

Negotiating Job Offers

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

Areas for Negotiation

You can negotiate a job offer on several areas, including salary, job title, number of vacation days or personal time, start date, or the date of your first evaluation of performance and salary. You should not negotiate more than one offer or on more than two or three items, and always start with the item that is of most importance to you.

The area that most people negotiate on is salary. Ask yourself these questions to determine if you should negotiate the salary of a job offer:

- How does the salary offer line up with the average salary data you found from the CDC, NACE and other salary research websites?
- If less than the average salary data, use that data when negotiating salary.
- If at or above the average salary data, be able to clearly articulate why you feel you deserve an increase in salary. Look at the job description and highlight the skills and experiences that make you an exemplary candidate.
- Consider:
 - Past work or internship experience
 - Project, research, and lab experience
 - Academic performance and GPA
- What about bonuses and other benefits such as vacation time, future education benefits, 401k benefits, and healthcare options?
- Do not include any personal factors such as student loans or cost of living in your salary negotiations.

If you feel you have justification and data to support asking for an increase in salary, it is okay to do so. People do it all the time, including many students and new graduates.

Negotiation Process

Call the company representative to begin the negotiation process. It is better to negotiate via phone, not through email, and feel free to leverage other offers, but do not lie or make up information.

One negotiation approach that works well is to offer a range. Start by identifying a high and low point based on your research. The highest figure should be no more than 10% above the original offer. For example:

- Highest Figure: you would be ecstatic if they could get you to this number
- Lowest Figure (still higher than the original offer): you would be happy and on board with the role if they could get you to this number

By providing the employer with a range, you make it easier for the company contact to review and react to the information. When you share the range be sure to highlight your worth and ability to get up to speed quickly based on specific prior experiences or examples.

When you negotiate, never issue an ultimatum to the company, indicating you will not take the job unless they offer you a certain salary. Instead, after you advocate your position through negotiation, you can say "Is there anything else you can do for me to increase my salary?"



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Another negotiation approach is to go back to the employer with just one figure you are hoping to get. If you take this approach, the figure should be between the low and high figure in your range approach. You should be prepared for the employer to come back with a counter offer and you need to decide ahead of time what you are willing to accept. If they cannot or will not adjust the salary, see if they will revisit the conversation after six months of work based upon your performance. If they say yes, be sure to get it in writing before you accept.

Accepting an Offer

It is recommended to accept a job offer by phone. Do not email your acceptance. Some companies may require that you sign and mail back the acceptance letter, or respond using their online system. If so, be sure to get a photocopy of the signed letter for your own files before you send it. If you amend anything through negotiation discussions with the employer, such as salary, job title, or number of vacation days, ask for that information in writing before signing and accepting.

Once you accept an offer, inform other companies that you have accepted a position. Do not continue to interview or apply for other positions. You should remove yourself from these other candidate pools to ensure you do not stand in the way of other applicants vying for those opportunities.

Declining an Offer

If you decide not to take a job offer, you should call the contact who extended the offer and thank them for the offer but inform them that you are no longer interested in the position and will be pursuing other opportunities. If telephoning is not your comfortable mode of communication, you may send a polite, grammatically correct email to your contact conveying a similar message—however, the CDC strongly recommends that you reach out by phone.

You may also inform a company that you are no longer interested in an opportunity before you receive an offer. For example, if you interview for a job and realize it is not what you are looking for, you should call the employer and thank them for their time, but inform them that you would like to withdraw your candidacy.

Remember...

Consider all factors when reviewing job offers, such as:

- How the role aligns with your career interests and goals
- Total compensation package: salary, bonuses, paid time off, retirement plans, healthcare
- Location
- Hours

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!

