Negotiating Job Offers

Receiving a job offer, particularly from one of your top choices, is exciting. However, the process can become stressful if the offer does not meet your expectations or match your worth. Negotiating offers, particularly salary, is becoming common and more common. Yet it is a conversation that many students and recent graduates are unsure of how to initiate. Below is a sample negotiation script. If you would like additional advising, please call 205-934-9202 to schedule an appointment with a Career Coach. Many entry-level positions do not have a lot of room for negotiating.

**IMPORTANT:** Before initiating the conversation, be sure to diligently research the salary range for the position. Be prepared to cite your sources, and/or other pending offers, when making the case for an increase in salary.

**Student:** I want to say thank you again for extending the offer to join the [company name] team. I am extremely pleased to have been offered this position, but I would like to discuss compensation, as it is less than I expected.

**Company:** Sure we can talk about compensation. What did you have in mind?

**Student:** Before we get into specific numbers, I would like to understand how your organization structures salary ranges and how this particular salary was determined.

**Company:** I have heard your argument. However, the most we can offer is XXXX, which is still less than what you want.

**Student:** Well [company name] is indeed one of my top choices for employment and based on what I know about the company and from my interviews, I believe I would enjoy working there, gain invaluable experience, and be a contributing member of the team. I am willing to consider a signing bonus of XXXX in lieu of an increase in salary. According to my university’s post-grad survey, graduates within my major make a higher salary than what was offered for similar work. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) most recent salary survey also indicates that the starting salary for similar positions is higher than what was offered.

**Company:** I understand the organization prefers to bring recent graduates in at the lower end of the range due to a lack of experience. However, my internship experiences, technical expertise, and educational warrants a higher salary.

**Student:** Thank you for your telephone call and letter of last week offering me the position of Logistics Coordinator with the Alabama Department of Transportation. I am excited about the opportunity this position offers both in terms of job duties and location.

**Company:** You asked that I make a decision by March 20. This is an important decision and I do not have all the information I need in order to make this decision by that date. Would it be possible for me to supply you with my decision by March 27? I would very much appreciate such an extension, and assure you that I will be able to make a firm decision by that date.

**Student:** Thank you very much for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Suzanne George
343 Jefferson Street
Birmingham, AL 35294
(465) 552-1111
sge@uab.edu

**IMPORTANT:** When making the case for an increase in salary, **other pending offers** should be included in the conversation. When making a case for an increase, **be sure to diligently research the salary range for the position**. Be prepared to cite your sources, and/or other pending offers, when making the case for an increase in salary.

**Student:** What did you have in mind?

**Company:** I understand the organization prefers to bring recent graduates in at the lower end of the range due to a lack of experience. However, my internship experiences, technical expertise, and educational warrants a higher salary.

**Student:** Yes, I accept the offer. Thank you for your offer of employment as a social media strategist at your Fruitville, Florida site. I am delighted to accept your offer and look forward to beginning work with Summers Fruit Company.

**Company:** I appreciate the challenging opportunity you offer, I have had another offer which I believe more closely matches my current career goals and interests. Therefore, although it was a difficult decision, I must decline your offer. I do appreciate all the courtesy and hospitality extended to me by your office, and I wish you well in your search.

In the position I have accepted with Public Policy Watch, I will occasionally be on Capitol Hill to attend hearings and monitor legislation, so if I hope we can get together again and talk about common interests.

**Student:** I wish you well in your endeavors.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Atkinson

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Request for Extension of Deadline for Accepting or Rejecting a Job Offer

March 1, 20XX

Dr. Thomas G. Jones
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Dear Dr. Jones:

Thank you for your telephone call and letter of last week offering me the position of Logistics Coordinator with the Alabama Department of Transportation. I am excited about the opportunity this position offers both in terms of job duties and location.

You asked that I make a decision by March 20. This is an important decision and I do not have all the information I need in order to make this decision by that date. Would it be possible for me to supply you with my decision by March 27? I would very much appreciate such an extension, and assure you that I will be able to make a firm decision by that date.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Atkinson

Withdrawal From Job Search, via Email; Follow-Up To Phone Call

March 1, 20XX

Ms. Vera L. Clark, Editor
Green Magazine
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Ms. Clark:

I want to express my sincerest appreciation to you for including me in the interview process as you seek candidates for your magazine’s website coordinator position. I have enjoyed meeting with the members of your staff and think you have an outstanding operation.

