



# EVALUATING SALARY & JOB OFFERS

Salary is just one of a number of factors to consider when deciding whether or not to accept a job offer. During this stage, it is important that you do all you can to ensure you are well-informed and that you, in turn, keep the employer well-informed throughout your decision-making process.

In this handout, we address the following:

- How can you know if the compensation you are being offered is fair?
- What else should you consider when weighing your options for an internship or full time job?
- How should you respond when you are offered a position, but it is not your first choice?
- How can you ask for more time to make a decision?
- When and how can you negotiate salary or other parts of an offer?
- How should you approach an employer when you are ready to accept or decline an offer?

Our staff advisors offer workshops on **Evaluating Salary and Job Offers** a few times each semester. You may view the schedule and sign up on our website.

## AFTER THE INTERVIEW

You had a job interview, you sent a thank you note to the employer, and now you are waiting to hear whether you have made it to the next stage of the selection process. When can you follow up with the recruiter again?

The most logical time to contact a potential employer for an update after an interview is when you start to receive job offers from other companies.

It can be challenging to convey your continued interest while respecting the employer's timeframe for making a decision without overstepping the bounds of tactfulness. Job seekers must strike a balance between demonstrating enthusiasm while still providing the

employer adequate time to process the many applications they receive.

In the meantime, before you even expect to receive an offer, develop an understanding of what your skills are worth in the current employment market.

Collect salary range information from a variety of sources, such as UMD engineering salary surveys (available on our website), the National Association of Colleges & Employers annual salary survey, industry associations, professional journals, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

See *Websites with Salary & Negotiation Information* in this handout for links and resources.

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## WEBSITES WITH SALARY & JOB OFFER RESOURCES

<https://www.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm> **Bureau of Labor Statistics** Wage Data by Area and Occupation

<https://collegegrad.com/salaries>  
<https://collegegrad.com/job-offer> **CollegeGrad** resources on job offers, salaries, negotiation, and other career preparation topics

<https://www.livecareer.com/quintessential/salary-negotiation> **LiveCareer** articles and tutorials for salary negotiation and job offer evaluation

<https://www.nerdwallet.com/blog/careers/> **NerdWallet's** Career Guide

[www.careers.wsj.com/](http://www.careers.wsj.com/) **Wall Street Journal** Career section (subscription required for some articles)

<https://fairygodboss.com/career-topics/how-to-negotiate-negotiations> **Fairygodboss** provides data and advice geared towards women seeking to advance in their careers.

<http://www.salary.com/> **Salary.com** provides reports and calculators by profession and location.

<https://www.educatetocareer.org/programs.php> **Educate to Career** includes a free salary calculator

[www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com) **Glassdoor** includes user-reported information on salaries, interviews, and company reviews. Create a free account with your .edu email address. Note that negotiation information is included under Interviews, not Salaries.

<http://www.homefair.com/movers/moving-cost-calculator.asp> **Homefair's** Quick Moving Cost calculator allows you to estimate the cost of moving to another city.



**GoInGlobal** and **USA Career Guides** are helpful resources for industry and cost of living data for U.S. and international cities. To access, log in to Careers4Engineers or Careers4Terps, then click on the logo.

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## WHEN YOU GET THE CALL

When you receive your first job offer, you may be tempted to jump up and down and scream “I’ll take it!” into the phone. Please don’t do that. Here are some tips on what you *should* do when you are offered a position.

### 1. ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE OFFER.

If the recruiter calls you with the offer, write down the details. If you receive an offer via email, reply to that email to acknowledge you received it. Request a time in the near future for a phone call to discuss details.

### 2. FOLLOW UP WITH OTHER EMPLOYERS.

Once you receive an offer, it is appropriate to call any employers you are still waiting to hear back from to ask when they are planning to make their decision.

### 3. REVIEW THE DETAILS.

Carefully review the offer letter and information regarding benefits, etc., to prepare questions for your discussion with the employer.

### 4. ASK QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU COMMIT.

The employer understands that you may have many questions and is happy to assist you during this process. Prepare your questions ahead of your phone meeting with the recruiter.

### 5. SET A DEADLINE TO RESPOND.

If you need more time, be sure to explain your situation and ask for more time than you think you need to make a final decision.

(Do not wait until the last minute to ask for an extension; this looks like you are not planning ahead.)

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## BEFORE YOU ACCEPT A JOB OFFER

### UNDERSTAND THE TOTAL COMPENSATION.

Benefits can add up to 40% of your base pay. Use the checklist at the back to fill in information on benefits and perks for a more realistic picture of the entire compensation package.

