

NEGOTIATING THE JOB OFFER

The following tips and suggestions will help you navigate the job offer and acceptance process in a manner that reflects well on you professionally and sets you up for a positive start.

Before the Interview

- Know your professional value. Think about the skills you bring, the degree(s) you have earned, and internships or other experiences you have had that will make you an asset to your future employer.
- Research salaries in your industry and of your specific occupation to learn what a strong offer looks like both in your field and in your geographical location. Reach out to your professional network or search online for estimates.
- Determine your salary and compensation needs.
 - Prepare a personal monthly budget to cover each of your living expenses, such as housing (rent), transportation/travel (including gas), food, education loans, insurance, pet care, savings, etc.
 - Pay careful attention to the timing of your monthly bills as they compare to your anticipated cash inflow from salary and/or other income.
 - Use online calculators, such as salary.com, paycheckcity.com, or onetonline.org, to assess your budgetary needs.
- You will want to have three numbers in mind: a minimum salary you're willing to accept, the amount you would like to be earning, and a range you will offer to the employer. Sharing a range, rather than a specific target amount, typically yields better results.

During the Interview

- Avoid bringing up salary in the interview. If the employer asks for your desired salary before making an offer, first indicate that there are many variables that you would need to consider.
- Counter with your own question, such as, "Is there a figure that recent high-performance new hires have been offered?" If they cannot answer the question or push back for a number, give a large range based on your research.

Receiving an Offer

- When receiving an offer, it is important to express your enthusiasm for the position, but do not accept on the spot.
 - You do not want to lose your chance to negotiate. Instead, ask for the offer in writing via email or hard copy.
 - An offer should include salary, benefits, retirement plan (if applicable), start date, paid time off, etc.
 - Ask for a specific amount of time to think about the offer and get back to them within the agreed upon period.
 - Typically, 48 hours is an acceptable time period. You can ask the employer by what time they need a response.
- Even if you're offered a position and are happy with the initial salary, consider negotiating and/or asking to review the benefits package offered to you.

Evaluating an Offer

- **First**, determine whether this is a salary and offer you can afford to accept.
 - Create a table of pros and cons for each organization from whom you have been extended an offer, including job features. Compare these pros and cons with your top priorities for your career and personal life at this time.
- With information from your research, you are equipped to discuss with the employer how an initial offer compares to benchmark data in the industry and area. This will give you an indication of whether or not you have received their best offer.
- **Then**, consider the benefits in addition to the salary which add value to the offer. An offer may include:
 - Relocation assistance
 - Contributions to a retirement plan
 - Paid time off for illness, holidays, and vacations
 - Education remission/reimbursement
 - Healthcare and life insurance
 - Bonus or merit-based compensation
- Additionally, other areas of consideration that have value beyond the salary include:
 - Job title
 - Overall work environment and satisfaction of coworkers
 - Organization's position and stature (prestige)
 - Career growth and professional development opportunities
 - Supervisor's work and communication styles
 - Organization's values as they relate to work-life balance
 - Organizational culture and your fit within it

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Negotiating the Offer

- Know that you can stop this conversation at any time, especially if you have the sense it is not going well.
- Keep in mind that this organization may be your future employer. Conduct yourself with integrity. Do not bluff, become noticeably impatient with the process, or make demands or ultimatums of the employer.
- After you receive the offer in writing, strategize a negotiation plan.
 - Feel free to attend a career coaching session at the CCD (see Resources) to discuss what you have researched for industry comparisons and develop your top three priorities for negotiation.
 - You must be able to demonstrate your worth and justify your negotiation points.
- Start by asking the employer if you can schedule a time to discuss the offer.
 - Begin the conversation by expressing gratitude for the offer.
 - If your top priority for negotiation is salary, describe in an objective manner why you believe the salary offer should be adjusted, utilizing your research.
- If the employer accepts your salary proposal, you can thank the recruiter and move on to other topics you would like to discuss.
 - At this point, you would accept their offer and arrange your starting date/time or ask for time to finalize offer(s) and decisions.
- If the employer indicates that the salary is non-negotiable, your conversation can instead focus on the other benefits in the offer. Other factors that may be equally as important to take into account as the salary include:
 - Do you have a supervisor who can act as a mentor?
 - Are there available funds for professional development, additional education, or training?
 - Will you feel comfortable in the work environment and with your colleagues?
 - Will there be opportunity for sign-on bonuses or raises?
 - Can you negotiate an extra week of vacation?
 - If performance evaluations are annual, can you request a 6-month review for an opportunity for an increase at that time?
- Once you have received an offer that you are comfortable with, ask for it in writing (an email will suffice).
- Do not push back more than twice if they have not been flexible on salary or benefits.
 - Once you have come to an agreement on the offer, it is time to accept or decline the position graciously

Balancing Multiple Offers

- Balancing multiple offers is a great problem to have, but it can be difficult to navigate.
 - You do not need to hide this from an employer; in fact, it can be used as a leveraging tool during the salary negotiation process.
- When this situation arises, ask for more time from each employer to consider their offer.
 - Follow-up at the CCD with a career coaching session to discuss your options.
- While every situation is unique, **do not**, under any circumstances, accept more than one offer or accept an offer with the intention to renege (i.e., back out) if “something better comes along.”
 - This can negatively impact on your professional reputation and reflect poorly on UConn as your institution.

Rejecting the Offer

- If you decline an offer, it is important to do so over the phone (rather than in an email or text) in a timely fashion.
 - Be sure to show appreciation for their time, consideration, and the opportunity.
 - For example, you can say, “Thank you very much for offering me the [XYZ] position. I appreciate you taking the time to consider me and for answering my questions about both your company and the role.”
- If you received a more lucrative offer, then you should avoid mentioning the details of the position of company.
 - Instead, diplomatically state that you carefully considered the offer, but that at this time you are pursuing another opportunity that better aligns with your career goals.

Keep in mind that you want to try as best you can to keep the door open for future contact with this employer.

Resources

CCD Career Coaching	Schedule an Appointment
Cost of Living Calculator	Payscale.com Calculator
Take-Home Pay Calculators	PaycheckCity.com Salary Calculators (salary, hourly, bonuses, etc.)
Salary Estimates	O*Net Glassdoor