays experiments.
- **IEEE EMBS Region 9 Conference** Oct 2023  
I have been invited to the conference to conduct a three-hours long workshop on how to design better sequence-based gene regulatory deep learning models.

## TALKS AND POSTER PRESENTATIONS

- **Predicting gene expression using random promoter sequences - Challenge Overview** 2022  
*14th annual RECOMB/ISCB Conference on Regulatory & Systems Genomics with DREAM Challenges, United States*
- **Tumor Segmentation from CT Scans Using Deep Learning** 2021  
*Guest lecture at graduate level course 'ELEC 8280: Image Processing', University of Windsor*
- **L2-Constrained RemNet for Camera Model Identification and Image Manipulation Detection** 2020  
*Advances in Image Manipulation workshop and challenges on image and video manipulation in conjunction with ECCV 2020, United Kingdom*
- **Lung Cancer Tumor Region Segmentation Using Recurrent 3d-denseunet** 2020  
*The Second International Workshop on Thoracic Image Analysis in conjunction with MICCAI 2020, Peru*
- **IEEE SPS Video and Image Processing Cup 2018 Final Round** 2018  
*2018 IEEE International Conference on Image Processing, Greece*
- **Shongket: Bengali Sign Language Alphabet Interpreter for the Deaf Community in Bangladesh** 2018  
*4TH IEEE WIECON-ECE 2018 CONFERENCE, Thailand*

## AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- **Four Year Doctoral Fellowship (4YF)** [\[UBC 4YF\]](#) 2021-2025  
 AWARD: 96,000 CAD in 4 years  
 The Four Year Doctoral Fellowship (4YF) program ensures UBC's best Ph.D. students are provided with financial support plus tuition for up to four years of their doctoral studies.
- **SBME Graduate Support Initiative-Entrance Award** [\[UBC GSI\]](#) 2021  
 AWARD: 4,000 CAD  
 This one-time award is granted to top-ranked incoming Ph.D. students, or top-ranked Ph.D. students in the first year of their program in SBME (School of Biomedical Engineering).
- **International Tuition Award** [\[UBC ITA\]](#) 2021-graduation  
 AWARD: 3,200 CAD per year  
 International Tuition Awards assist international graduate students with their tuition fees if they are registered full-time in research-oriented masters and doctoral programs at UBC - Vancouver campus.
- **President's Academic Excellence Initiative Ph.D. Award** [\[UBC President's\]](#) 2021-graduation  
 AWARD: 1,500 CAD per year  
 Awards totalling approximately 4.3 million CAD per year are provided to recognize the significant contributions of Ph.D. students to the research activities of the university.
- **PharmaHacks 2022** [\[PharmaHacks\]](#) [\[GitHub\]](#) 2022  
 Member of the team that won the hackathon's Phyla Challenge 'Classification of Diseases Based on the Gut Microbiome'.
- **IEEE SPS Video and Image Processing Cup 2018** [\[IEEE SP Magazine\]](#) 2018  
 AWARD: 2,500 USD  
 Member of the team that won 2<sup>nd</sup> place among 28 teams from the whole world.
- **4th IEEE-WIECON-ECE 2018 Humanitarian Project Competition** [\[IEEE SIGHT BLOG\]](#) [\[YouTube\]](#) 2018  
 AWARD: 500 USD  
 Member of the team that placed 2<sup>nd</sup> among top 8 teams.
- **Bangladesh Math Olympiad** 2011-2013  
 Divisional Champion
- **Bangladesh Astro Olympiad** 2012  
 National 4<sup>th</sup>
- **Bangladesh Physics Olympiad** 2012  
 Divisional Champion
- **Bangladesh Science Olympiad** 2011  
 National 3<sup>rd</sup>

## FUNDED PROJECTS

- **Lossless preprocessing of the sequence and expression space to improve sequence-based gene regulatory models** May 2023 - Aug 2023  
*Funding Source:* *School of Biomedical Engineering, UBC*  
*Principal investigator:* *Carl de Boer*  
*Total Funding:* 6,000 CAD  
*My Role:* I wrote the proposal as a co-applicant for this grant. Through this grant, we hired a Co-op student to pursue the project.
- **DREAM Challenge 2022** [\[website\]](#) May 2022 - July 2022  
*Funding Source:* *TPU Research Cloud, Google*  
*Principal investigator:* *Carl de Boer (UBC), Pablo Meyer (IBM research), Jake Albrecht (Sage Bionetworks)*  
*Total Funding:* 50 TPU quotas (each TPU quota consists of 5 v3-8s, 5 v2-8s, and 100 preemptible v2-8s)  
*My Role:* I co-organized the competition with Professor de Boer, Dr. Meyer, and Dr. Albrecht as the only graduate student in the committee.
- **Identifying selection on human gene expression with gene regulatory models** Jan 2022 - Dec 2022  
*Funding Source:* *The Digital Research Alliance of Canada*  
*Principal investigator:* *Carl de Boer*  
*Total Funding:* 6 GPU years of cloud computing resources  
*My Role:* I assisted Professor de Boer with writing the proposal for this grant.
- **Efficient edge inference benchmarking for AI-driven applications** [\[lanner\]](#) Nov 2020 - Mar 2021  
*Funding Source:* *Mitacs Accelerate*  
*Principal investigator:* *Jonathan Wu*  
*Total Funding:* 15,000 CAD  
*My Role:* I was the only co-applicant in this project. I wrote the proposal with Professor Wu's supervision.

