Reasonable Offer Deadlines Guidelines
Saint Joseph’s University Career Development Center

These guidelines have been adapted from the NACE Reasonable Offer Deadlines Guidelines. To view NACE’s guidelines, visit http://www.naceweb.org/principlesreasonable_offer.htm

As the job market for college graduates becomes more intense, employers and career centers alike ask questions about deadlines for job offer acceptance—particularly when deadlines come very early in the recruiting season. The timing of these offers and acceptances is a market-driven issue, with different industries experiencing varying degrees of urgency to fill positions. The role of the Career Development Center at Saint Joseph’s University is not to enforce a specific time frame, but rather to encourage practices reasonable and appropriate for both employers and students, recognizing that ultimately the employment decisions are between the student and employer. Communication is key to these decisions, with regular contact between the employer and student vital from the point of offer to the start date.

In a robust and fast-paced job market for graduates and interns, some employers attempt to mitigate the effects of job-market competition with practices, including providing giveaways to students between the offer and the decision; providing financial incentives for accepting an offer; or requiring students to accept job offers within a short time frame. In some instances, students accept offers, continue their job searches, and renege on their accepted job offers if they find “better deals.”

Experience shows the best employment decisions for both students and employers are those that are made without pressure and with the greatest amount of information. Students given sufficient time to attend career fairs, participate in on-campus interviews, and/or complete the interviewing in which they are currently engaged are more likely to make good long-term employment decisions and may be less likely to renege on job acceptances.

At SJU, it is our recommendation that students receiving an offer from an organization have 3 weeks to consider the offer and make the best decision possible. While we will not require employers to give any specific amount of time for offer acceptances, the Career Development Center believes that providing sufficient time for students to evaluate the opportunities offered to them allows them to make the wisest decisions for all concerned, creating a positive experience for candidates and employers, and ultimately reducing renege and attrition rates.

Employment professionals will refrain from any practice that improperly influences and affects job acceptances. Such practices may include undue time pressure for acceptance of employment offers and encouragement of revocation of another employment offer. Employment professionals will strive to communicate decisions to candidates within the agreed-upon time frame.

Some issues that employers may wish to consider when establishing their offer deadlines are:

**Housing:** Does the student have sufficient time to research housing costs and availability?
**Proximity to graduation:** Does the student have time to explore a wide range of options?
**Time to make offers to other students if initial offers are not accepted:** Will the student pool be sharply decreased by a delay?
**Prior experience with candidate:** Does the student believe prior internship will lead to a job offer?
**Impact of technology:** How quickly offers can be extended along with offer details, such as salary, benefits, and bonuses?

The Career Development Center understands that not all employers recruit at the same time of the year. Therefore, recommending specific calendar dates for offers and acceptances would not be appropriate. Furthermore, many employers issue offers to their graduating co-ops or interns at the start of the employer’s recruiting cycle in order to provide those students priority consideration prior to extending offers to other students. Finally, shorter decision time frames would be appropriate if the candidate’s graduation date and start date are very close.

The Career Development Center provides guidance to students to help them make informed decisions when accepting or not accepting job offers. Career centers may provide guidance to employers and recommend that they consider extending deadlines when needed. Students should also be sensitive to employer needs and accept offers in a reasonable time. Career centers can help students work with employers to determine what might be a reasonable time.

If you have any questions about guidelines for offer deadlines, please contact the Career Development Center at recruit@sju.edu.