

Job Search Information Packet

Job Offer Negotiations

The right answer to the question, “What’s your salary range?” is almost always some version of “I’m not telling you.”

— Penelope Trunk

The Quick Version: 13 Tips for Salary Negotiations

1. Sell yourself in your interview (what makes you the best person for the job?)
2. Do your research about the employer and the position
3. Increase the value of the job with YOU in it! (the negotiation starts during the interview—help employer see you in the job and all the value you will bring to the organization)
4. Don't ask about salary during the interview or be the first to name a number
5. Benchmark ALL aspects of the position (job market standards for compensation, perks, title, etc.)
6. Know your personal job priorities (location, salary, culture, benefits, value of experience)
7. Be prepared with creative alternatives to salary (flex time, bonuses, transportation)
8. Enter negotiations with a "Best Alternative to the Negotiated Agreement" or BATNA—i.e. know your bottom line for salary, have a firm idea of must-haves, have alternative plans in case negotiations fail
9. Keep interviewing and applying for multiple positions (will give you alternatives!)
10. Avoid bringing your personal life into the negotiation
11. When you receive a salary offer, do NOT say "That is more than I expected!"
12. Use silence as a technique (employer may increase an offer if you don't respond right away)
13. The best negotiation is a Win-Win!

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environment.yale.edu/cdo

Identify What is Negotiable

One of the first research items in assessing an offer is determining what is negotiable. Here is a starting point of typical items.

Monetary Items That May Be Negotiable:

- Salary
- Signing Bonus
- Moving Allowance

Typical Benefit Packages Include:

- Tuition Reimbursement
- Profit-Sharing and 401(k) Programs
- Retirement Plan
- Health Insurance
- Dental and Eye Coverage
- Scholarships for Dependents
- Sick Time
- Vacation Time
- Stock Options

Non-Monetary Items That May Be Negotiable

- Start Date
- Review Date
- Title
- Responsibilities and Opportunities
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Performance-Based Bonuses and Commissions
- Work Schedule/Flex-time
- Local Travel (T or Metro Pass)
- Housing

Other Creative Alternatives/Ideas from Family and Friends

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Priorities

Creating a realistic list of your priorities will help you determine what you decide to negotiate on. See the below list of items and sample priority chart. Think about your top 6 priorities, and create a list. Then rank the list and weight by percentage as in the example:

Sample Items to Consider for Priorities List

- Location
- Reputation of Company/Org
- LGBTQ Supportive Workplace
- Salary
- Benefits
- Time Off
- Partner Benefits
- Flat Hierarchy
- Family-friendly policies
- Commitment to Antiracism
- Clear Accommodations for Disabilities
- Tuition Reimbursement
- Organization’s Commitment to Sustainability
- Relationship with Supervisor and Co-workers
- Work Environment (indoor/outdoor)
- Culture Fit/Diverse Team

	My Priorities	Rank
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Sample Priorities List	Relative Importance
<input type="checkbox"/> Location	35%
<input type="checkbox"/> Salary	20%
<input type="checkbox"/> Org’s commitment to social justice	20%
<input type="checkbox"/> Rapport with colleagues	10%
<input type="checkbox"/> Flex Time/Time Off	10%
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefits	5%

My Priorities in Rank Order	Relative % of Importance

Determine Your Living Wage

It is essential for you to have a realistic idea of your personal bottom line before you enter negotiations. **This is a figure for your information only.** It is not the same as a salary, and it is your private information, not to be shared with employers.

Your bottom line requirement will typically fall somewhere between your ideal living situation and a bare bones account. The below worksheet will help you determine your living wage, or personal bottom line.

Monthly Budget Item	Amount
Moving Expenses (1 time item)	
Other 1 Time Expenditures	
Housing	
Clothing	
Food	
Automobile/Transportation	
Insurance	
Medical/Health	
Support for other family members/pets	
Bills & Debts	
Taxes	
Savings/Retirement	
Discretionary	
Other	
Other	
Other	
Multiply by 12 months for Annual Need	

Walk Away Point

For every position you are considering, it is important to decide on a number that you will not go below for salary as well as benefits you will not go without. Take the time before entering negotiations to determine what these offer elements are.

Benchmarking

What Is Benchmarking?

Researching and comparing the broader job market's standards for compensation, title, responsibilities, and perks based on the position, your skill set and qualifications. – from **Negotiating Your Salary & Perks**, WetFeet

Tools for Determining Salary Benchmarks

Figuring out what the job is worth in the broader job market is an essential step in the job offer negotiation process. Your benchmarked figure will fit into a range that you determine by researching and comparing a variety of sources.

