
Taylor J. Smith

Information for Prospective Students

Thank you for considering me as a potential supervisor! I am seeking highly-motivated students at either the undergraduate or graduate level with strong backgrounds in theoretical computer science who are interested in studying fundamental research problems relating to formal languages and automata theory.

I welcome and encourage applications from students belonging to historically-underrepresented groups in computer science—including students who identify as women, students of colour, and indigenous students—as well as from first-generation students.

Prospective undergraduate students. I am happy to discuss opportunities for you to get involved in either a summer research project or an honours thesis. If you are currently enrolled in one of my courses, then I will already know who you are. If you have taken one of my courses in the past, but are not currently enrolled in any of my courses, then a brief reminder of who you are/which course you took will help my memory (though I'll likely still remember you in any case).

Please send me a copy of your most recent CV/résumé and a copy of your unofficial transcript. You do not need to have a pre-planned research topic in mind, but if any particular area of theoretical computer science really interests you, mention this as well. I do not expect prospective undergraduate students to have published papers, though experience with mathematical writing is an asset.

I encourage prospective undergraduate students to apply for funding from the NSERC USRA program in support of a summer research project. I can help you with funding applications if you choose to join my research program. Unlike summer research projects, honours theses are typically not funded.

Prospective master's students. If you are interested in pursuing graduate studies in theoretical computer science, then I encourage you to apply to our department's research-based MSc program. It is your responsibility to ensure that you meet the admission standards for the MSc program. Note that, even though the minimum standard is “a bachelor's degree or equivalent in computer science with a 70% average or better”, the bar for conducting successful research in theoretical computer science is higher. If you have done very well in your theory/math courses and your overall average is 80% or better, then that is a good sign. As always, though, individual cases will vary and grades are only one metric of many.

Please send me a copy of your most recent CV/résumé, a copy of your unofficial transcript, and a brief description of your past experience with theoretical computer science. You do not need to have a pre-planned research topic in mind, but if any particular area of theoretical computer science really interests you, mention this as well. Experience with mathematical writing is an asset; if you have written an undergraduate honours thesis or major paper, please include a copy of that as well.

I encourage prospective graduate students to apply for funding from the NSERC CGS program, the Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarships program, and any other relevant sources of external funding. I can help you with funding applications if you choose to join my research program.

Our department also offers a course-based master's degree in applied computer science (MACS). If you are interested in conducting research, you should *not* apply to this program. As it is a different stream with different requirements, I cannot supervise MACS students, and transfers from the MACS program to the MSc program are difficult.

Prospective PhD students. Unfortunately, our department does not currently offer a PhD program. Thus, if you contact me to inquire about PhD supervision, I will not be able to consider your application.
