

Preparing for Job Interviews

A Helpful Guide for Entering the Job Market



Freed-Hardeman University
Career Center

I. Before the Interview

A. Company Research

Why research? Learning what you can about the company and being able to ask informed questions at the interview will help lift you above the competition. It is easier to:

- Find information on public companies versus private firms
- Locate facts about corporations as a whole versus subsidiaries/divisions
- Uncover information about large, nationally known corporations than local/regional firms

It is important to check the dates on publications to make sure that they are current. Company information to look for includes: years in business, services or products, competitors within the industry, ranking within the industry, growth pattern, reputation, divisions and subsidiaries, location/length of time established there, size, sales, assets and earnings, projects, number of locations, and foreign operations.

Utilize your network of professors and career services as they may have some insight into the company with which you are interviewing. If you are on the Internet researching companies and a source charges a fee, first check whether the FHU Library already has a subscription to that resource or one that provides similar information.

Interview Preparation/Research

- Verify where and when the interview is. Be sure you have directions for getting there and account for rush hour traffic, construction or other delays when making your travel plans.
- Know the name and title/position of your interviewer if possible. Being familiar with names ahead of time will make it easier to connect in person and it will also give a more personal touch to the thank you notes you write following the interview.
- It is okay to ask for the type of interview to expect (i.e., panel, behavioral, case, etc.).



B. Managing Your Professional Image

Email and Voice Mail

Utilize a professional email address such as john.smith@students.fhu.edu , not deerguy@hotmail.com or princess@gmail.com. Remember that your email address is an example of your written communication skills. Use proper grammar; do not use slang, abbreviations, text messages, and always proofread before sending. Ensure your phone message is appropriate. If you are not in a setting where you can conduct a professional conversation (e.g. a noisy restaurant) and don't recognize the number, let the call go to voice mail. If caught off guard or an employer calls at an inconvenient time (e.g. you just returned from jogging), politely excuse yourself for a moment or explain that you are unable to talk at this time and request a mutually agreeable time to call them or have them call back.

Social Networking Sites

When searching for a job it is important to remember your online image. Some employers may search social networking sites or the Internet for information on job candidates. Before you post pictures or statements on the web, keep in mind that posting to the web is like getting a tattoo — it's permanent. Google yourself and never post anything you wouldn't take into a job interview or show your grandmother. It is also a good idea to learn what information is out there and correct misinformation if possible.

Applications

Many companies will require you to fill out an application in addition to the resume and supporting materials that you have already submitted. When you are filling out the application you may be asked whether you have ever been terminated, arrested or convicted. Read carefully and pay attention to the details of the question. If an application asks and you do not disclose, it can be considered falsification of records. Being honest will not necessarily jeopardize your candidacy. A possible way to answer a difficult question is "Yes, details provided upon request."

Physical Image

As the saying goes, you never get a second chance to make a first impression. It's important to dress for the job you want. If in doubt, it's better to slightly overdress than to risk appearing too casual. If you want people to take you seriously, you need to dress and act the part.

Men's Business Professional Attire

- No formal attire
- Shirt should be tucked in, starched, clean and unwrinkled
- Avoid anything that is tight or has gaping buttons
- You should not be able to walk on the hems of your pant legs
- The waist of your pants needs to sit at the natural waist
- No shorts, jeans or anything really trendy
- No excessive or flashy jewelry
- Dress shoes only—no flip flops, boots or tennis shoes
- Be sure your shoes are polished and in excellent shape
- Don't smoke the day you meet with employers
- Go easy on or don't use perfume/cologne
- Hair color should be a natural color and styled conservatively
- No five-o'clock shadow—trim or shave facial hair
- Cover any tattoos and remove body piercings
- Nails should be well manicured and trimmed



Men's Business Casual Attire

- Button-down shirts and dark or khaki-colored dress pants are recommended
- Solid-colored v-neck or crew neck sweaters are appropriate
- Avoid shirts with loud prints
- Sport coats and blazers can be worn
- Belt and dress shoes should match and be polished and professional-looking
- Wear socks that are dark in color and high enough to cover the leg when seated
- No athletic shoes, flip flops, cargo pants, sweatshirts, jeans, t-shirts, shorts, etc.
- Minimal jewelry: watches, one ring per hand only



