

## THE CONSULTATION: IMPLEMENTING A GATHERED FIELD

Are you responding on behalf of your institution?

**YES**

<p><b>If NO, please state on whose behalf you are responding e.g. Department/section within institution (admissions, international office, WP or widening access office, Medical School, etc) or as an individual</b></p>
<p><b>Name of institution</b>      <b>University of Cambridge</b></p>

Type of institution	Please tick
University	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other HEI	<input type="checkbox"/>
State/maintained school	<input type="checkbox"/>
Independent School	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sixth form College	<input type="checkbox"/>
FE College with HE	<input type="checkbox"/>
FE College without HE	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students' Union	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trades' Union	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connexions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aimhigher or other widening access body (such as LLN)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Location of institution	Please tick
England	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Northern Ireland	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scotland	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wales	<input type="checkbox"/>

**A. Given that the admissions review concluded that fairness rests in considering applications as part of a gathered field, please indicate which of the following options would be preferable for an HEI to operate a fair and transparent process while allowing applicants sufficient time to gather information about the course/HEI prior to making a commitment to offers:**

		Please tick one only
<b>Option 1</b>	Application deadline: 15 <sup>th</sup> January Publication of decisions from 15 January	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Option 2</b>	Application deadline: 15 <sup>th</sup> January Publication of decisions: 31 <sup>st</sup> March	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Option 3</b>	Application deadline: 15 <sup>th</sup> January Publication of decisions: 31 <sup>st</sup> January	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Option 4</b>	Application deadline: 31 <sup>st</sup> January Publication of decisions: 15 <sup>th</sup> February	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Option 5</b>	Application deadline: 31 <sup>st</sup> January Publication of decisions: 31 <sup>st</sup> March	
<b>Option 6</b>	Application deadline: 15 March Publication of decisions: 31 March	

### Comments

The Colleges of the University of Cambridge already operate their admissions on a gathered field basis with a 15 October deadline for applications and, with the exception of those not invited to interview, decisions not being communicated to applicants until early January. We have no particularly strong preference between these options – this being more a matter for those HEIs directly affected by this question – but we would note that Option 1 is not consistent with the concept of decisions being made in the context of the gathered field – there has to be some time between the deadline for applications and the first communication of decisions.

**B. For each option, please indicate what you feel the most appropriate decision publication date for Cambridge, Oxford, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science would be, bearing in mind that currently most institutions will need to interview applicants before an admissions decision is made and that the Government recommendation is that the application deadline for these programmes should remain at 15<sup>th</sup> October. Please select from:**

**A. 15<sup>th</sup> January**

**B. 31<sup>st</sup> January**

**C. 15<sup>th</sup> March**

**D 31<sup>st</sup> March**

		<b>Preferred Cambridge, Oxford, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science decision publication date</b>
<b>Option 1</b>	Oxbridge application deadline: 15 <sup>th</sup> October Application deadline: 15 <sup>th</sup> January Publication of decisions from 15 January	15 <sup>th</sup> January
<b>Option 2</b>	Oxbridge application deadline: 15 <sup>th</sup> October Application deadline: 15 <sup>th</sup> January Publication of decisions: 31 <sup>st</sup> March	15 <sup>th</sup> January
<b>Option 3</b>	Oxbridge application deadline: 15 <sup>th</sup> October Application deadline: 15 <sup>th</sup> January Publication of decisions: 31 <sup>st</sup> January	15 <sup>th</sup> January
<b>Option 4</b>	Oxbridge application deadline: 15 <sup>th</sup> October Application deadline: 31 <sup>st</sup> January Publication of decisions: 15 <sup>th</sup> February	15 <sup>th</sup> January
<b>Option 5</b>	Oxbridge application deadline: 15 <sup>th</sup> October Application deadline: 31 <sup>st</sup> January Publication of decisions: 31 <sup>st</sup> March	15 <sup>th</sup> January
<b>Option 6</b>	Oxbridge application deadline: 15 <sup>th</sup> October Application deadline: 15 March Publication of decisions: 31 March	15 <sup>th</sup> January

**Comments**

15 January would represent a slight delay in the publication of our decisions compared to current arrangements. We could consider further delaying publication if there was significant demand for this from other stakeholders, though we note that, at present, demand from applicants and schools/colleges is for our decisions to be communicated earlier rather than later.

**C. Assuming that an earlier application timetable is retained for applications to Oxbridge and to Medicine/Dentistry/Veterinary Science continues, should other HE institutions or programmes should be permitted to opt into this earlier timetable?**

	Please tick one only
Yes – on an institutional basis only (ie all programmes at the same institution operate to a single application timetable)	
Yes – on a subject basis only (ie all applications to a named subject group operate to a single application timetable, regardless of institution)	
Yes – with individual programmes able to choose the application timetable which they feel best suits their needs (ie there could be different application timetables operating within a single HEI and different application timetables operating for the same subject group)	✓
No	

**D. Assuming that a system based on the principle of a ‘gathered field’ is adopted, would you wish this to be based on:**

	Please tick one only
A pure ‘gathered field’, with all decisions held back until the agreed publication date	
A partially ‘gathered field’, with applicants who are unsuccessful in securing an interview, notified that their application has been unsuccessful on a continuous basis, with other decisions held back until the agreed publication date	✓

**E Assuming that a system based on a gathered field is adopted, what dates would be the most feasible to adopt with courses that being in January or April?**

**Comments**

The University of Cambridge offers no such undergraduate courses. Therefore we feel that it is inappropriate to express a view on this question.

**F What alternatives, if any would you propose in place of a gathered field system?**

**Comments**

None. The principle of a gathered field is fundamental to a fair admissions system.

**G For any further comments on the gathered field please note below**

**Comments**

The integrity of the notion of decisions being made in the context of the gathered field will be irreparably undermined if HEIs are permitted to give “applicants an informal indication” before the deadline for the publication of decisions that an offer will be probably be forthcoming, as suggested at §4.2.4. This should not be permitted.