

Strategies for Effective Negotiation: Salary + More

Tips for getting started

1. Estimate your living expenses ⁽⁷⁾

It's important to know what salary you will need to meet expenses. While some expenses, like loans, may stay the same regardless of your location, others—like rent, transportation and the cost of food can vary depending upon where you live.

Check out these cost of living calculators:

<http://www.payscale.com/cost-of-living-calculator>

<https://www.nerdwallet.com/cost-of-living-calculator/>

K-State's Powercat Financial Counseling is an excellent free resource to help students with personal financial planning and budgeting. Contact them at <http://www.k-state.edu/pfc/>

2. Research salaries ⁽⁸⁾

There are a variety of resources that can help you determine a salary range for the position you are seeking. To get a more complete picture, use multiple resources, and when possible, evaluate differences by location and specific job title.

www.k-state.edu/ces/students/kstatepostgradstats.html

www.salary.com

www.glassdoor.com

www.payscale.com

<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

3. Consider your skills and strengths and what the company needs ⁽²⁾

Review the job description again in detail. What skills and expertise is the employer seeking? Next reflect on your personal skills and strengths. In particular, focus on those that overlap with the employer's needs. Use these skills and experiences as evidence to support your discussion about salary. Make the connection between your skills and the position—how will they help the employer? This will help you make the case for your target salary.

4. Practice what you will say to the employer when asked about salary expectations or when given an offer. You can make an appointment with an advisor at the Career Center for help with preparing for a negotiation or with reviewing and responding to a specific offer.

FAQs

When should I bring up salary to an employer? [\(2\)](#)

Wait until an offer is made to bring up salary, rather than bringing it during in an interview. Ideally you will be able to respond to a specific offer, rather than being the first one to mention it.

What should I do if an employer asks about my salary expectations? [\(2, 5, 8, 9\)](#)

Sometimes an employer will ask about your salary expectations, either in the application, or during the interview or at the time of the job offer. It's best if you can deflect this question. Following are some of the ways employers may ask about your salary expectations:

On the application: If possible, list “negotiable.” If a number is required, provide your target salary or a range based on your research (See Tip #2 above).

During the interview: Try something like—*“I’m really interested in the position but would like to learn more about it before discussing salary.”*

After the interview: Try initially to politely avoid answering the question: *“This position seems like an excellent fit for me. I would certainly be glad to consider a specific offer.”*

What should I do when I receive an offer? [\(2\)](#)

Whether you receive an offer in person, on the phone or via email, it is usually advisable to take some time to reflect. Be sure you have full information about benefits in addition to salary.

Offers received in person or on the phone: If you are interested in the position, thank the person for the offer, then ask to receive the offer in writing. Also ask when they will need a response from you. Find out how they would prefer you get back in touch with them—phone or email?

Offers received in writing: It may seem like once an offer is in writing it can't be changed, but written offers can still be negotiated.

How do I begin the negotiation? [\(1, 2\)](#)

Sometimes salary and/or benefits don't meet expectations in the initial offer. To begin a negotiation, you will need to be prepared with your research and be able to talk about your skills and how they will help the employer. Demonstrating confidence and showing respect during the negotiation process is also critical.

When you are ready to respond, tailor the key elements:

1. Let them know you've done research, work in your target salary:

“Thank you for the offer. I am very interested in the position and your organization, and believe this role is an excellent fit. I've been researching typical salaries for someone with my skills and experience in this position and was hoping for something closer to \$_____.”

2. Then add evidence:

Talk about the specific skills and experiences that make you unique and will add value to their organization.

For example:

“There are a number of strengths that I can bring to your organization, including a strong work ethic and leadership skills. I have earned a high GPA while also being extensively involved in campus leadership roles throughout my K-State experience. I believe these skills and my ability to lead teams will help me be a strong manager.”

Don't forget about Benefits ⁽²⁾

Not all benefits are negotiable, but it is important to evaluate them carefully and be sure that you understand what is being offered, as this is a critical and often overlooked part of compensation. Here are some common benefits that organizations may offer:

- Health Insurance: Find out what you will pay in premiums and out of pocket. While this may not be negotiable, it can help you if choosing between offers. Significant out of pocket amounts can put a dent in your salary.
- Retirement benefits : Consult with PowerCat Financial Counseling if you have questions about whether your offer of retirement benefits is standard.
- Vacation time : You may be able to negotiate for additional paid time off if you feel you have too few days.
- Moving expenses : If you don't have to re-locate and this is part of a standard offer, it might be possible to negotiate for the moving allotment to be added as a one-time bonus or addition to your salary.
- Continuing Education: Will the company help with the cost of additional training?

What if I'm still not making headway after trying to negotiate? ⁽³⁾

Find out when the employer typically conducts performance reviews. If it is usually after a year of employment, then you could ask if they would be willing to give a review earlier (perhaps at 6-9 months) to evaluate your performance and reconsider your salary. If they agree to an earlier review, try to get that in writing if possible. If they still won't budge, then you need to determine if you want to accept the position or not.

What if I've been given an offer by one company, but my top choice still hasn't made me an offer? ⁽⁴⁾

If you do have some interest in the offer you've received, you can thank the company, then find out when they will need a decision from you, or propose a date when you would like to get back to them.

Example: *"Thank you so much for the offer. I am definitely very interested, but need some time to consider it. When do you need to hear back from me about this?"* (or you could be more direct—"Would it be possible to get back to you by ___ (date)?"

As long as you haven't accepted an offer, you can then contact the 2nd company that you may be more interested in. Let them know you are still very interested and find out when they will be making a decision. You can even let them know you have an offer.

Example: *"I really enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you about the _____ position during our interview on _____ (date). I was wondering when you will be making a decision about this position. I have received another offer but am still very interested in your opportunity. Thank you for any additional information you can provide about your timing."*

What to Avoid

Do not accept an offer and then continue interviewing with other employers. This reflects poorly on you and on Kansas State University. Employers who have candidates drop out after accepting offers may elect not to recruit on our campus.

Need Help? Have Questions? Want to Practice? Contact the Career Center to meet with an advisor.

Full Source List:

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2. Busse, M., & Joiner, S. (2008). Closing the Deal, Understanding Benefits and the Art of Negotiation. In Idealist Guide to Non-Profit Careers (Online). Available: <http://idealistcareers.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/IdealistGuideforFirstTimeJobSeekers.pdf>
3. Graves, J. (July 9, 2013). 6 Crucial Benefits to Negotiate Besides Salary. In Money, US News (On-line). Available: <http://money.usnews.com/money/careers/articles/2013/07/09/6-crucial-benefits-to-negotiate-besides-salary>
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9. Trunk, P. (May 31, 2016). The (Surprising) Best Answer to the Questions "What's Your Salary Range?". In Payscale Salary Negotiation Guide (Online). Available: <http://www.payscale.com/salary-negotiation-guide/how-to-answer-whats-your-salary-range>