Women's Business Casual Attire

- Dress pants/skirts should be worn with a blouse in a solid color or conservative print; sweater sets are ok.
- Skirts should be knee-length and should not be tight; slits to facilitate walking are acceptable; slits to show off your legs are not
- Blazers can be worn
- Larger casual jewelry can be worn if it is conservative and not distracting
- Hosiery should be of a neutral color or slightly darker and always be worn with skirts
- Wear shoes that you can walk in, but avoid overly chunky heels/platforms; Flats or low heels are appropriate (closed-toe and heel)
- No cleavage (on either end!)
- No tank tops, belly shirts, jeans, flip flops, capri/crop pants, sweatshirts, t-shirts, shorts, etc.



Women's Business Professional Attire

- Two-piece matching suit in navy, dark gray or black (pinstripes, pants or skirted suits are acceptable)
- Skirts must be at least knee length
- Hosiery should be a neutral color or slightly darker and always be worn with skirts
- Closed-toe and heel shoes with low heels
- Wear conservative jewelry and makeup
- Nail polish should be in a clear or subtle shade
- Only one earring per ear



C. Professional Etiquette

- Be nice to everyone, especially the receptionist or greeter; your interview begins as soon as you leave home and you never know who you may meet before the on-site interview begins.
- Offer a firm handshake — no one likes a dead fish or a bone-crusher.
- Smile, have good eye contact, and speak clearly.
- Have some general conversation topics ready at all times. You may want to have at least five current event topics available to talk about; avoid negativity and controversial topics.
- Wait to sit until invited by your host.
- Do not chew gum during the interview.
- Sit up straight and don't fidget!
- Employer-sponsored social events can affect your reputation and chances for hiring/promotion with a company; keep this in mind when consuming alcohol, choosing attire for the event, and conducting yourself. This is not the time to party.
- Conversations, including those with peers, should be of a professional nature. Overly intimate topics or gossip should not be shared at employer-sponsored events.

D. Dining Etiquette

Meals are a common part of both the job search process and working with clients in the business world. Below is a list of tips to keep in mind when dining for business.

Basic Table Manners

- Be courteous to everyone, including restaurant staff.
- If possible, let the employer take the lead in ordering and order along the same price range as the host or choose an entrée in the middle of the price range.
- It is best to order food that can be easily eaten with a knife and fork. Finger foods can be messy and are best left for informal dining.
- Do not order alcoholic beverages. Drinking when dining out is unprofessional and can damage your credibility with the company.
- When dining at a formal table setting, a good rule of thumb is to begin with the outermost pieces of silverware and work towards the plate.
- When in doubt about the table setting, always remember solids on the left (bread plates) and liquids (drinking glasses) on the right. Think “BMW”: **B**read- **M**eal-**W**ater
- Wait to eat until everyone at the table has been served and your host has started his/her meal.
- Eat at a moderate speed and don't make others wait for you to finish. Remember — your first priority is the business, not the food.
- When you are not eating, keep your hands on your lap or resting on the table with wrists on the edge of the table. Elbows on the table are acceptable only between courses, not while you are eating.
- Used silverware should never touch the table; rather, it should rest on your plate.
- If your silverware falls on the floor, pick it up if you can reach it and let the server know you need a clean one. If you can't reach it, tell the server you dropped a piece of your silverware and ask for a clean one.
- Don't make a big fuss if you spill or break something on the table. Wipe it up with your napkin if it is small or call the waiter.
- Place your napkin on your chair if you leave the table during a meal. Place your dirty napkin near your plate only when everyone has finished and you are ready to leave the table.
- You should not leave the table during the meal except in an emergency. If you must go to the bathroom or if you suddenly become sick, simply excuse yourself. You can apologize later to your host by saying that you did not feel well.
- Say “no thank you” if you don't like or want something.
- It is inappropriate to ask for a doggy bag when you are a guest. Save the doggy bag for informal dining situations.



