

# Job Offer & Salary Negotiations

**Put your best foot forward!**

**Career Services & Professional Development**

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<http://sites.uiw.edu/career/>



# Negotiating a Job Offer

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There are many things to think about and take into consideration when negotiating a job offer and figuring out what salary you are worth. Know that you should negotiate only when you feel that you are not being offered what you and the job are worth. Never negotiate just for the sake of it! When negotiating a job offer follow this handout and these steps and you will be sealing your own deal in no time.

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## WHAT SHOULD I CONSIDER WHEN EVALUATING THE JOB OFFER?

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Once you receive a job offer, you are faced with a difficult decision and must evaluate the offer carefully. Some issues to consider when assessing a job offer include:

- ✓ Will the organization be a good place to work?
- ✓ Will the job be interesting?
- ✓ How are opportunities for advancement?
- ✓ Is the salary fair?
- ✓ Does the employer offer good benefits?
- ✓ Will I have to relocate?

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## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AND EVALUATE

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### 1 The Organization

Background information on an organization can help you decide whether it is a good place for you to work. It can help you determine your fit with the organization and can give insight into what the company is about.

- Here are some factors to consider:
- **The organization's business or activity:** Is the organization's business or activity compatible with your own interests and beliefs? It will be easier to apply yourself to the work if you are enthusiastic about what the organization does.
- **The organization's size:** Large organizations generally offer a greater variety of training programs and career paths, more managerial levels for advancement, and better employee benefits than small organizations. Jobs in small organizations, however, offer broader authority and responsibility, a closer working relationship with top management, and a chance to clearly see your contribution to the success of the organization.
- **The organization's age:** Should you work for a start-up organization or one that is well established? New businesses have a high failure rate, but for many people, the excitement of helping create a company and the potential for sharing in its success more than offset the risk of job loss. On the other hand, it may also be exciting and rewarding to work for a company which already has a foothold on success.
- **Private versus public:** Does it make any difference to you whether the company is private or public? A privately owned company may be controlled by an individual or a family; this can mean key jobs are reserved for relatives and friends. A publicly owned company is controlled by a board of directors responsible to the stockholders. Usually, key jobs are open to anyone with talent.
- **Background Research:** Background information on an organization can be obtained by simply calling its public relations office and asking for an annual report. Information is also available on the organization's website and many resources can be found at the [UIW Library](#). Also press releases, company newsletters or magazines, and

recruitment brochures also can be useful. Some publications and databases such as can also give you great company and industry information:

- ✓ [Reference USA](#)
- ✓ Directories such as:
  - Business Journals
  - Dun & Bradstreet's Million Dollar Directory
  - Standard and Poor's Register of Corporations

## 2 The Job Location

Where is the job located? If it is in another city, you need to consider the cost of living, the availability of housing and transportation, and the quality of educational and recreational facilities. Even if the job is located where you are now living, consider the time and expense of commuting.

- A number of websites exist to help you compare cost-of-living and salaries among US regions. Try [CNN Money](#) and [Home Fair](#): They features a number of salary and relocation calculators.

## 3 The Nature of the Work

Determining in advance whether you will like the work may be difficult. However, the more you find out about it before accepting or rejecting the offer, the more likely you are to make the right choice. Some things to consider:

- **Does the work match your interests and make good use of your skills?**
  - The duties and responsibilities of the job should be explained in enough detail to answer this question.
- **How important is the job in this company?**
  - An understanding of where you fit in the organization and how you will be contributing to its overall objectives should give you an idea of the job's importance.
- **What about your potential boss and co-workers?**
  - Are you comfortable with the person who you will be reporting to and do the other employees seem friendly and cooperative?
- **How long do most people who enter this job stay with the company?**
  - High turnover can mean dissatisfaction with the nature of the work or something else about the job.
- **How about work hours?**
  - Does the job require travel, or does it call for irregular hours?
- **What kind of professional development opportunities will be made available to you?**
  - A good job offers you opportunities to learn new skills, increase your earnings, and rise to positions of greater authority and responsibility. A lack of opportunities can dampen interest in the work and result in frustration and boredom.

## **4 Know What You Are Worth! The Salary and Benefits**

**Do not negotiate salary until you receive a job offer and until you've researched the market and know what salary you can expect to receive.** Wait for the employer to introduce these subjects. Most companies will not talk about pay until they have decided to hire you. In order to know if their offer is reasonable you need a rough estimate of what the job should pay. You may have to go to several sources to research this information. Talk to friends who recently were hired in similar jobs. Ask your teachers and a Career Counselor in the Career Services Office about starting pay for graduates with your qualifications. Use the [NACE Salary Calculator](#) to find recent salary data.

- If you are considering the salary and benefits for a job in another geographic area, make allowances for differences in the cost of living, which may be significantly higher in a large metropolitan area than in a smaller city, town, or rural area.
- Learn the organization's policy regarding overtime. Depending on the job, you may or may not be exempt from laws requiring the employer to compensate you for overtime. Find out how many hours you will be expected to work each week and whether you receive overtime pay or compensatory time-off for working more than the specified number of hours in a week.
- Take into account that the starting salary is just that, the start. Your salary should be reviewed on a regular basis—many organizations do it every 12 months. How much you can expect to earn after 1, 2, 3 or more years? An employer should be specific about the amount of pay if it includes commissions and bonuses.
- Benefits can add a lot to your base pay, but they vary widely. Find out exactly what the benefit package includes and how much of the costs you must pay.

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### **\*WHAT SHOULD I KEEP IN MIND WHEN NEGOTIATING SALARY?**

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During your initial contacts with a company work to keep the salary decision open. You have no real bargaining power until you are being seriously considered for a job.

- If the employer mentions a salary figure or range, don't make the mistake of agreeing to a specific figure at this point. For example, if the employer says, "The job pays \$45,000. Would that be satisfactory?" you might reply that \$45,000 falls in the general range you are considering.
- Employers may not name any figure at all, asking you, instead, to name the salary you have in mind. Unless you are familiar with an organization's salary structure, throw the ball back to the interviewer. You might say, "I'm not familiar with your salary scale. What range do you think is appropriate for this position?"
- If the employer names a range that is agreeable, then suggest that you think your knowledge, skills and experience would qualify you for a salary at the high end. However, if the range doesn't meet your requirements, explain what your minimum is and why. Try to avoid a drawn-out salary discussion during the early stages of interviewing.
- Don't be afraid to be firm about your salary demand. The person who wants to hire you has done a sales job for you, convincing their boss why you are the best person for the job.
- Remember to consider both short term and long term career goals before running the risk of negotiation. When negotiating, try to look at it from the employer's perspective also.

\*Adapted from UT-Austin Career Design Center

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## **NEED ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE?**

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The Career Services & Professional Development Career Advisors will be happy to answer any questions you may have about evaluating a job offer or negotiating a salary. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 210-829-3931 or come by AD 112.