

STEPHEN ZIXIN XU

Darden School of Business, University of Virginia
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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Data Analytics and Decision Science 2023–2028 (Expected)

University of Virginia, Darden School of Business

Research Interests: Search Theory & Optimal Stopping, Sequential Decision-Making under Uncertainty, Bayesian Learning, Multi-Armed Bandits, Mechanism & Contract Design, Economics of AI

M.A., Applied Economics 2019–2021

National University of Singapore

B.A., Economics 2015–2019

Central University of Finance and Economics

RESEARCH

Conference Publications

- *BEACON: Bayesian Optimal Stopping for Efficient LLM Sampling*
(Guangya Wan*, Zixin Stephen Xu*, Saša Zorc, Manel Baucells, Mengxuan Hu, Hao Wang, Sheng Li)
Findings of EMNLP 2026. *Co-first authors with equal contributions

Working Papers

- *Optimal Policies and Structural Properties Search Without Recall Under Normal Uncertainty*
(Zixin Stephen Xu, Manel Baucells, Saša Zorc)
Major Revision at *Operations Research*
- *Bayesian Sequential Search and Pandora’s Box under Location-Scale Learning*
(Zixin Stephen Xu, Manel Baucells, Saša Zorc)
- *The Exploration Premium: Valuing Experiments Across Projects*
(Zixin Stephen Xu, Manel Baucells, Saša Zorc)
- *On the Properties of the Metalog Distribution*
(Manel Baucells, Lonnie Chrisman, Thomas Keelin, Zixin Stephen Xu)
Under Review

Works in Progress

- *Screening Skill through AI Usage: Optimal Employment Contracts with Endogenous Deskilling*
(Zixin Stephen Xu, Saša Zorc)
- *Cost-Aware Bayesian Search with Endogenous Batch Width*
(Zixin Stephen Xu, Manel Baucells, Saša Zorc)
- *Cognitive Offloading as an Intertemporal Allocation Problem*
(Zixin Stephen Xu, Emanuele Agrimi, Hami Doan, Linda Fiorini, Fabio Michele Russo, Folco Panizza, Tea Tucić, Alexander J. Gates)

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Conferences and Workshops

- 2026 INFORMS Annual Meeting (Presentation) October 2026
- 2026 INFORMS MSOM Conference (Presentation) July 2026
- 2026 Advances in Decision Analysis (ADA) Conference (Presentation) June 2026
- UVA–IMT AI Workshop March 2026
- 2025 UVA Quantitative Psychology DADA Meeting (Presentation) October 2025
- 2025 INFORMS Annual Meeting (Presentation) October 2025
- 2025 Purdue Supply Chain and Operations Management Conference (Presentation) August 2025
- 2025 INFORMS International Meeting, Singapore (Presentation) July 2025

- Games and Artificial Intelligence Multidisciplinary Summer School (GAIMSS) & Workshop (Presentation) June 2025
- Risk, Uncertainty and Decision (RUD) 2025 Conference June 2025
- 1st Summer School in Experimental and Behavioral Economics & Workshop August 2024
- Paris School of Economics Industrial Organization Summer School & Workshop (Presentation) July 2024

Referee Service

- Journal: Operations Research, Management Science

Research Associate

2022–2023

Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen

- Collaborated with Prof. Linyi Zhang on empirical research in ESG Policy, and Industrial Organization
- Tutorials for undergraduate level *Quantitative Methods for Policy Evaluation*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Product Manager

2021–2022

Tencent

- Designed educational platforms integrating quantitative assessment methodologies
- Applied statistical methods to evaluate technology-enhanced learning interventions
- Employed experimental design principles to test platform effectiveness

Management Trainee

Dec 2020–Apr 2021

Harvest Fund Management, Internship
Shanghai, China

Fintech Intern

Jun 2020–Aug 2020

Tencent, Internship
Shenzhen, Guangdong, China

IBD Intern

Jul 2018–Sep 2018

China Merchants Securities Co., Ltd., Internship
Guangzhou, Guangdong, China

Audit Intern

Jan 2018–Mar 2018

Deloitte
Guangzhou, Guangdong, China

HONORS AND AWARDS

Darden School of Business Merit Fellowship	2023–2028
National University of Singapore Academic Scholarship (Top 1%)	2020
National University of Singapore Certificate of Excellence (Microeconomics)	2020
National University of Singapore Certificate of Excellence (Quantitative & Computing Methods)	2020
National University of Singapore Certificate of Excellence (Topics in Economic Policy)	2020
Central University of Finance and Economics Excellent Graduate	2019
National Innovation and Entrepreneurship Project Award (Outstanding)	2018
Central University of Finance and Economics Merit Student	2018
Central University of Finance and Economics Outstanding Leader	2018
Central University of Finance and Economics Dean's list	2016–2019
Central University of Finance and Economics Leadership Scholarship	2016–2018
Central University of Finance and Economics Merit Scholarship	2016–2017

SKILLS AND PROFICIENCIES

Statistical and Computational: Python, R, STATA, MatLab, Mathematica, AMPL, MySQL
Languages: Mandarin (Native), English (Fluent)