

How to apply to a postdoc position

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Berkeley Week @ Kavli IPMU, 1/14/2020



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Disclaimer: not my typical talk...

- I'm not an expert!
- Intentionally, there is a lot of info on these slides.
- There are no jokes.
- Hopefully, these will be useful “notes.”
- **Please ask questions!**

Outline

- General Info

- Application timeline
- Tips & Shortlists
- Important sites

- Application Components

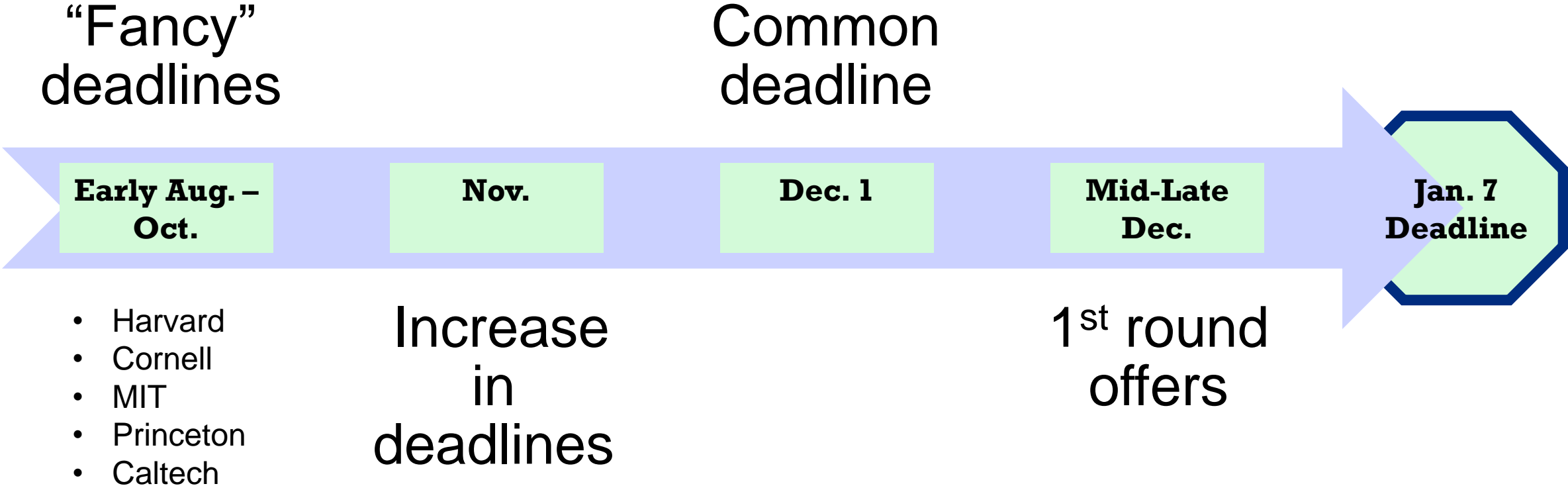
- Recommendation letters
- Research statement
- CV
- Publication list
- Other