II. The Interview



When you arrive at the interview, be prepared to make small talk with office staff and the interviewer(s). Be positive, especially in response to those seemingly innocent questions, such as “How are you today?” “Did you have trouble locating the building?” No one wants a complainer or a person who seems to have a negative attitude as part of their team.

A. The Employer’s Perspective

The interviewers will have objectives to achieve during the interview process. Although they already have basic information from your resume, they want to:

- Confirm your competence (knowledge, skills and abilities) to do the job.
- Assess your communication skills—every sentence you speak during an interview provides an example of your verbal communication skills and ability to present information.
- Determine your level of motivation and interest in the position as well as the organization.
- Observe your interpersonal skills, and how well you get along with other employees.
- Evaluate your problem-solving skills and initiative.

Answering Interview Questions

- Employers determine which skills or critical behaviors are necessary for the job opening and then ask very deliberate questions to determine whether the candidate possesses those skills. To assess which skills the employer is seeking, talk with alumni, read the company literature and listen closely during the company’s information session.
- Always listen carefully to the question, ask for clarification if necessary, and make sure you answer the question completely.
- Your resume will serve as a good guide when answering interview questions. Refresh your memory regarding your achievements in the past couple of years.
- Keep your answers concise but complete. Your answer should take approximately 30 seconds to two minutes, depending on the depth of the question.
- Focus on your strengths and put a positive spin on answers to negative questions. (e.g., what you learned.)
- Enunciate, speak clearly and avoid swearing, using slang or fillers (e.g., “um,” “you know,” “like”).

Screening and/or General Interviews

The purpose of this type of interview is to narrow the pool of candidates.

(?) Personal Information

Tell me about yourself.

What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

How do you handle criticism?

How do you think a supervisor/friend/professor would describe you?

Why should I hire you?



*How do you like to be managed?
What two or three things are most important to you in a job?
Are you willing to relocate?
Are you willing to travel?
How do you work under pressure?
What are your short-range and long-range career goals?
What do you do in your leisure time?
What are your favorite hobbies?*

(?) Education

*Why did you select your college or university?
Why did you choose your major?
What class did you like best and least and why?
How has your college experience prepared you for a career with our organization?
What are your plans for continued study?
Do your grades accurately reflect your ability?
Why or why not?*

(?) Experience

*What did you like best and least about your last job?
What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
What experience do you bring to this job?
What have you learned from participating in extracurricular activities?
Are you a leader? Give examples.
Describe your most rewarding college experience.*

(?) Motivation

*What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
Why did you choose this career?
How would you describe the ideal job for you?
What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
How do you determine and evaluate success?
What salary are you looking for? (Try to avoid answering this until you reach the final interview stage.)*

(?) Company or Organization Questions

*Why do you want to work for this company?
What position in our company interests you the most?
What do you know about our company?
In addition to the literature that was sent out, what other sources did you use to find out about our company?
What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
How long do you intend to stay with our organization?*

Phone/Video or Web Cam Interviews

If the interview is being conducted using video, treat it as you would an in-person interview. Dress and behave appropriately.

- When scheduling any interview, confirm the time zone; Tennessee is in the Central Time Zone.
- If you are not in a setting where you can conduct a professional conversation, let it go to voice mail or request to set up an alternate interview time.
- Prepare your telephone area (paper, pen, calendar, and resume) and the location (i.e., hang a sign to warn roommates or other visitors).
- Get in an interview mind set — it may help to dress as if you are going to an in-person interview.



- Consider standing up for a phone interview because it may help you project your voice.
- Give brief answers and follow with questions of your own.
- Don't just repeat what is on your resume (it's probably in front of them as they call).

Be positive, especially in response to those seemingly innocent questions, such as “How are you today?” No one wants a complainer or a person who seems to have a negative attitude as part of their team.