Suggested Resources (see environment.yale.edu/careers/job-search/):

- [YSE Employment and Salary Data](#)
- [Glassdoor.com](#)
- [The National Association of Colleges and Employers Salary Calculator Center.](#)
- [Job Search Intelligence](#)
- [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#): Tons of wage, salary and benefits data by region and sector; information on trends and occupational outlooks.
- [cbsalary.com](#): A free salary calculator from Career Builder.
- [opm.gov](#): typically grades 9-11 for Masters degree, depending on previous experience, calculates by location. Even if you are not looking at US Government work, these figures are a good starting point and will give a good idea of averages across sectors by location.
- [Salary.com](#)
- **Ask friends and recent alums**

Once you have determined a figure or a range, be prepared to discuss your method of determining the range during your negotiation, i.e. "According to my research, a typical starting salary for an associate level Environmental Consultant for a medium sized firm working on government contracts in the NYC area is \$x."

Job Offer Negotiation Worksheet

Confidence in negotiations is 95% preparation. Before you engage in any job offer negotiations, be sure to take time to look at these important figures and elements of your total package. Be sure to benchmark benefits and perks that are on your priority list:

	Annual Dollar Amount	Benefits (health care, retirement, etc.)	Incentives/Perks (moving, transit, free meals, etc.)	Time-Off
Living Wage: Personal Bottom Line				
Walk-Away Point for this position				
Benchmark for Similar Positions (source 1)				
Benchmark for Similar Positions (source 2)				
Benchmark for Similar Positions (source 3)				
Average 3 Benchmarks to Use in Negotiation				
Job Offer				
Difference Between Avg Benchmark and Offer (Focus of Negotiation)				

Assessing Your Bargaining Power

As you are developing a list of “must-haves,” it’s good to think about your relative power in the negotiation. With stronger bargaining power, you may have a longer list of “must-haves.”

Take a few minutes to review the following charts, and check off the items that are true of a position you are pursuing.

Stronger Bargaining Power	True
You were strongly recommended	
You have very relevant education, skills and experience	
You have strongly “sold” your value to employer	
There are few other candidates	
The employer is concerned about you taking a job elsewhere	
You have several offers and are not worried	
There are several valued YSEers in the organization already	
Total	

Weaker Bargaining Power	True
You’re feeling desperate	
You have little relevant experience/education	
You learned about job through a job posting	
There are many candidates	
You’ve left it to employer to assess your value rather than strongly selling yourself	
Your calls are not returned or are taken by an assistant	
You have not networked with anyone in or related to the organization	
Total	

Fill in the number of items checked:

Stronger Bargaining Power: _____

Weaker Bargaining Power: _____

If you have many more weak items than strong, you will have a shorter list of must-haves. Moving forward in your search, you might want to think about your general strategy, including networking to access the hidden job market, polishing your interview skills and personal selling points, expanding your search and re-assessing your skills vis a vis positions you are applying for.

Must-Haves and Nice-To-Haves

While some degree of negotiation is appropriate for any position...it is better to approach negotiations for an entry-level position with limited expectations and a shorter list of “must haves.” – idealist.org

Now that you have reviewed what is negotiable, your personal priorities, your bottom line, benchmarks for similar positions and relative bargaining power, take a few minutes to prepare the following two items:

List of Must-Haves

Depending on your needs and assessed bargaining power, create a list of 2-4 items you will focus on in your negotiation:

1	
2	
3	
4	

List of Nice-To-Haves

You may quickly realize that your must-haves are already part of your package. Prepare a short list items that would be nice to have:

1	
2	

Best Alternative to the Negotiated Agreement, or BATNA explained

*Having a good BATNA increases your negotiating power. If you know you have a good alternative, you do not need to concede as much, because you don't care as much if you get a deal. You can also push the other side harder. If your options are slim or non-existent, the other person can make increasing demands, and you'll likely decide to accept them--because you don't have a better option, no matter how unattractive the one on the table is becoming. Therefore, it is important to improve your BATNA whenever possible. If you have a strong one, it is worth revealing it to your opponent. If you have a weak one, however, it is better to keep that detail hidden. – Brad Spangler, **Beyond Intractability.org***

Entering Negotiations

Ideally you will not start full negotiation until you have an actual offer. Once you have an offer, either verbal or written, you can begin the process of assessment and response in earnest.

Always lead your verbal and written communication around an offer with positive enthusiasm, regardless of whether the offer is your first choice. Until you have actually accepted an offer, you are under no obligation, and employers should assume that you are looking at several options (and ideally you are). However, showing enthusiasm is always a good way to lead in negotiations.