### LOOK AT THE WHOLE PICTURE.

While money is important, it is not the only reason to accept or decline an offer. Consider other factors - the type of work, company reputation, opportunity for challenge or advancement, adventure, job security, location, etc.

Clarify these points as well when you ask the employer questions about the offer.

### USE TACT WHEN NEGOTIATING.

If you decide to negotiate, schedule a time to speak with the person that extended the offer to you.

During the conversation, emphasize to the employer how excited you are about the job but that you are disappointed with the salary that was offered. Then calmly explain the reasons why you believe the offer is below the market value for the position and describe what you can do for the company.

### KEEP SELLING YOUR STRENGTHS.

Remember to focus on why you **deserve** more, not why you need more. If you can point to how you can make or save money for the company, do so.

If it is important to you, you may decide to negotiate benefits rather than an actual dollar increase. If a company appears hesitant to move on salary, bonus, stock options, etc., perhaps they might have some latitude in other areas like relocation, vacation days, or temporary housing.

### GET WRITTEN CONFIRMATION OF CHANGES.

Some employers prefer to discuss all the parameters of the offer first, then send you a letter of agreement after you give a verbal "yes." Getting something in writing provides closure and prevents any misunderstandings between you and an employer. Take charge of this process by writing an email confirming the details of your agreement while they are fresh in your mind.

### WEIGH YOUR OPTIONS.

Timeliness is crucial at this stage, especially when considering multiple offers. Get as much information as possible in the time you have, knowing that you may have to decide without having 100% of the data.



### Take your time!

The recruiter or hiring manager **expects you to take time** to consider the offer and ask questions before you make a decision.

Use diplomacy and show your appreciation of the offer, but **do not say yes** (or no) to the offer until you consider the details!

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## DECISION TIME – ACCEPTING AND DECLINING

At some point, you are going to have to accept one offer and decline others you may have received.

**Once you decide to accept an offer**, you should reach out to the person that extended the offer. Confirm any other important information about the position, such as start date, dress code, required background checks, etc.

**Once you accept a position**, you should immediately stop interviewing, cancel any further interviews, and notify all employers who are still considering you.

**If you choose to decline a job offer**, do so tactfully and in writing. If you have developed a rapport/relationship with a recruiter, offer them the courtesy of a phone call. Keep in mind these tips when declining a job offer:

- Avoid saying anything negative in writing about the employer, even if you had a negative experience.
- If you choose to decline an offer because another offer is a better fit for your interests and goals, it is fine to state this, without giving details about why the declined offer is not the best fit. It is not necessary to state whose offer you accepted, but you may do so if you wish.
- Remember that this employer may be a contact for you in the future. Be professional and courteous.

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## AFTER YOU ACCEPT AN OFFER

### Share your news with Engineering Career Services!

You can complete the Job Update Form on our website or come in and tell us about it. If you notify us about the internship or entry level job you have accepted, we can stop sending your resume to employers. It is also important for our office to know who we have helped!

If the position is a co-op, we can help you register for ENCO099/098 so you maintain your student status. International students on F-1 visas must request and receive CPT work authorization before they can begin working at an internship off campus.

### Policy on Accepting a Job Offer & the Consequences of Reneging

Once you accept an offer, including verbally, you are obligated to that position even if you receive a better offer later. After you accept an offer, you should notify other employers that are considering you and you should stop submitting new applications. If you are not sure how to respond to an offer, please contact Engineering Career Services staff for advice.

If you renege on your commitment to an employer, your Handshake account will be blocked, and you will be barred from participating in campus recruiting activities. Reneging damages not just your professional reputation, but that of the Clark School of Engineering. Your actions can jeopardize opportunities for other Clark School students.

If a company/organization rescinds its offer of employment to you, please notify the Engineering Career Services office immediately.

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## WHAT NOT TO DO

### DON'T BE CAUGHT UNPREPARED.

The more information you have about your market value and the prospective employer, the greater your likelihood of success. Time spent learning how to negotiate and preparing for negotiations may be the best investment you will ever make.

### DON'T BE TOO EAGER TO ACCEPT.

Ask for some time to respond to the offer. If you feel the salary is not sufficient, tell the employer when you ask for time to consider the offer. You will find out right away whether the salary quoted is set in stone or not.

### DON'T SAY WHY YOU *NEED* MORE MONEY.

The employer does not want to hear about your student loan debt, living expenses or preference for eating out. Your rationale for salary negotiation should focus on why you *deserve* more (relevant expertise, specific knowledge, offer below market value).