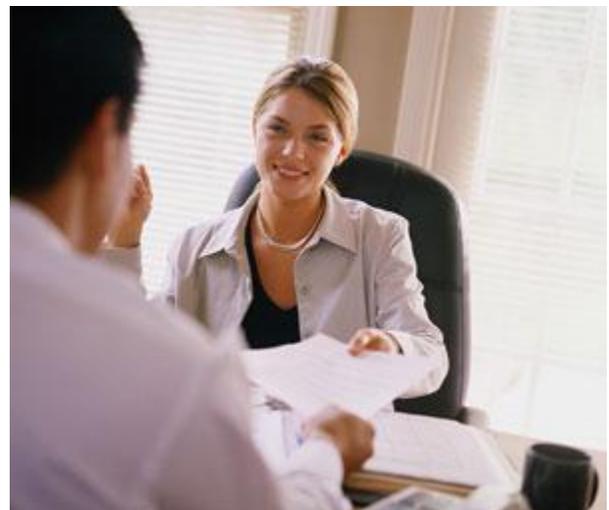
Situational Interview

Situational Interviewing techniques focus on what candidates would do in a specific situation. This technique involves questions that describe a hypothetical situation based on challenging, real life, job-related occurrences and ask the candidates how they would handle the problem. Example: You feel that your team is making a wrong decision. How do you handle the situation?

Behavioral Interview

The basic premise behind behavioral interviewing is that the best predictor of future behavior is past performance. Some points to remember when answering behavioral interview questions are listed below.

- Prior to the interview you need to think of examples where you have demonstrated the behaviors sought by the company.
- Demonstration of the desired behaviors may be proven in many ways. Use examples from past internships, classes, activities, and work experience. In addition, you may use personal examples such as running a marathon, or running for student body president.
- Your response needs to be specific and detailed. Tell the interviewer about a particular situation that relates to the question, not a general one. Briefly describe the situation, what you did specifically, and the positive result or outcome. The interviewer may probe further for more depth or detail such as “What were you thinking at that point?” or “Lead me through your decision process.”
- The question will require you to frame your answer in one of the following ways:
 - CAR:** Challenge (what was the problem/task?), Action (what action did you take?), Result (what was the result of your actions?)
 - STAR:** Situation, Task, Action, Result
 - OKEYO:** Overview, Key Events, Your Role, Outcome



B. Behavioral Interview Questions

(?) Decision Making and Problem Solving

Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to resolve a difficult situation?

Give a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem?

Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventative measures?

Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision?

Give me an example of a time when you could not make a decision because you did not have enough information?

How did you handle the situation? What was the result?

Describe a situation in which you had to make a decision involving an element of risk. What was the outcome? How comfortable were you in making the decision?

Describe a creative solution you have developed. How did you do it?

(?) Communication Skills

Describe a situation where you were able to use persuasion to convince someone to see things your way?

Tell me about a time when you had to use written communication skills to get an important point across?

Describe the most significant or creative presentation you have given?

Give an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even though that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa)?

Sometimes employees must communicate sensitive or unpleasant information to customers or other team members. Describe a time, in a work setting, when you had to communicate unfavorable information to someone? What did you have to tell them? How did you communicate the information? How did this person respond? Were you able to keep the interaction positive? If so, how? What was the outcome of this situation?

(?) Adaptability/Stress and Time Management

By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a variety of people, situations, and environments?

Describe a time when you had to function in a new environment that was different from one you had functioned in previously. How did you adapt?

Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills?

Tell me about a time when you had to work with competing priorities or an excessive workload?

Give me an example of a time when your schedule was interrupted? How did you react to this?

Tell me about a situation when you had to learn something new in a short time? How did you proceed?

Give me a specific example of a time when you did not meet a deadline? How did you handle the subsequent situation?

(?) Leadership/Personal Effectiveness

Give an example of an important goal you set and tell about your success in reaching it?

Tell about a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done?

Describe a time when you decided on your own that something needed to be changed, and you took on the task to get it done?

Give me an example of a time when you tried to accomplish something and failed? How did you deal with the failure? What did you learn from the experience? What would you have done differently?

Give me an example of a time when you motivated others?

Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively?

Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem?

What are three effective leadership qualities you think are important? How have you demonstrated these qualities in your past/current position?

How have you motivated yourself to complete an assignment or task that you did not want to do?

Tell me about a time when you constructively dealt with disappointment and turned it into a learning experience? What was the situation? What factors lead to the disappointing outcome? What did you learn from this situation? What would you do differently if you had it to do all over again?