Candidates should not feel compelled nor be expected to give an answer on the spot. Do not give an answer right away.

You have received an offer, now what?

Recommended Next Steps:

- Express enthusiasm (i.e. “This is great news, thank you!”)
- Ask for more details (benefits, preferred starting date, whether you will receive a written offer)
- Assure employer that you will review the offer and be in touch in few days.

You have reviewed and assessed the offer and identified areas of negotiation and list of must haves, now what?

- Develop a counter offer
 - Draft a list of must-haves
 - Select 2-4 items you would like to negotiate on
 - Develop a compelling reason why you should be granted your requests (knowledge, experience, added value, etc.)
 - Create a list of lingering questions, i.e. preferred start date, clarification on benefits, etc.
 - Determine whether you will negotiate in person, over the phone, via Zoom, or in writing by e-mail
 - Follow up enthusiastically in the timeframe you have agreed upon

The Right Way to Negotiate

There isn't one right way to negotiate. While there are a number of steps you can take before the negotiation (wait for an offer, research benefits, prioritize which elements of an offer are most important to you), there isn't a foolproof script to follow. –idealist.org

Sample Counter-Offer Letter

Every offer and every counter offer will be unique. Ideally your counter offer will be based upon thoughtful consideration of the items covered in this packet—priorities, benchmarking similar positions, review of your bargaining power, knowledge of your walk away point and BATNA, and your list of “Must-Haves.” Notice that this sample starts with a very positive frame, includes a small list of 3 items, offers compelling reasons why the employer should seriously consider the counter proposal and related requests, and includes language that clearly signals that the writer is both serious in the requests AND willing to negotiate as needed.

Dear So and So,

I am very excited with your offer of an Associate position with NAME OF ORGANIZATION. After reviewing the salary and benefits and weighing them against my other options, I have three requests for you to consider.

First, would it be possible to negotiate my base salary up from \$4,500/month (\$54,000/year) to \$5,300/month (\$63,600/year)?

I recognize that this is a significant increase, but \$63,600/year would be in line with the results of my research into salaries for similar positions in the Washington, DC area. More importantly, I am confident that I will bring valuable knowledge, skills and experience to the role. I have highly developed quantitative and analytic skills, and I could immediately begin making a contribution to several of the projects we have discussed (could elaborate on specifics here). I have taken two semesters of RELEVANT COURSE OF STUDY and one semester of ANOTHER RELEVANT COURSE at Yale, and my overall experience and facility with modeling tools will allow me to both share my own technical expertise and learn specific applications (SPECIFY) your team uses quickly and efficiently. I have very strong written and verbal communications skills, and speak English and Mandarin fluently, so I can communicate effectively with stakeholders in the U.S. and in Beijing.

Second, would your organization (NAME) help cover moving costs from Connecticut to Washington, DC? Based on my research into moving costs and the benefits offered by other positions, \$5,000 would be an appropriate budget.

Finally, what is your preferred start date? I would like to begin Monday, August 20th, to give me time to finish a project after graduation, move to DC, and take a long awaited trip. However, if I accept your offer my top priority is to begin with a great start, and if you need me sooner I am willing to arrange my travel accordingly.

Thank you for considering these requests and for your generous offer. I'm very excited to have the opportunity to join your team, and look forward to discussing these details with you further.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

Six Reasons Why You Should Negotiate from idealist.org

1. It's okay to ask for what you're worth.
2. The first offer is often not the best possible one.
3. A higher starting salary means higher raises (in this or future jobs).
4. Salary is not the only part of a compensation package that you can negotiate.
5. Asking for a more competitive salary/benefits package does not suggest that you only care about money, or that you do not care about the mission of the organization.
6. Negotiating shows that you are confident in and can advocate for yourself and your abilities

Final Things to Think About

On Naming The Salary

The person who gives the first number sets the starting point. But if that's you, you lose. If you request a salary higher than the range for the job, the interviewer will tell you you're high, and you've just lost money. If you request a salary lower than the range, the interviewer will say nothing, and you've just lost money. — Penelope Trunk

On General Demeanor/Approach

*You should negotiate from a position of strength—not need or greed. — **Dynamic Salary Negotiations**, Ron and Caryl Krannich*

About Win-Win

Some job seekers end up creating a situation that is more confrontational than it really needs to be. Negotiation is a nuanced art; it is never an ultimatum...the end result isn't victory or defeat, but an agreement that allows both sides to come away satisfied. — idealist.org