



Salary Negotiation

Why negotiate?

- You're expected to. Although few students feel comfortable discussing salary and other benefits with employers, negotiation is a normal part of getting a new job.
- Any gain you make now adds up. Raises are often a percentage of your salary, in which case a higher initial salary will mean larger and larger raises down the line.

When should I negotiate?

- The employer opens the door to discussing the terms of employment by making an initial offer.

When should I not negotiate?

- You should not discuss salary or benefits any time before the employer makes you an offer.

How do I negotiate?

- At all times, be realistic and positive. Asking for more money or different benefits is fine, but asking for unreasonable things in an unprofessional way makes a bad impression.
- Know what you want in advance. Before you walk in to your first interview (and preferably before sending in your application), research your career field. Get salary data from numerous online resources (search for "salary calculator") or the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (<http://bls.gov/oco/>).
- Explain your reasoning. For example, do not ask for more compensation without proper justification. If your research shows average salary for similar entry-level employees to be higher than what you are offered or if you feel you have something unique and concrete (like technical certification or years of experience), say so.
- Ask for more time if you feel unsure or unprepared. Most people find it easier to negotiate over the phone with advance notice rather than in person without notice.
- Express your appreciation for the offer and behave diplomatically. Even if you do not succeed in getting better compensation, you can leave a positive impression on your future employer.

What can I negotiate?

- Negotiable things include: salary, start date, work schedule, moving expenses, early performance review (for an early bonus or secured employment), paid time off, bonuses, flex time, geographic location (e.g., the Chicago office rather than New York), stock options, use of a company car, and training or education assistance.
- Health plans and retirement plans are not negotiable. Employers arrange these for the entire company and generally cannot make any individual changes or exceptions.