### DON'T PLAY "HARD TO GET."

If the company has offered you a salary that is more than fair compared to industry standards, you may not need to negotiate. In addition, if you are new to the field and applying for a position such as an internship or a co-op, you may not have as much leverage to negotiate.

### DON'T APPROACH SALARY NEGOTIATION LIKE HAGGLING OVER THE PRICE OF A CAR.

Job negotiations are the starting point for your career with a company. Consider your long term goals rather than trying to win a single round.

### DON'T BE GREEDY.

This is one sure way to lose everything you have obtained. Know when to quit bargaining. There comes a point in every negotiation when you have achieved everything you could have reasonably expected to gain.

### DON'T LIE.

If you lie during negotiations (about salary history or other offers), sooner or later you are likely to be caught. Even if you keep the offer, you will be at a tremendous disadvantage, and your credibility will always be suspect.

### DON'T BURN BRIDGES.

When the negotiations are over, you will have to be able work with the person with whom you are negotiating. Moreover, your future success may depend on that person. So, while you want to negotiate the best possible deal, you need to do so in a way that does not damage your image.

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## DECISION TIME – ACCEPTING AND DECLINING

### Accepting an Offer

Once you have decided on the position you will accept, and have confirmed the conditions of the offer, send an email confirmation and, depending on the situation, call the recruiter.

From: jwareumd@terpworld.net  
To: mmckinney@bbengcompany.com  
Date: August 30, 2018, 10:04 a.m.  
Subject: Engineering Co-op, Acceptance of Offer, J. Ware

Dear Ms. McKinney:

Thank you for your offer of employment as a co-op at B&B Engineering. I am excited to accept your offer and I look forward to beginning work next semester at your Gaithersburg, Maryland site.

You indicated that I will be receiving a salary of \$20.00 per hour, and I will have initial duties reporting to Andrew Chun. As your offer stated, I will begin work on January 15, 2016 at 8:30 AM. In the meantime, please let me know if I can provide you with any further information.

Again, thank you for offering me this exciting opportunity. I look forward to working at B&B Engineering.

Sincerely,

### Tactfully Declining a Job Offer

As soon as you know you will not accept an offer please email the employer a gracious note. In certain circumstances you will want to follow up first by calling the person who extended the offer to you to let them know. Here is a example of an email sent after declining an internship offer:

From: jwardumd@terpworld.net  
To: blumhr@engfirmtrb.com  
Date: July 12, 2018, 4:30 p.m.  
Subject: TRB Internship Offer, J. Ward

Dear Ms. Blum,

Thank you for your call and letter offering me the position of Summer Intern with TRB International. While I appreciate the challenging opportunity you offer, I have received 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 endeavors.

I will be attending the IEEE Conference this July in Raleigh, NC, so I hope to see you there.

Sincerely,

## JOB OFFER CHECKLIST

This table can help you evaluate the compensation package of a job offer. However, keep in mind that this is a very comprehensive list; every item may not necessarily apply to you or your specific offer.

<b>Topic Area</b>	<b>Their Response</b>	<b>Potential Questions</b>
<i>Title</i>		<i>(Is it what was expected? If not, why not?)</i>
<i>Report To</i>		<i>(Is it who was expected? If not, why not?)</i>
<i>Start Date</i>		<i>Can we make it earlier? Later?</i>
<i>Base Salary</i>		<i>Payable monthly? Bi-weekly?</i>
<i>Signing Bonus</i>		<i>Do they offer one? How much? Any conditions?</i>
<i>Commissions or other Bonuses</i>		<i>Are there any? Percentage? Tied to what specifically?</i>
<i>Relocation</i>		<i>What expenses are covered, if any?</i>
<i>Comp Time</i>		<i>Any work hours/days flexibility?</i>
<i>Overtime</i>		<i>Is there paid overtime? Not typical for</i>
<i>Retirement Plan</i>		<i>Type? (401k?) Company match %? Max</i>
<i>Stock Options</i>		<i>How are they determined?</i>
<i>Health</i>		<i>What is my premium (For myself? For my family)? Options (PPO? HMO?) Deductibles? Co-pays? Co-insurance?</i>
<i>Dental</i>		<i>Deductibles? Co-pays? Orthodontics? Max?</i>
<i>Vision Care</i>		<i>Exams? Glasses/contacts? Max?</i>
<i>Life Insurance</i>		<i>Set amount? % of salary?</i>
<i>Short-term Disability</i>		<i>Period of time? Coverage?</i>
<i>Long-term Disability</i>		<i>Period of time? Coverage?</i>
<i>Vacation</i>		<i>Any flexibility in providing more? When does it increase?</i>
<i>Holidays</i>		<i>How many? Can any be flexed?</i>
<i>Sick/Personal Days</i>		<i>Covered? How many? Restrictions?</i>
<i>Tuition</i>		<i>Reimbursement rules and %?</i>
<i>Training</i>		<i>Other training provided? Who approves?</i>
<i>Health Clubs</i>		<i>Coverage?</i>
<i>Dependent Care</i>		<i>Coverage?</i>
<i>Performance Review</i>		<i>When will my first performance review be?</i>
<i>Salary Review</i>		<i>When will my first salary review be?</i>
<i>Potential Increases</i>		<i>What % increases should I expect for the first 2-</i>
<i>Travel</i>		<i>% overnight travel expected?</i>
<i>General Expenses</i>		<i>Are all business-related expenses covered?</i>

