

# Nikhar J. Abbas

## Curriculum Vitae

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*The windmill with its skeleton tower and creaking vanes is an object of beauty as significant in its way as the cottonwood tree, and the open tank at its foot, big enough to swim in, is a thing of joy to man and beast, no less worthy of praise than the desert spring.*  
- Edward Abbey  
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## Education

- 2017 – Pres.  
Aug **Doctor of Philosophy**, *University of Colorado Boulder*, Mechanical Engineering,  
Thesis Title: *Enabling Control for Wind Turbine Design*.
- 2015 – 2016  
Sept Jun **Master of Science**, *University of California, San Diego*, Mechanical Engineering,  
Thesis Topic: *Small Disturbance, Long Term Voltage Stabilization on a Distribution Feeder in Kathmandu, Nepal*.
- 2011 – 2016  
Sept Jun **Bachelor of Science**, *University of California, San Diego*, Environmental Engineering.

## Employment

- 2017 – Pres.  
Aug **Graduate Research Assistant**, *University of Colorado Boulder*, Boulder, CO,  
Thesis Advisor: Professor Lucy Pao.  
Conducted research concerning integration of wind turbine control systems into automated wind turbine design processes. This has been done in close collaboration with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) for the entirety of my graduate research. The largest contributions of this work include:
- Creator and lead developer of the Reference OpenSource Controller (ROSCO) – a fully automated wind turbine controller tuning and implementation framework for use by the wind energy community (900+ documentation visits from 40+ countries.)
  - Integration of ROSCO into the ARPA-E funded Wind Energy with Integrated Servo-control (WEIS) framework, a multi-disciplinary optimization tool for fixed and floating offshore wind turbines.
  - Co-design optimization of trailing-edge flaps on low specific power rotors and floating offshore wind turbines.
  - Analysis of controller influence on floating wind turbine design optimization through robust stability margin constrained controller tuning processes.
- 2017 – 2018  
Aug May **Graduate Teaching Assistant**, *University of Colorado Boulder*, Boulder, CO,  
MCEN 4043 - System Dynamics.  
Lead teaching assistant for the primary senior-level system dynamics laboratory course taught in the Mechanical Engineering Department at CU Boulder.
- Instructed and supervised 60+ students in bi-weekly laboratory experiments focused on the fundamentals of mechanical and electrical system dynamics.
  - Hosted weekly office hours
  - Graded homework and exams

- 2016 – 2017  
Jul Jun
- Graduate Controls Intern**, *National Renewable Energy Laboratory*, Golden, CO.
- Unknown input, EKF design for Wave Energy Converter (WEC) state estimation
  - Wave excitation force forecasting via autoregressive parameter estimation
  - Model predictive control to maximize power production and minimize foundation loads
- 2015 – 2016  
Sept Jun
- Graduate Research Assistant**, *University of California, San Diego*, San Diego, CA,  
Thesis Advisor: Professor Jan Kleissl.
- Research in optimization and control of a grid connected solar-plus-battery system in Kathmandu, Nepal to improve voltage quality for local feeder connections. The work was primarily conducted through MATLAB and OpenDSS and in collaboration with the NGO, RIDS-Nepal.

## Relevant Skills

- Extensive knowledge of wind turbine control systems, especially within the context of turbine design.
- Setting up, running, and post-processing simulation data from wind turbine design load cases and related large data sets.
- Use of version control for collaborative software development (git).
- Use of large-scale High Performance Computing systems for parallel processing.
- Multi-disciplinary optimization, particularly within the OpenMDAO framework.

### Programing Languages

- Python
- MATLAB/Simulink
- Modern Fortran

### Wind Energy Software Expertise

- ROSCO
- OpenFAST
- WEIS/WISDEM

## First-Author Journal Papers

- 2021 Abbas, Nikhar J., Daniel Zalkind, Lucy Pao, and Alan Wright (2021). “A Reference Open-Source Controller for Fixed and Floating Offshore Wind Turbines”. In: *Wind Energy Science Discussions*, pp. 1–33. [↗](#).

