

Hello everyone, good morning, afternoon, evening.

We are excited to continue our series of ACL Year-Round Mentorship sessions. The mentorship aims to answer everyone's questions on different types of questions that are relevant, to growing as an NLP researcher.

I am excited to be here today, joined by three wonderful mentors. I am the co-organizer, a PhD at Max Planck Institute and ETH, working on NLP and causality. Together with Mohit Bansal, Vinodkumar Prabhakaran, Rada Mihalcea, Ashkan Kazemi, Lisa Bauer.

Priyanka Agrawal (ML manager at Booking.com), Scott Hale (Prof at Oxford, Director of Research Meedan) & Elisa Ferracane (Research Scientist at Abridge)

The three mentors we invited today are.

Elisa:

- Google (ex-professor)
- Salesforce
- Clear mind to go to internship

Priyanka:

- IBM India (internship coordinator, first PhD internship program)
- Booking.com

Scott:

- Meedan (open-source tools for fact-checkers and journalists)
- (Undecided between industry and academia)

Different natures: Non-profit

Different sizes: Companies of different sizes

For different social functions:

Interns vs. full-time vs. 50% academia

In different geolocations, UK, US, India

Demonstrate the fit and skills (Coordination cost)

=> Our mentors make tremendous efforts on making a time good for Asia-Pacific time zones.

"Dear mentors, I want to know if I need to publish at least one first-author paper to get accepted for an NLP internship? Thank you."

- Core of the problem: How to demonstrate your profile?
- There can be other venues where you can demonstrate your skills. There are many ways to communicate and showcase your skill sets. E.g., a blog post that walks through

a technology, e.g., how to use dockers to do reproducible social science. This shows your clear knowledge and fitness to the role that the manager cares about.

- By just reaching out to the people you know directly. As far as there is a match, you will find your best choice

How to reach out:

- “How to approach professors for internships in academia, if I don't have prior interactions?”
- Get your first-order neighbors, and brainstorm what types of things you want to reach out.
- Do the “translation” of how your skills match with the what the managers need.
 - Care about the “dot product”
 - At least show the initiative that you care about how the hiring side cares

Examples of previous interns:

- First internship: two published papers. I had extensive experience as a software developer (for 10 years before I start my PhD). I framed my resume to highlight this. They know that I can get up to speed really quickly.
 - Having someone in your network to endorse you. There are these application folders, e.g., thousands of applications coming. It is not very easy to filter them up. The viewers are looking for cues to show this person has good credibility.
- Priyanka: even within a given research lab, there can be different internships for different types of students, varying from bachelors, masters, doctorates. Do advertise yourself in all different types of skills. I myself also had an intern earlier on as an undergrad student. Do not restrict yourself on whether you have a blog, a paper, etc. Look at what skill sets you have, e.g., dataset collection, software engineering (GitHub), your extensive understanding of something fundamental (blogs)
- Start applying early.
- Highlighting the diversity of projects that can be taken for interns.
 - Human in the loop
 - A new sampler in the pipeline
- Developer is a huge strength, experience in literature in this area, human study design, dataset design/survey design, language experience in different low-resource languages

Which internship to prefer IT Research Labs (Google, Apple, etc.) or Academic institutions?

- What is the purpose of the internship
 - E.g., dive deeper into certain areas
 - E.g., increase the publication profile
 - E.g., prepare for industry jobs later on
 - E.g., to learn more about how to do research (then either one is good, maybe academic is better)
 - E.g., to build a skill set to showcase later in your career
- But do try to have interaction before the internship starts
 - Be very open-minded, and get a concrete picture

- The line is getting blurred between industry and academic internships
 - Had a chance with the professor and google staff in my Google internship.
- Core: how do you select an internship.
 - What do you want out of your internship

Undergrads:

- **Undecided cases:** but want to apply for masters and PhDs (leave the most probability)
 - A safer choice: do an academic internship. And in industry, there is more randomness in which team you landed in, and perhaps into a developer internship, e.g., the data part of the industry lab's goal.
- "I went to all professors' office hours. They were so happy to have somebody to talk about their research. You can also ask in person about whether you have openings."

Masters:

- Secure a good internship

PhD:

- Will the research be confidential or public?

Thinking framework: as an employer, imagine the pool of candidates.

"Dot product"; decision under uncertainty.

Know what you want; Make the right choice to apply; strive to get the right skill set
→ reflection & attend our mentorship.

How to compare big companies with small companies (for undergrad, master, and PhD students)?
How to compare profit vs. non-profit companies?

What are the key differences in research in academia vs industry? Similarly industrial PhD vs purely academic?

Does the name of the institution that I'm currently studying impact an internship selection? It's easy to refer Oxford, Harvard, etc but others aren't.

How do we start looking for internships in research areas we are interested in but only have experience in related areas?

As a masters student, it's difficult to find an internship (most target PhDs) but now to get a good PhD you need a good internship... so what should we do?

