

NICHOLAS LAMBOURNE

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EXPERIENCE

Canva

Sydney, NSW

Engineering Manager (AI)

Dec 2024 – Present

- Founded and lead the Evaluation Platform team – six engineers building the internal tooling Canva uses to measure the quality of its generative AI features. Managed a long-term product roadmap, hired engineers, coached employees across specialities (BE/FE/MLE/QA), and handled reporting to product, engineering leadership, and customers.
- Led delivery of an internal head-to-head “arena” service that pits generative AI models across mediums (text, image, video, audio, 3D) and criteria (e.g. prompt following), with multi-turn (agentic) support.
- Oversaw the development of tooling that brings the ergonomics of pytest, jest, and JUnit to non-deterministic generative AI features. Later extended to support continuous evaluation on live production data.
- Beyond the team: host of Canva’s recurring internal AI Forum (typically 200–400 attendees); interviewed 70+ ML engineering candidates.

Senior ML Engineer ← *ML Engineer* ← *Associate Data Engineer*

Feb 2021 – Dec 2024

- As part of the ML Platform team, I built and operated the ML Platform that 100+ engineers and researchers use to train and serve 150+ production models at Canva, owning training clusters, base images, and the ML onboarding program.
- Cut ML platform fixed costs by 85% (>\$500k saved annually) by rebuilding the cross-region Kubernetes training clusters around a scale-to-zero architecture using Karpenter.
- Designed a Java library that streams live inference I/O from production ML services through AWS Kinesis Firehose to S3 for downstream reinforcement learning.

Software Engineering Intern

Dec 2019 – Feb 2020

- Built a shell-to-Python transpiler framework and reference generator (Python, Flask, React) for Canva’s infrastructure team, with an interactive playground that performed real-time transpilation in the browser.

The University of Queensland – School of Electrical Engineering & Computer Science

Brisbane, QLD

Senior Research Assistant ← *Research Assistant*

Jun 2018 – Feb 2024

- Architected and developed Elpis, a user-friendly automatic speech recognition (ASR) tool with a React/Flask GUI over multiple back-end engines (notably Kaldi), used to develop ASR models for low-resource Indigenous languages.

Teaching Assistant

Jul 2018 – Dec 2020

- Tutored, prepared materials, and graded for *Voyages in Language Technologies* (COMP3001), *Computer Systems Principles and Programming* (CSSE2310), and *Programming in the Large* (CSSE2002).

Atlassian

Sydney, NSW

Site Reliability Engineering Intern

Nov 2020 – Feb 2021

- Built full-stack service level objective (SLO) reporting dashboards (PostgreSQL, Java/Spring, TypeScript) for the Platform SRE team, consumed by infrastructure teams across Atlassian.

Sepsis Scout (Formerly Patchd, Inc.)

San Francisco, CA

Software Engineering Intern

Jan 2019 – Feb 2019

- Developed parallelisation strategies for training recurrent neural nets in the detection of sepsis from vital-sign data.

EDUCATION

The University of Melbourne

Melbourne, VIC, Australia

Master of Business Administration (In Progress)

Jan 2026 – Dec 2028

The University of Queensland

Brisbane, QLD, Australia

Bachelor of Science (Computer Science) [Thesis: Quantum Finite Automata]

Graduated 2020

Bachelor of Commerce (Finance)

Graduated 2015

Bachelor of Science (Psychology)

Graduated 2015

PROJECTS

SlackBlocks – Slack BlockKit API Wrapper

github.com/nicklambourne/slackblocks

- Python library published on PyPI providing an ergonomic Python interface to the Slack BlockKit API. 2.8M+ downloads to date; depended on by the Masonite Python Framework and many others.

Elpis – Accelerated Linguistic Transcription

github.com/CoEDL/elpis

- React/Flask abstraction framework and GUI over the Kaldi ASR library for developing speech recognition models for low-resource Indigenous languages.

SKILLS

Languages: Python, Java, C, TypeScript, SQL, Jsonnet, L^AT_EX

Tools: Infrastructure (Terraform), Orchestration (Kubernetes, Argo Workflows), Packaging (Nix, Bazel), CI/CD (Buildkite, GitHub Actions), Cloud Platforms (AWS), Containers (Docker), AI Evaluation (Weave)

VOLUNTEERING

University of Queensland Computing Society (UQCS)

2015 – Present

- Served as president (2019) and events director (2020); organised events, sponsorships, and open source projects. Named honorary life member in 2020.

UNSW Computer Science & Engineering Society (CSESoc)

2021 – 2023

- Industry mentor to CS students, running weekly catchups; wrote career advice articles, guested on podcasts, and delivered technical talks.

Node Girls, Django Girls, & Robogals (Brisbane Chapters)

2016 – 2020

- Mentored women and girls learning web and robotics technologies.

SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS & PRIZES

UQ Faculty of Engineering, Architecture & IT Hawken Scholar

(2020)

UQ IdeaHub San Francisco Startup Adventure Participant

(2019)

UQ Summer Research Scholarship

(2019)

UQ Advantage Grant (CoEDL Summer School)

(2018)

UQ Winter Research Scholarship

(2018)