## First-Author Conference Papers

- 2020 Abbas, Nikhar J., Alan Wright, and Lucy Pao (2020). “An Update to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory Baseline Wind Turbine Controller”. In: 1452, p. 012002. [↗](#).
- 2019 Abbas, Nikhar J., Daniel Zalkind, and Lucy Pao (2019). “Assessing Control of a Floating Wind Turbine Based on Harmonic Loads Analysis”. In: *AIAA Scitech 2019 Forum*, p. 1802. [↗](#).
- 2017 Abbas, Nikhar J. and Nathan Tom (2017). “Utilization of Model Predictive Control to Balance Power Absorption Against Load Accumulation”. In: *The 27th International Ocean and Polar Engineering Conference*. OnePetro. [↗](#).

## Presentations

- 2020 Abbas, Nikhar J., Roland Feil, and Lucy Pao (2020). “Generic Controller Development for Distributed Aerodynamic Control Devices on Large Wind Turbine Blades”. In: American Control Conference 2020.

## Refereed Journal Papers

- 2021 Bortolotti, Pietro et al. (2021). “Land-Based Wind Turbines with Flexible Rail-Transportable Blades–Part 1: Conceptual Design and Aeroservoelastic Performance”. In: *Wind Energy Science* 6.5. [↗](#).

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## Refereed Technical Reports

- 2020 Allen, Christopher et al. (2020). *Definition of the UMaine VoltturnUS-S Reference Platform Developed for the IEA Wind 15-Megawatt Offshore Reference Wind Turbine*. Tech. rep. National Renewable Energy Lab.(NREL), Golden, CO (United States). [↗](#).
- 2020 Gaertner, Evan et al. (2020). “Definition of the IEA 15 MW Offshore Reference Wind Turbine”. In: *International Energy Agency*. <https://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy20osti/75698.pdf>. [↗](#).

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## Refereed Conference Papers

- 2021 Lenfest, Eben, Andrew Goupee, et al. (2021). “Two-DoF Model-Informed Controller Gain Tuning for Several Floating Wind Platforms”. In: *The 31st International Ocean and Polar Engineering Conference*. OnePetro.
- 2020 Feil, Roland et al. (2020). “Distributed Aerodynamic Control using Active Trailing-Edge Flaps for Large Wind Turbines”. In: *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*. Vol. 1618. 4. IOP Publishing, p. 042026. [↗](#).
- 2020 Lenfest, Eben, Andrew J Goupee, et al. (2020). “Tuning of Nacelle Feedback Gains for Floating Wind Turbine Controllers Using a Two-Dof Model”. In: *International Conference on Offshore Mechanics and Arctic Engineering*. Vol. 84416. American Society of Mechanical Engineers, V009T09A063. [↗](#).
- 2020 Rinker, Jennifer et al. (2020). “Comparison of loads from HAWC2 and OpenFAST for the IEA Wind 15 MW Reference Wind Turbine”. In: *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*. Vol. 1618. 5. IOP Publishing, p. 052052. [↗](#).

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## Honors and Awards

- 2017 Outstanding Mechanical Engineering Research Potential Fellowship  
Aug

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## Philanthropy

- 2018 – Pres.  
Dec **Assisted Ski Instructor**, *National Sports Center for the Disabled*, Winter Park, Colorado.  
Volunteer instructor with the NSCD assisted program ski program, a program that brings disabled persons onto the ski slopes of the Winter Park Ski Resort in Colorado.
- 2021 – Pres.  
Jul **Surplus Food Distribution**, *Denver Food Rescue*, Denver, CO.  
Transport surplus food around Denver, primarily by bicycle. DFR works to collect unwanted food and distributes to community centers that then provide the food to those in need.

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## Hobbies and Interests

A list of activities that fill my proverbial cup:

- A general love for spending time in the outdoors – activities including but not limited to: trail running, rock climbing, bicycle riding, and skiing.
- General handy-work regarding my home, vehicle, and bicycle.
- Ultimate frisbee and soccer