Reciprocal Offers:
Dos and Don’ts for Applicants and Postdoctoral Training Directors

The following document provides clarification for applicants and postdoctoral training directors about asking for or responding to reciprocal offers.

Applicants

1. Know which programs on your list have indicated they will follow the APPIC Postdoctoral Guidelines and the Uniform Notification Date (UND).
   • It is advisable to confirm ongoing participation, particularly if the listing is outdated.
   • If there are programs on your list that are not following the APPIC Postdoctoral Guidelines and the UND, find out when they anticipate making offers.

2. Keep an ongoing list of programs that you applied to and/or interviewed for and how they rank. Note: No formal ranking of programs needs to be submitted anywhere. This rank list is for your use only, so you are prepared to respond to offers, if you receive them.
   • Review and adjust your rankings at least weekly.
   • Anticipate and be prepared to respond if a program on your list makes you an offer for a postdoctoral position.
   • Programs that have indicated they are not following the APPIC Postdoctoral Guidelines and the UND are more likely to make offers prior to the UND.

3. If you received an offer from a postdoctoral training program prior to the UND that is not your first choice, you can:
   • Request to hold the offer from the program that made the early offer until the UND or a shorter hold period.
   • Request a reciprocal offer from your top ranked program.

4. We would highly recommend consulting with mentors, supervisors, or your internship training director should you have any questions or uncertainty while navigating offers.

5. If you receive an offer from a postdoctoral training program prior to the UND that is not your first choice, you may contact your top ranked program and ask for a reciprocal offer.

6. When requesting a reciprocal offer, the program may ask for verification of your original offer from the lower ranked program. Be prepared to forward an email notice from the program that made you the early offer.

7. It is unlikely but possible that two programs may be tied as your top ranked program. However, you can only make one reciprocal offer request to one program. Therefore, you must identify your top ranked program.

8. If a reciprocal offer is extended to you, it is expected that you will accept immediately. You cannot ask to “hold” a reciprocal offer.

9. If the program does not extend a reciprocal offer, it is acceptable to ask if you remain in consideration and/or if the program is willing to disclose information about your relative position on their rank list. This information may help you decide about the standing offer. For example:
• If you are low on their list, you may consider the standing offer more strongly.
• If you believe you may get an offer from your preferred program, you may decide to decline the first offers.

10. If a program declines to provide a reciprocal offer, you can request a second reciprocal offer from your next preferred program. As with all reciprocal offer requests, you are expected to immediately accept the offer if it is extended. All options noted above pertaining to your first request for a reciprocal offer apply to subsequent reciprocal offer requests. Reciprocal offer rules do not apply after the UND.

11. If you accept an offer prior to the UND (an early offer or a reciprocal offer), contact all other postdoctoral programs that you have applied to and notify them you wish to withdraw your name from further consideration.
  • Informing programs that you have already secured a postdoctoral position makes the selection process proceed smoother for both programs and your fellow applicants.

12. We understand that applicants may feel pressured to accept any offer that they receive and may feel uncomfortable requesting a reciprocal offer from their top ranked program. Applicants should understand that it is perfectly acceptable and professional to use the reciprocal offer option under the circumstances noted above.

13. Familiarize yourself with the section below for Postdoctoral Training Directors. It will help you understand reciprocal offer options more fully.

### Postdoctoral Training Directors

1. Make sure your listing in the Universal Psychology Postdoctoral Directory (UPPD) is up to date by 9-15-19
   • Listings that are not updated may negatively impact applicants’ perception of your program.
2. Ensure that applicants are informed about your program’s plans to make offers (i.e., if you plan to follow the Selection Guidelines and UND or, if not, your time frame for making offers). This information can be included in your recruitment materials and/or discussed during interviews.
3. Ensure that applicants know how to contact you when requesting a reciprocal offer. This information should be in the UPPD and on any marketing/recruitment materials.
4. Be prepared to make reciprocal offers (should one be requested) prior to the UND.
   • We do not recommend that you make offers if you have not completed your interview process. Not only may you be uncertain about who your top applicant is, but interviewees have already invested time and money into interviewing at your site. Schedule interviews with this in mind (i.e., scheduling interviews late in the process may mean that you receive requests for reciprocal offers but cannot respond).
   • Generally, programs should be prepared to respond at any point if an applicant they are considering makes a request for a reciprocal offer. It is also useful to be prepared for an applicant to ask for information about their relative position on your rank list if you decline their request for a reciprocal offer.
5. If an applicant contacts you for a reciprocal offer, you may offer them a position immediately if they are your top candidate.
   • It is possible that two applicants may be tied as your top ranked candidate. If this is truly the case, you could offer either applicant the position should they request a reciprocal offer.
6. Applicants are required to immediately accept a reciprocal offer.
7. If an applicant requests a reciprocal offer and they are not your top ranked candidate, you may not offer them the position. You may not contact other applicants on your list and offer them the position.
8. If a position is filled prior to the UND, immediately email all applicants to inform them the position is no longer available.
   • Letting applicants know that you have filled the position may be disappointing, but it allows them to re-appraise their rankings and facilitates a much smoother selection process for all programs and your fellow applicants.
9. If an offer is extended and accepted, please send a formal letter of confirmation of agreement within 48 hours.
10. Familiarize yourself with the section above for Applicants. It will help you better understand reciprocal offer options more fully.