# JOB OFFERS QUICK REFERENCE SHEET

Below are a few suggestions on how to respond in different situations surrounding job offers and salary. As a reminder:

- Be sure to do research on comparable salaries for your major, industry, location and experience level before you negotiate with an employer.
- Consider the company culture and how you have interacted with the recruiter in deciding on the method of follow up (call or email) to these sensitive conversations.
- Review the complete Job Offer and Salary Guide for additional information.

## WAYS TO HANDLE DIFFERENT SALARY CONVERSATIONS

### When asked about your salary expectations during the interview:

- Deflect and delay. For example, you could say,

“I believe my salary should be based on the responsibilities of the job, the skills I bring to the position, and the standards of the industry.”

- OR -

“Although salary is an important factor, what I am really looking for is opportunity. So, after we are finished discussing what skills I can bring to the position, I would like to entertain your strongest offer.”

- OR -

“What would a person with my background, skills, and qualifications typically earn in this position?”

- If the employer is still insistent on you providing a number, give a range, with the bottom of your range being your ideal figure.
- Do not give a number that you would not be willing to accept.

“Based on the research I have done on typical starting salaries in this area for engineers with my level of experience, a fair salary would be in the range of the mid to high \_\_\_\_’s.”

### When asking for more time to decide:

- Be sure to explain your situation and ask for additional time to make a final decision.
- Do not wait until the last minute to ask for an extension. This can be perceived as if you are not planning ahead and/or are unsure about the offer. Here are a few ways you could ask for more time:

“I have another offer to consider as well, and while I am leaning towards your company, I am still gathering important information that will help me make the best choice based on my career goals. May I have an extension of \_\_\_\_ to ensure I make a thoroughly informed decision?”

—OR—

“Could I have at least \_\_\_\_ more weeks to make my decision?”

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## SALARY CONVERSATIONS, CONT'D.

### When you have received an offer and are waiting to hear back from another company:

- Reach out to the company you are waiting to hear back from to try to get an update on your status.
- Do not wait until the last minute to reach out to the company.
- You may also need to ask for more time from the initial company that offered you the position.

“I am calling to check in to see where you are in the hiring process. I am still very interested in the position, but I have also just been offered another position. So before accepting anywhere else, I wanted to see what

### When negotiating salary:

- Do your research ahead of time. Use tact.
- Schedule a time to speak by phone with the person that made the offer. Explain how excited you are about the job, but that you are hoping for a higher salary than was offered. Here are some examples of ways to initiate the conversation:

“I am excited about the possibility of working for \_\_\_\_\_. However, the salary offered was lower than what I was expecting.”

—OR—

“I am excited about the position and your offer. Based on my skills and background, I would like to discuss a higher starting salary of \_\_\_\_\_ [give a range]. This is closer to industry averages for my level of experience

### When you have multiple offers and want to negotiate with your top company:

- Only negotiate with the company you are serious about working for. Do not play one company against another.
- Express your excitement about the position and the opportunity.
- Be sure to mention how you are worth more before discussing other offers.

“I am excited about the position and the contribution I can make at your company, and I am confident that my skills and experience in \_\_\_\_\_ will be valuable to this position. While \_\_\_\_\_ is my first choice, I have received

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## CONFIRMING CHANGES TO AN OFFER

After your conversation clarifying vague information or making changes to the initial offer, be sure to get the new conditions in writing. You can start by writing an email clarifying that you understood what you discussed with the recruiter or hiring manager.

Subject: ABC Mechanical Engineer I Offer, J. Cho

Dear Mr. Shoemaker:

Thank you for taking my call yesterday about the *[benefits, salary, conditions of the offer, etc.]*. For the sake of clarity, I set down the points of the agreement we reached during our conversation. *[Insert points here.]* If I am incorrect on any aspect, please let me know. If I do not hear from you, I will assume we are in agreement.

Sincerely,