

EVALUATING JOB OFFERS

Congratulations on receiving a job offer! Please know that the Career Development Center (CDC) is here to help coach you through the evaluation and negotiation processes. This tipsheet will guide you through that evaluation process and give you some tips and strategies for negotiating your job offer with an employer.

Job offers are usually made verbally. However, you should ask to receive the offer and any related benefits information in writing so that you can properly evaluate it. Once you have the offer in writing, you should consider a number of factors, including the job, organization, culture, and benefits.

The Job

The first thing to evaluate when you receive a job offer is the job itself. Make sure that you understand all aspects of the job and its responsibilities, and take time to determine how well the job matches your interests, preferences, and goals.

Questions you may ask yourself include:

- What is the job title?
- What are the responsibilities and expectations?
- Who is your supervisor, on your team, in your department?
- What other departments will you be working with?
- How long do people typically stay in this role? What type of roles do they do next?
- What hours will you work?
- What is the location?
- Do you like the overall environment?
- Did you leave the interview feeling excited about the opportunity?
- Will you get to travel for work?
- Does the work match your interests and the skills you want to use?

- Can you picture what a typical day will look like? Describe the work you would be doing:
 - Are you in an office, a cubicle, a lab, or working outdoors?
 - Will you spend most of the day sitting at your desk or will you be standing in a lab or on a manufacturing floor?
 - Will you use a computer to complete most of your work or will you take a more hands-on approach?
 - What software or technical skills will you be using? Do you enjoy that?

If you cannot answer these questions, go back to the employer and ask for more information to get a clearer understanding of the job. Most of all, it is important that you like the day-to-day responsibilities of the job otherwise you may be unhappy, regardless of what other perks or benefits the job offers.

The Organization

You should also determine if the company making you the job offer is a good fit for you. Assess the company's business activity, financial stability, age, size, and location. Think about whether or not the business, product, or service matches your own interests and values. In particular, consider how the size and structure of the company may affect your development and mobility. Large organizations may offer more training programs and levels of management for advancement, while smaller organizations may allow you to have more varied responsibilities and form relationships with upper management more quickly.

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More established companies may offer stability, while developing companies come with some uncertainty but also the thrill of helping to create the future of a new venture or industry.

To find out more about the company, visit its website and read about its mission, values, and activities. Search online for recent news articles or press releases regarding the company and the industry. You can also use the “**Hoover’s Company Profiles**” online database through the Gordon Library website. Tap into your network to ask about feedback or their perspective. In addition, **Glassdoor.com** is a website containing company reviews. **LinkedIn** company pages, as well as the company’s social media are both resources you may utilize to learn about the company.

Opportunities and Training

Consider what opportunities a job may offer, as well as how much training will be required and provided. Will you have opportunities to continue to learn new skills and gain additional responsibilities? Find out if the company has an on-boarding process or training plan for new employees and ask about mentor programs. Also consider other employee perks such as tuition reimbursement and professional association memberships.

Make Sure Your Job Offer is Complete

This is an important decision! You want to make an informed and sound decision having the proper information from the employer. The job offer should be in writing and should include the following:

- Salary
- Full Benefits Package (not just the highlights)
- Start date
- Deadline by which you have to decide

If the job offer does not include that information, you should ask the employer to provide it to you. Some companies provide benefits information on the company website, while others may provide it to you in a packet or hand-out or in an outlined format in your job offer.

Research: Know Your Worth

In order to decide if you should negotiate a job offer, you first need to know what salary you should expect to earn. You can use several resources to research salary information:

- Visit the CDC website’s on **Majors & Careers**, there you will find **Career Outcomes & Salary Data** which has historical salary data on graduates within different majors.
- **CareerOneStop.org** has a Salary Finder Tool which is a good resource to see low, median, and high salary ranges by location.
- National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has **salary statistics** for starting salaries nationwide by major.
- **Payscale.com** allows you to search for salaries by field, position, and location.
- **Glassdoor.com** provides self-reported salaries by company and job type
- **Bls.gov/ooh** allows you to review national information on salaries and growth

Keep in mind that these resources list average salaries. To get a clearer picture of how much you can expect to earn for a specific job, make a list of the qualifications you have that match the job description. The more qualities you have, the higher you will place in a salary range. Consider internships, projects, and leadership opportunities to define your qualifications and experience.

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Comparison of Three Offers (sample)

	JOB A	JOB B	JOB C
Salary	\$50,000	\$56,000	\$61,000
Bonuses	5% annual	2-4% per qtr.	None
Relocation	\$2,500	\$0	\$1,000
Time off	24 Days	22 Days	18 Days
401K/403B	Immediately	Immediately	1 year wait 2%
Raises	4% yearly	3% yearly	yearly
Position	Love	Stepping stone	Not challenging
Base salary	\$50,000	\$56,000	\$61,000
After 1 year	\$54,500	\$59,360	\$62,220
After 2 years	\$56,681	\$61,141	\$63,464
After 5 years	\$63,759	\$66,810	\$67,349

If you have received multiple job offers and are trying to decide which one is the best fit for you, make a spreadsheet to compare the jobs:

It is important to consider not only the entire compensation offer but also your preference for which role aligns best with your career goals and interests. Focus on your top five factors, and rank the offers.

Accepting an internship or job is an important decision that only you can make. The CDC is here to help guide you through the process. We recommend making an appointment as soon as you get the offer. You want to be sure to talk through it before the offer deadline closes and before you accept or reject the position. Good luck!

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