Give a specific occasion in which you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree?

(?) Teamwork

Tell me about a time when you had to work with a difficult coworker or customer?

Describe a situation in which you were part of a team and not everyone was doing their share? How did you handle the situation? What was the result?

Tell me about a team project in which you are particularly proud of your contribution?

Case Interviews

Case interviews are a specialized style of interviewing that are common for consulting and finance interviews; however, they can be found in any field. Case interviews allow an employer to assess a candidate's ability to use logic, analyze a situation, sort through a large amount of information as well as their ability to present recommendations to a group. Coming to the "right" answer is not as important as the process you use when answering the question. Case questions can take several forms such as market-sizing questions, business strategy questions, or business operations questions. Examples of case questions are "How many ping pong balls fit into a 747?" "ABC Widget Company would like to buy Worldwide Faucets. What would you advise them to consider before making this acquisition?"



Answering case interview questions can be very overwhelming for students. However, students who know they will be getting a case interview question or who have an interview in the areas of consulting or finance are strongly encouraged to contact their career services center for additional information on the do's and don'ts of answering case interview questions.

Technical Interviews

This type of interview is usually conducted by a professional in your field. You may be asked about knowledge specific to your industry. Be prepared to define terms common to your discipline such as "define net present value" or solve basic problems common in your academic area. You may want to review some of the vocabulary and problems found in basic-level courses in your field.

C. Questions to Ask Employers

You should ALWAYS have a few questions for employers. It will show your interest in the company. These questions can be written down and taken to the interview with you. Because you should also prepare for an interview by visiting the company Web site and reading any available literature about the company, your questions should not be the type that could have been answered by doing very basic research. Be aware that some interviews have very strict time limits (such as 30 minutes), so don't ask an excessive number of questions. Make sure you know the interviewer's name for follow-up. At the end of the interview, find out the company's next steps.

(?) Questions about the Company

What expansion is planned for this department/facility?

What are your growth projections for next year?

What is the largest single problem facing your staff (department) now?

Do you fill positions from the outside or promote from within?

What do you consider to be your organization's three most important assets?

Tell me about your company's culture?

What is unique about the way this company operates?

(?) Questions about the Position

Please describe the duties of the job for me?

What is a typical day like?

What kinds of assignments might I expect in the first six months?

What are the potential career paths within the company?

Has there been much turnover in this job?

Is this a new position or am I replacing someone?
What is the person doing now that previously held the position?
What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
What skills are especially important for someone in this position?
Is there a lot of team/project work?
Will I have the opportunity to work on special projects?
Where does this position fit into the organizational structure?
How much travel, if any, is involved in this position?
Once the training period is completed, how much authority will I have over decisions?
What happens during the training program?

(?) Personal Questions

What do you like most and least about working for the organization?
Can you tell me about your own experience with the organization?
What does it take to advance in this field?

(?) Wrap-Up Questions

What is the next course of action?
When should I expect to hear from you or should I contact you?
When will a decision be made as to whom will be offered the job?

Get a business card or contact information from every person you interview with. Always send a thank you note to each individual within 24 hours following the interview. Thank you notes can be typed, handwritten, or emailed; use your personal preference.

(?) Questions on Salary

Let the company initiate salary discussions. Some experts suggest deferring salary discussions if they come up early in the interview process, but always be prepared by knowing the appropriate salary range. When asked for salary requirements, suggest to the recruiter that you would like to discuss this topic after exploring the nature of the position and your qualifications. If pressed, try to get the recruiter to state a range first: “I expect to earn a salary that is appropriate for my education and qualifications — what is the range that the company has in mind?”

III. After the Interview

If an employer has not gotten back with you within the time frame discussed, it is appropriate to contact the employer to follow-up on your status. If a time frame was not mentioned, wait two weeks after the interview to follow-up. Keep in mind that employers may be very busy meeting other work responsibilities — it is important to limit the frequency of follow-up contacts to avoid annoying the employer. If you are not sure whether it is appropriate to call — ask your career center.