- **Spatio-Temporal Human Activity Recognition on Manufacturing Floors** [i-50] Oct 2019 - Apr 2020  
*Funding Source: Mitacs Accelerate*  
*Principal investigator: Jonathan Wu*  
*Total Funding: 22,500 CAD*  
*My Role:* I was one of the co-applicants in this project. I assisted Professor Wu with writing this proposal.

## PEER-REVIEW ACTIVITIES

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### Primary reviewer:

- *Neurocomputing*  
 Number of papers reviewed: **2**
- *Journal of Real-Time Image Processing*  
 Number of papers reviewed: **2**
- *Cyber-systems and Robotics*  
 Number of papers reviewed: **1**

### Secondary reviewer (assisted PI with permission from the editor):

- *Genome Biology*  
 Number of papers reviewed: **1**
- *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*  
 Number of papers reviewed: **1**
- *Molecular Systems Biology*  
 Number of papers reviewed: **1**

## MENTORSHIP

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- **Talaria Summer Institute** [website] 2023-  
 Talaria Summer Institute (TSI) is a free summer STEM research mentorship program for female and genderqueer students. Supervising a high school student on genomics sequence analysis.
- **de Boer Lab** [website] Jan 2023-  
 I have been the sole supervisor for two Co-op students at de Boer lab. Both projects were designed by me and one of them won the SBME Synergy funding. One of the students successfully completed his project, and the other student is currently continuing his work at the lab.
- **SUS-GSS Mentorship Program** [website] 2022  
 Mentored second-year undergrads from the University of British Columbia regarding professional development skills.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

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- **Project co-ordinator and organizer**, *DREAM Challenge 2022* [website] 2022  
 Over 100 teams of ~ 300 scientists from over 75 universities and companies worldwide participated in DREAM Challenge 2022 to create machine learning models that predict gene expression from DNA sequences. I co-organized the competition with Carl de Boer (UBC), Pablo Meyer (IBM research), and Jake Albrecht (Sage Bionetworks) as the only graduate student in the committee. I was responsible for the daily operation of the competition.
- **Secretary**, *Biomedical Engineering Graduate Association*, University of British Columbia 2021-2022  
 Organized social events for SBME graduate students to increase interaction between different research groups.
- **Graduate Student Rep**, *SBME Sustainability Committee*, University of British Columbia 2021-2022  
 Worked towards adopting sustainable thinking into the daily operations and culture of the SBME.
- **Assistant Treasurer**, *IEEE Joint Chapter SP/COM, IEEE Windsor Section*, University of Windsor 2020-2021  
 Researched and analyzed financing alternatives and provided recommendations.
- **Vice President**, *Satyen Bose Science Club*, BUET 2017 - 2018  
 Arranged scientific talks, seminars, and debates for university students to create an environment where students engage in active discussions on different topics of science.
- **Assistant General Secretary**, *Satyen Bose Science Club*, BUET 2017  
 Worked as the foot soldier in the events organized by the club.
- **Volunteer tutor** for *illiterate workers of BUET dormitory canteen* 2014-2015  
 Taught illiterate kids and adults to read and write who were working at the dorm canteen.
- **Volunteer tutor** for *Bholananda Night High School*, Sylhet 2011-2012  
 Taught kids who were required to work during day to support their families. I tried my best to inspire them to continue their education despite their circumstances.

## SKILLS

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- **Programming Languages:** Python (Advanced), R (Advanced), MATLAB (Advanced), C++ (Intermediate), C (Intermediate), Assembly(Intermediate), Verilog (Basic)
- **Machine Learning Libraries:** Pytorch, Tensorflow, Scikit-learn, OpenCV
- **Machine Learning Inference:** Amazon SageMaker (cloud), Intel OpenVINO (edge), Nvidia TensorRT (edge)
- **Cloud Computing:** Amazon Web Services, Google Cloud Platform
- **Simulation & Design Tools:** OrCAD PSpice, Cadence EDA Tools (Virtuoso), Proteus7, Auto-CAD, emu8086, AVRstudio, CYME PSAF
- **Typesetting Software:**  $\text{\LaTeX}$ (Advanced)
- **Graphic Design:** Adobe Illustrator (Advanced), Adobe Photoshop (Intermediate), Adobe Premiere Pro(Intermediate)