However, to confirm our telephone conversation of this morning, I respectfully withdraw from consideration for your position. I have just accepted another employment offer which I believe very closely matches my current skills and career goals.

I wish you and the staff of Green Magazine the best of success. I hope we will have the chance to visit at the upcoming Magazine Writers’ Conference. Thank you again for the opportunity to explore career possibilities with your office.

Sincerely,

Amanda Vonn
1234 College Road
Birmingham, AL 35294
(540) 555-0000
avonn@uab.edu

Acceptance of a Job Offer

March 1, 20XX

Dr. Thomas G. Jones
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Dear Dr. Jones:

Thank you for your offer of employment as a social media strategist at your Fruitville, Florida site. I am delighted to accept your offer and look forward to beginning work with Summers Fruit Company.

You indicated that I will be receiving a salary of $, per year and will have initial duties reporting to Andrea Caruso. As your offer stated, I will begin work on August 1st. In mid-July, after relocating to the area, I will call you to see what information or materials I may need before August 1st. In the meantime, please let me know if I can provide you with any information.

Again, thank you for offering me this exciting opportunity.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Atkinson
### Budget Worksheet

**Recommended Budget Strategy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Expenses (Fixed or Flexible will vary by individual)</th>
<th>Monthly Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Savings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Debt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Personal Care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What’s My Income?**

- **Monthly Total**
  - **INCOME**
    - Salary (after taxes, benefits)
    - Other income (after taxes)
  - **MONTHLY**

- **Total Monthly Income**

Adapted with permission from the University of Maryland’s 2017-18 Terp Guide.

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### Planning for Graduate School

Graduate Education involves obtaining specialized knowledge in a concentrated area of study, with two basic types of degrees: academic and professional. An academic degree involves research and scholarship in a particular discipline. A professional degree provides training to acquire skills and knowledge needed for a particular profession (e.g., law and business school). There are three basic degree levels: master’s, specialist and doctoral:

- Master’s degrees are offered in almost every field of study, although some universities only offer doctoral programs in certain fields.
- Specialist Degrees are usually completed in addition to a master’s program and often require additional training or internship experience; this type of degree prepares an individual for certification or licensing requirements necessary for some professions.
- Doctoral studies usually require the pursuit of original research for an academic program or the practical application of knowledge and skills in professional programs.

### Is Graduate School for me?

This is the first determination you may need to make. Before applying to graduate school, give careful consideration to your goals. Remember, graduate school is a means to a professional goal, not a way to extend your undergraduate experience. Become familiar with the working conditions, employment prospects, and other requirements of the field you plan to pursue. You may also consider consulting with faculty or mentors to help estimate your readiness for graduate work. Most Master’s programs will require at least two years of full-time study, with most doctoral degrees taking four to six years to obtain.

### RESEARCHING SCHOOLS

Once you have determined that you are on your way to graduate school, the next step is to begin researching specific schools. There are many resources to review and identify programs in your chosen career field. Don’t hesitate to talk to faculty members, as well as use online and print resources. You may also want to attend the Graduate and Professional School fair held in the fall to speak with school representatives. Once you have a list of several programs you are interested in, there are a number of factors to consider when choosing a program. These include:

- **Quality and Reputation of the Program**
  - Consider the commitment to research by the faculty, the reputation of the alumni, and the program accreditation.

- **Location and Size**
  - How large is the department? What is the typical class size?
  - How will you finance your degree?
  - What does the program cost, and what forms of assistance are available?

- **Satisfaction of current students**
  - Ask to speak to students currently enrolled.
  - What advice do they have? Is there affordable housing?

- **What is the culture of the program?**
  - Are the students friendly and inviting or competitive and driven?
  - Are the faculty good mentors?

You may have other criteria that is on the list for your own personal exploration into graduate school. After you have begun this progression, the next step is the application process!

Source: Modified from Graduate School Planning Career Services at Princeton University.

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**The University of Alabama at Birmingham**

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