A. Job Offers

Receiving an Offer

An offer for employment is typically delivered over the telephone by your primary point of contact through the recruiting process. Be sure to thank them for the offer and clarify when you need to provide a decision. Do not instantly accept the offer because there may be multiple factors to consider.

Example

“Thank you for the offer. I am excited about this position and the opportunity to work for your company. Of course, this is a very important decision for me and I will need some time to think it over. May I get back to you with my decision?”

In addition to a verbal offer, you should request and receive a written document outlining the details of the employment offer as well as associated benefits. Bonus or relocation details and associated stipulations may also be included. **DO NOT ACCEPT AN OFFER AND CONTINUE THE JOB SEARCH.** If you would like to continue interviewing with other companies or finish the interview process, ask for a deadline extension.

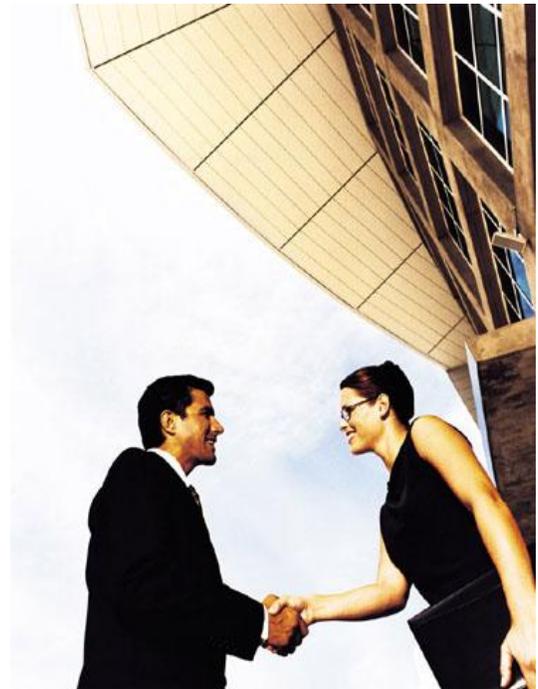
Evaluating the Offer

There are many issues to consider when assessing a job offer. It’s not unusual for new questions to emerge as you evaluate an opportunity. Now is the time to ask the potential employer about these issues — and to do some checking on your own. Before you make a decision you might regret, make the effort to get clarification. You can get in touch with the recruiting contact, an alumnus that works for the organization, career services staff or a current employee to provide you with the information that you need to make the best decision for you.

Factors to Consider in an Offer

A candidate rarely gets everything he or she wants in a job offer. Consider which factors are most important to you and which ones you would be willing to give up in order to get what you want most. Think about what you would like to have in a job several years in the future.

- Salary and benefits
- Job/industry stability (including turn-over and layoffs.)
- Physical work environment
- Geographic location/possibility of relocation
- Personally rewarding work, impact on society
- Opportunities to travel
- Level of responsibility/autonomy
- Size of the organization
- Non-profit vs. profit/public vs. private
- Nature of supervision
- Fit with co-workers
- Telecommuting/flex-time
- Opportunity for advancement
- Work hours
- Ability to use skills and be challenged
- Training and development



Benefits & Total Compensation

Total compensation includes your base salary plus the value of the benefit package and is a factor that must be carefully weighed. Benefits can increase your compensation by up to one-third of your salary.

These factors should be carefully considered

- Insurance premiums and coverage (medical, prescription, dental, vision, life, disability, flexible spending)
 - q) What is the co-pay?
- Paid time off (PTO): vacation, sick/disability leave, family leave (maternity, paternity, or family leave)
 - q) How are these allocated? When can you begin to use them? Do you accrue this immediately or is there a waiting period? Does your PTO roll over from year to year? When does your PTO allocation increase?

- Retirement plans
 - q) Does the company match contributions? Are you eligible for this immediately? Is a contribution mandatory?
- Stock options and profit-sharing
- Bonuses: signing, holiday, productivity
 - q) If you lose your job for any reason, will you be required to pay it back? How are bonuses allocated (according to seniority, sales, level of position, etc.)?
- Relocation expenses
 - q) Is it a flat fee or reimbursement? If you lose your job for any reason, are you required to pay it back?
- Tuition reimbursement
 - q) Will they reimburse for advanced degrees or licensures? Do they have a student loan payback plan?
- Flex-time or telecommuting
 - q) Is there flexibility to work from home for this position? Do you need to be employed for a specific amount of time to be eligible? Can you work four 10-hour days instead of five 8-hour days? Will weekend or evening work be available or required?

