

Once you are offered a position, you may be thinking of negotiating for a higher salary or compensation package. Here are some ideas to guide you through this process.

Prepare for the negotiation

In order to evaluate a job offer, you need to research the job market.

- Identify salary averages for your field, industry, job title and geographic location. One place to gather this information from recent CMU graduates is www.cmu.edu/career in 'salaries & destinations'. You can also do some research on www.glassdoor.com.
- Typically, there are some items that can be negotiated (such as salary, signing bonus, start date and possibly location) and some that cannot be negotiated (such as vacation, holidays, retirement, health insurance, relocation, and graduate tuition reimbursement). Some of this may vary depending on your field and the size of the company. You can talk with your Career Consultant about this further.
- Make a list of what is important to you in a job. This will help you to evaluate your offer based on what you value in a position. Here are some examples:

- | | | | |
|---|------------------|---|------------------|
| o | Benefits | o | Low stress level |
| o | Flexibility | o | Prestige |
| o | Job Location | o | Salary |
| o | Responsibilities | o | Teamwork |

- Decide on the amount of compensation that will make you satisfied – make it realistic with the type of job offered. Create a budget and remember to include the taxes that will be deducted from each of your paychecks. There is no point in accepting a job if you think you'll be unsatisfied and want to look for another job very quickly. If an employer refuses to meet or exceed this amount, then you may want to reject this offer and keep looking.
- **Assess your job offers**
 - Consider the pros and cons of each of your offers. You could create a spreadsheet to compare the factors of each of your offers.

Negotiate

- If you have decided to negotiate because, after doing research, you have data points that show the employer higher salaries/averages for your field, then it is best to do this negotiation on the phone. Start the conversation with positive comments such as: "Thank you for the offer. ABC Company seems like a wonderful place to work."
- Then ask "I would like to ask if the salary is negotiable?" Wait for an answer...do not keep talking.
- If the employer says NO:
 - o There may be other areas to negotiate such as signing bonus, start date, location. You can ask.
 - o If nothing is negotiable, then you can thank your contact person and let them know when you will give them your decision. Stay polite. Remember, you may be negotiating with the person who will be your supervisor.



- If the employer says YES:
 - o This is where you need to present your case as to why you are negotiating. You can say something like “According to CMU Career Center’s website, last year’s Mechanical Engineering students had an average salary in the mid-70’s, and salaries tend to increase 2-3% each year. In light of that, I was wondering if you could move my salary closer to the high-70’s?” Stay polite and try to make this a win-win situation.
- Often during this process, your contact person will say they need to check with their budget and other people. before calling you back with a new salary offer.
- Once you get a new offer, ask for a new offer letter that states the new salary and any other conditions that you negotiated.

□ **A final tip to keep in mind**

If you decide to negotiate, as long as you conduct yourself in a professional, polite and flexible manner, then your offer will not be rescinded by the employer – even if the employer decides not to negotiate. Also, if a position is acceptable to you as it is first offered, then you should not feel obligated to negotiate....just enthusiastically accept it!

Need additional help?

If you would like to discuss your job offers further, then make an appointment with your career consultant for additional support and resources. We also have an excellent [brief video](#) on this topic.