StFX UNIVERSITY | FLAReLab

Information for Prospective Students

Thank you for your interest in our lab's research! We are seeking highly motivated students at both the undergraduate and graduate level with strong backgrounds in theoretical computer science who are interested in studying fundamental research problems relating to formal languages and automata theory.

We 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. Our lab offers many opportunities for you to get involved in either a summer research project or an honours thesis. Summer research projects typically run from May to August, while honours theses are completed from September to April of your final year. If you are interested in writing an honours thesis, please get in touch as far in advance of your final year as possible.

Please send a copy of your most recent CV/résumé and your unofficial transcript to `tjsmith@stfx.ca`. 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. Prospective undergraduate students are not expected to have published papers, though experience with mathematical writing is an asset.

Prospective undergraduate students are required to apply for funding from the NSERC USRA program in support of a summer research project. Help is available with funding applications if you choose to join our lab. 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 please consider applying to our department's research-based MSc program and indicating that you would like to work with Prof. Taylor J. Smith.

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 a copy of your most recent CV/résumé, your unofficial transcript, and a brief description of your past experience with theoretical computer science to `tjsmith@stfx.ca`. 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 feel free to include it with your other documents.

Prospective graduate students are required to apply for funding from the NSERC CGS program, the Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarships program, and any other relevant sources of external funding. Help is available with funding applications if you choose to join our lab. Keep in mind that funding deadlines often differ from admissions deadlines.

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, MACS students cannot join our lab, and transfers from the MACS program to the MSc program are extremely difficult.

Prospective PhD students. While our department does not offer our own PhD program, faculty members can supervise PhD students through a partnership with Memorial University of Newfoundland. Prospective PhD students should submit all of the same information as prospective master's students, but be forewarned that only outstanding applicants will be considered.