- Professional memberships/professional development opportunities?
- Expense accounts?
- On-site child care?
- Company car, mileage allowance, and parking?
- Technical allowances (cell phone, personal computer)?

Negotiating the Offer

WARNING: Proceed with caution because you are affecting your relationship with your future employer.

Are there issues you want to negotiate that would make the offer more attractive? Perhaps there are issues about the offer that are flexible, such as start date or location. If you have concerns about a particular aspect of the offer, ask whether it can be negotiated. Many employers have a set salary range for entry-level positions and may not have flexibility to negotiate. Check with the University Career Center for salary surveys for new graduates.

Salary Negotiation Tips

- The best time to negotiate is after an offer is made. Avoid salary discussions during an interview before a firm offer is made.
- Don't negotiate just for the sake of it. A company will offer what is perceived by them to be a fair compensation package based on your experience, educational background, and skills. If you feel that it is inconsistent with market data, share your researched facts with them.
- Always maintain professionalism in the negotiation process. Your professionalism will confirm the skills that you will offer the organization.
- Don't negotiate TOO hard. Aggressive negotiation tactics may lead to a rescinded offer.
- During the negotiation process, reiterate your excitement about the offer. Be gracious before elaborating on the concerns that you would like addressed.
- Research typical salary ranges for the nature of the work and the geographical area before asking for more money. Current economic factors such as hiring demand and availability of candidates will influence your worth to an employer.
- Do not bring your personal financial obligations into a salary discussion. The organization is not concerned about your expenses or debts and is not likely to consider these issues in determining a fair salary for you.
- Be able to articulate your strengths so that there is no question what value you can offer to an organization. This value can come from experience, specialized knowledge or certifications/licenses.
- A peer's higher offer is not sufficient reason to negotiate your offer. Salaries differ from company to company and from industry to industry; plus, a certain skill set may be more in demand at the current time.

- Understand that your negotiation requests may be denied. Even if an employer wanted to concede to your requests, the ability to do so might not exist. Decide which of your requests are “deal breakers” and which are only on your “wish list.”
- If your negotiation requests are accepted, you are expected to accept the job with no further negotiation.

Handling Multiple Offers

Weigh all of the factors. Create a pros and cons list, outlining comparative aspects of each opportunity. Analyze the list according to what is most important to you. You might be tempted to accept the higher paying offer, but many other factors will impact your career satisfaction. If the opportunities seem genuinely equal, look inside yourself, keeping in mind what is really important to you.

Turning Down an Offer

Be **tactful and timely when** declining an offer for employment. It is very important not to “burn bridges behind you.” Be sure to indicate any aspects about the recruiting process or organization that you enjoyed or appreciated. Decline the offer verbally and in writing.

For Example

Thank you for offering me the position of Business Assistant with XYZ Company. Your organization’s reputation for exemplary customer service was reflected in the courtesy and professionalism provided to me throughout the interview process. However, after careful consideration, I have decided to accept another position that aligns more closely with my skills and interests at this point in my career. Thank you again for the opportunity to interview and learn more about your organization. I enjoyed meeting you and the other members of the sales team.

Coping with Rejection

If you get the dreaded rejection letter, it’s okay to feel disappointed. Give yourself a brief time period to grieve and then move on. Spend some time analyzing the process and what you could do differently in the future. Review your resume and reflect on the interview. Consider your presentation, including preparation, interview attire, body language, nervous habits, and answers to the questions. Consider reapplying. In some industries it is common to apply several times before your application is successful. A one-time rejection is not always a permanent rejection. Ask “What is your reapplication time frame or protocol?”

Accepting the Offer

Get the final offer in writing. Sign a copy for the employer and keep a copy for yourself. Thank your references and others who have assisted in your job search. Report your offer to the University Career Center.



Congratulations! You’re hired!