

## Town Hall on the Postdoc Acceptance Deadline

If you have a question or comment that you would like to share at the Town Hall, please add it below.

Link for webinar:

<https://cornell.zoom.us/j/94247460044?pwd=s5nNuqmqRmM4COI1KskdYz5HvDbVm8.1>

1. **Name:** Pavel Nadolsky

**Affiliation:** SMU/MSU

**Email:** nadolsky@smu.edu

**Question:** Is the committee able to tell if a later deadline may benefit a particular kind of institutions more than the others (e.g., the top leading institutions, a particular domain of hep-th, etc.)? Does it help to maintain the even playing field between the better supported and less supported institutions? For example, a later deadline may further disadvantage those less supported institutions that are more likely to go for the second and third round of offers for various reasons.

2. **Name:** Ayres Freitas

**Affiliation:** University of Pittsburgh

**Email:** afreitas@pitt.edu

**Question:** I still have not heard a compelling reason for moving the *lower bound* of the acceptance deadline, which in essence is the date by which an applicant with multiple offers is asked to *reject* the less favored ones. With the existing Jan-7 accord, there is no obstacle to postponing the formal acceptance of a particular offer for administrative reasons (e.g. office closures), religious holidays, or to sort out family constraints, and I would hope that any reasonable prospective employer already does that. Why is that not sufficient? On the other hand, I wonder why in this discussion no consideration has been given to second/third-round offers. A significant fraction of postdoc positions is only filled at that stage, but the impact of timing and deadlines for these (in particular delays due to a later first-round deadline), both for applicants and employers, have not been part of any survey that I have seen.

3. **Name:** Felix Yu

**Affiliation:** JGU Mainz

**Email:** yu001@uni-mainz.de

**Question:** In the same vein as the second part of Ayres's question, I would suggest a common set of guidelines for all postdoc offers (such as a minimum number of days to consider the offer) to apply not only to first-round offers but subsequent rounds. For instance, a community-wide agreement that all offers would give a minimum of 5 working days before a reply is required may help avoid some of the anxiety about the importance of the first offer deadline.

4. **Name:** Tao Han  
**Affiliation:** University of Pittsburgh  
**Email:** [than@pitt.edu](mailto:than@pitt.edu)  
**Question:** If the problem is to prevent too early offers, shouldn't we instead consider an "earliest offer day", rather than set a very late acceptance (rejection) deadline?
5. **Name:** Daniel Harlow  
**Affiliation:** MIT  
**Email:** [harlow@mit.edu](mailto:harlow@mit.edu)  
**Question:** There is a puzzling inconsistency in the data: how can 70% of people think 2/15 is acceptable but <5% think that it is reasonable to have a hiring period longer than 8 weeks? It seems to me that many people who said 2/15 is acceptable have not thought through the consequences of adopting it, which are indeed that the gap between first round offers and deadlines will be very long. I wish there had been a question which asked what people prefer for the deadline conditioned on the first-round offers coming around 12/15 (which the backup slides show was still the most popular option last year). There needs to be a much more transparent discussion about when the first-round offers come, and we need to make sure we don't accidentally end up in a situation with a very long cycle because we didn't think enough about when the offers will likely come. Followup from Daniel H based on later questions: we did discuss last year if the top north american hep-th groups could make their offers later if the deadline is 2/15, and the result of the discussion was that offers would still come around 12/15 since people want to compete with the fellowships. This is why we went with 1/15 for the offer deadlines.
6. **Name:** Daniel Stolarski  
**Affiliation:** Carleton U  
**Email:** [stolar@physics.carleton.ca](mailto:stolar@physics.carleton.ca)  
**Question:** What is setting the first round offers to be in December? If the deadline was (say) in February, would many first round offers be in January?
7. **Name:** Lance Dixon  
**Affiliation:** SLAC  
**Email:** [lance@slac.stanford.edu](mailto:lance@slac.stanford.edu)  
**Question:** Just want to agree with Daniel S. (and disagree with Dan H.): We (SLAC) would certainly make first-round offers later for the Feb. 15 deadline (in fact, we did already last year). We offered somewhere around mid-January, so still <~ 4 weeks before the deadline. I think that is one of the main advantages of Feb. 15, so the decision/offer process can move past the winter break.
8. **Name:** Antoine Van Proeyen  
**Affiliation:** KU Leuven  
**Email:** [Antoine.VanProeyen@kuleuven.be](mailto:Antoine.VanProeyen@kuleuven.be)  
**Question:** We saw in Europe that the deadline date sets the whole timing: the deadline for applications, the evaluation process and the first offers.

**Therefore it looks irrelevant for the time between offers and acceptance dates. It does not change the hiring period.**

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