

In this document, I will try to explain the NYU Shanghai PhD program, summarize my advising style, and answer some common questions.

What is NYU Shanghai PhD program?

For more details regarding the program, please visit the following link:

<https://shanghai.nyu.edu/academics/graduate/computer-science-phd-program>. I will provide some clarifications based on my understanding:

- **PhD students in the program are NYU PhDs** (i.e. there is no designation as “NYU Shanghai PhD student”). Applicants apply for the Computer Science PhD program at NYU and express their interest in being associated with NYU Shanghai. The final admission decision is made by the NYU committee.
- **PhD students have greater flexibility in shaping their future careers (in US or China)**. This is because for non-US citizens, students are eligible for F1 OPT after graduation, which provides opportunities to work in the US.
- **The stipends offered to PhD students are competitive**. Specifically, if students are based in Shanghai, they receive a monthly stipend of 1700 USD. If they are based in New York, the stipend increases to 3500 USD per month.
- **Students advised by me are also flexible to choose where to work during PhD**. In the first year, PhD students are required to be in New York to complete the necessary coursework. After the first year, students generally return to Shanghai to continue their research. In the case of my advisees, if they prefer to stay in New York during their last year, I am willing to work with them remotely (or in person if I am also visiting New York).

What problems are you interested in working on?

I mainly work on NLP and HCI problems, and you can find more information about the specific directions I'm currently excited about on my homepage. Broadly speaking, I'm interested in the problems that cannot be effectively addressed solely through end-to-end approaches, such as direct promotion or fine-tuning of large language models. Working on these challenging problems normally involves engaging in multiple fascinating steps:

- 1) Identifying these problems is often a non-trivial task, requiring direct interaction with end-users like radiologists, as well as conducting in-depth analyses of existing approaches. This user-centric and analytical approach helps me understand the core issues at hand.
- 2) Solving these problems holds the potential to directly benefit end-users, and there are numerous ways to explore in order to tackle these open-ended challenges. Some

approaches may involve data annotation by experts, while others may necessitate the design and implementation of novel algorithms.

How many students do you plan to admit?

Recruiting students is a dynamic process, which depends on whether both think we are a good fit. In particular, I have a preference for students have some prior research experience, such as having led a project with a submitted or accepted paper. **More importantly, I find students who align well with my style tend to be easy-going and modest, while displaying a strong determination to tackle challenging, high-risk problems.**

This year (2024-2025), my intention is to accept 1-2 PhD students, some of whom might be co-advised. The focus of their research includes retrieval augmented large models, controllable text generation, and human-in-the-loop NLP within the medical domain.

What does your advising style look like?

I am actively involved in advising students and prefer a hands-on approach. When working with PhD students, I typically provide detailed ideas for their initial 1-2 projects. As they progress, students are encouraged to propose projects that align with their interests. At the start of each semester, we determine the goals and focus for that period together. These objectives could include initiating a new project, submitting a research paper, or enhancing writing skills, among others. Throughout the semester, I conduct one-on-one meetings that last one hour. These meetings serve as an opportunity to discuss all aspects of the projects, review recent papers, and address other high-level matters such as career planning or personal well-being. I highly value these interactions as they provide a holistic approach to student development.

What about visiting students?

I have several openings for hosting funded visiting students, the start date is flexible. If you are interested, send me an email with a brief introduction, a summary of your research experience, and an overview of your high-level research interests.