Importance

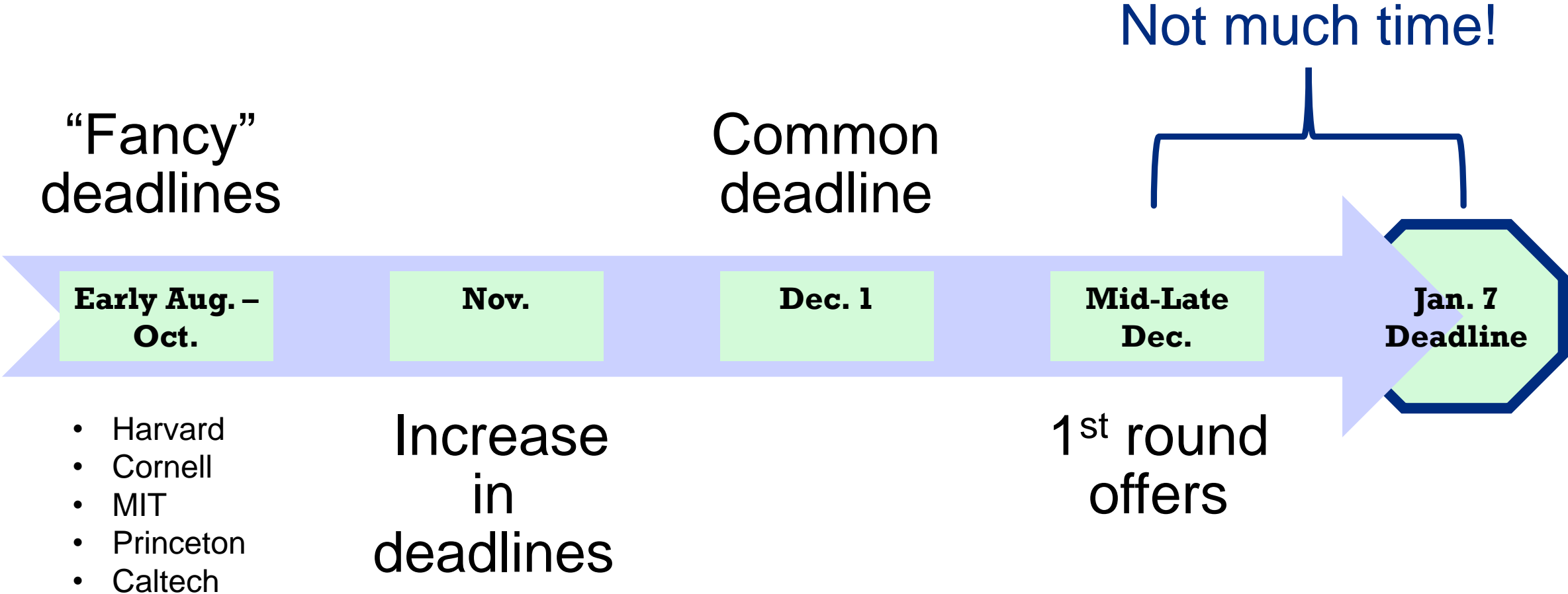


General Info

Application timeline



Application timeline



Tips & Shortlists

- **Apply early**, unless you're putting more papers out.
- Shortlists: ordered lists of candidates
 - Don't worry if not 1st choice! (*There was only one #1.*)
 - After an offer or two, **contact your top choices** individually.
 - Widely done & shows interest. Very informative/helpful!
 - Shortlist easily converts to an offer on a short timescale.
 - **Start comparing options** early. Can get offer Jan 6 or later!

Important Sites

- **AcademicJobsOnline.org**

- Most used; both job postings & applications all-in-one

- labs.inspirehep.net/jobs

- Used if they don't accept apps through AJO; only postings

- **HEP “Rumor Mill”**

- Offers, Declines, & Acceptances; good refn
- Faculty equivalent good refn for noting new faculty when deciding

Application Components

Recommendation letters

- 3+ letters; at least **3 from “senior scientists”**
 - Can be daunting: reach out to adviser + connections
 - Need people familiar with your work and research abilities.
 - **Be involved** with conferences, seminars, etc. Might lead to projects.
 - With their guidance & approval, **work with 2+ profs besides your adviser asap.**

Recommendation letters

- **Ask early!** 1st deadline in Aug.
- Provide research statement (draft) & CV.
- Once letters on AJO, can select which letters go on which applications easily.
- **Provide links & instructions early** for specialized applications, and check those frequently.

Research statement: Content

- Your past work, **why it was interesting**, & what you want to do in the future
- Ideally, **2 pages, single spaced** (not including references)
 - some applications don't allow more than 2 pgs
- Highlight general skills, tools, techniques, computational abilities, etc that you've acquired. Could even **bold**.

Research statement: Content

- **Brief intro**: your research, interests, and selling point
- **Body**: 1st past research, 2nd future directions & interests
- OR address future directions alongside past research
- **Brief summary** to recap all research interests

Research statement: **Start Early**

- Most time-consuming & tricky part of application
- Takes time to **critically assess** your past and future research directions, sell them, and **highlight your strengths**.
- **Get feedback** from more senior physicists and even fellow students. Go through several drafts.

Research statement: Other Tips

- **Ask postdocs** for their past statements.
- Could **customize statements** for your top places.
- Could write multiple research statements to highlight different aspects of your work as appropriate for the places to which you're applying.

CV

- Necessary info:
 - Name & contact
 - Education
 - Fellowships & Honors
 - Talks
 - E.g. Invited Seminars, Conference Talks, Public Talks

CV

- Additional good info:
 - **Publications** (doesn't hurt)
 - **Teaching**
 - Schools or Workshops
 - **Community** or Professional Activities
 - Professional Skills

CV tips

- For sections, aesthetics, formatting, etc, **look at CVs** of people in your field (e.g. faculty websites).
- Important & necessary info first.
- Make it **easy to read** & find what they want.
- As **efficient** as possible without losing relevant info.

Publication list

- Easiest “part” of application!
- Includes both journal **articles** & arXiv **preprints**
- Copy your favorite **journal format**.
- Comment on author ordering, if necessary.
- Tip: write out **full names** of all authors on your papers.
 - Good to emphasize who you’ve worked with.

Concluding Tips

- **Start early!**

- Start letters, statement, CV, pub. list today!

- **Get organized!**

- Might apply to 100+ institutions
- Find deadlines early. Make a calendar or spreadsheet.
- Search for “fancy” fellowships individually.
- Note any non-AJO applications.

Good Luck!

Piled Higher and Deeper by Jorge Cham

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title: "The Post-doctoral Sense, pt. 3" - originally published 11/26/2008