

[PhD Career Series] Negotiating Your Job Offer(s) Inside & Outside Academia

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Agenda

- Timeline of a job offer
- How to evaluate an offer
- Negotiation
 - What
 - How



Timeline of a Job Offer

1. During Interviews

- **AVOID** initiating discussion on salary or other employment terms
- Wait until they have made the commitment to hire you
- **WHY?**
 - : You are **one of 3-10 candidates** employers are considering for the position
 - **You don't have leverage YET.**

2. Receive the Offer

Congratulations! It's time to negotiate!

- Do NOT accept their offer on the spot! Choose to negotiate!
 - **Why?** Negotiation is a **standard part of the job-offer process**. In fact, most employers, whether in [academia](#) or [industry](#), will expect some level of negotiation

Recommended next steps

- Thank them
- Ask how much time you have to make a decision and request more time if necessary
- Ask to email the offer details when a verbal offer is extended (via phone)

If you are interviewing with multiple organizations...

Inform other organizations that you received an offer

- Don't provide too many details
- Try to find out their timelines
- If they are your preferred employer, see if they can expedite the interview process

If necessary, negotiate for even more time with the first organization

What is Negotiation?

What is Negotiation?

Negotiation is a **strategic discussion** between two or more parties when they need to **reach a joint decision** that **both feel satisfied**.

- **Strategic** – Prep is needed
- **Discussion & Joint**– Two-way communication: Two or more people should contribute together
- **Both feel satisfied** – Both parties need to give and take to find a common ground

Win-Win Mindset

In many cases, your best interests are the same as the employer's

- **Employers:** They are invested in you throughout the 2-4 months of the hiring process to fill a much-needed skills gap in their team/organization
- **Candidates:** Join the team/organization with what you need to succeed

Successful hiring contributes to the long-term success of the employer and you!

Why Don't People Negotiate?

Concern about employer's perception

- *73% of employers would negotiate salary, 55% of workers don't ask**

Fear of losing the job offer

- It rarely happens. Only revoked if unprofessional, lying, etc.

Desire to avoid conflict

- Negotiation can be framed collaboratively

Lack of confidence in negotiation skills

*Source: Career Builder ([link](#))

How Do I Negotiate the Offer?

Offer Negotiation Steps

Step A. Preparing to Negotiate

1. Understand your offer as the whole package

- Don't get fixated on one item (e.g., salary)
- Focus on the value of the entire deal:
 - *Industry*: Responsibilities, location, travel, flexibility in work hours, opportunities for growth and internal promotion
 - *Academia*: The entire start-up package or research funds (e.g., graduate assistants, computing resources, lab supplies)

2. Know that salary is NOT the only negotiable item

- Don't feel that your negotiation failed if the organization cannot increase your salary (many factors related to a salary range)
- Focusing on expanding the pie

List of Non-salary Negotiable Items

- A different start date (if you want a little break before you begin)
- Relocation assistance
- Visa sponsorship (e.g., H1B, Green Card support)
- Home office set-up stipends
- Expedite time for promotion evaluation (or tenure clock)
- Dual career assistance

More Common in Industry Jobs

- A signing bonus (this may be tied to relocation assistance, if not)
- Equity percentages or stock options
- Relocation to another branch or office
- A performance bonus later in the year
- Flexible hours or work-from-home days (post-Covid)
- Professional development or external training opportunities

List of Non-salary Negotiable Items (Cont'd)

More Common in Academia (Tenure-track faculty jobs)

- Start-up package (e.g., funds for setting up a lab, purchasing equipment, research assistants, travel funds)
- Teaching load (mostly for your first-year)
- Office and lab space or location
- Housing assistance
 - : Some institutions offer housing subsidies, loans, or other assistance, especially in high-cost areas
- Spousal/partner employment (Dual career/spouse hire assistance)
- Summer support (e.g., salary, research funds)

FYI. How About Benefits?

Often not negotiable, but very valuable info to collect before the negotiation

Insurance

- Medical, dental, vision, life
- Premiums
- Will it cover dependents

Retirement plan

- Pension or 401K—or both
- Employer contributions
- How long until you can receive these benefits

Vacation & sick days

Step A. Preparing to Negotiate

3. Know your priorities

- You cannot negotiate everything from the list
- Identify what you value most in an offer
- Focus on the top 3-5 and set your goals (e.g., set your minimum requirements)

4. Schedule a meeting to discuss your offer (via phone or Zoom)

- Do not negotiate via email (avoid a lot of time going back and forth)
- Usually, with an HR manager/recruiter (not a hiring manager)
 - In academia, the search committee chair or department chair/dean
- The meeting should be at least 3-4 days before the offer deadline

Step A. Preparing to Negotiate

5. Do your research

- Collect data to support why your asks are reasonable
- Identify the market value of your role
 - [Glassdoor](#), [Indeed Salaries](#), [Salary.com](#), [PayScale.com](#), [SalaryExpert](#)
[Levels.fyi](#) and [comprehensive](#)
 - Identify similar positions from the 8 states with [Salary Range Transparency Laws](#) (still consider a different cost of living)
 - Find similar/same REMOTE job postings and check the end of the job descriptions

Salary Range Transparency

US - Remote - \$214,000-310,000 USD per year

Austin Metro Area - \$214,000-310,000 USD per year

Seattle Metro Area - \$241,000-349,000 USD per year

New York Metro Area - \$240,000-348,000 USD per year

San Francisco Metro Area - \$253,000-367,000 USD per year

Step A. Preparing to Negotiate

5. Do your research

- **Resources for TT faculty jobs** (Glassdoor, Indeed salaries still useful)
 - [AAUP Faculty Salaries](#), [Chronicle's Salary Data Library](#) (log-in required)
 - National Education Association's [Faculty Pay Report](#)
 - Search public university faculty salary data as it is public data
- Review the job description and **identify the areas to support why you need more** (e.g., 1+ year more experience than the required experience)
 - Frame your additional skills as your potential contributions to the team
- Prepare your talking points for each of your ask

Georgia Tech Salary Info: Salary Survey

Georgia Tech Career Survey Report: AY 2022-2023

The Georgia Tech Career Survey is designed to capture students' post-graduation plans, particularly with regard to employment and further education. The survey is administered to undergraduate and masters-level students at the end of each semester. Data from the survey instrument is used to generate the Salary Report, which provides a summary of employment offers, acceptances, salary offers and signing bonuses presented by major, college, and degree level. It is important to note that the results presented are based on self-reported information. In some instances, reported salaries may vary considerably from year to year. Actual salaries can vary based on prior work experience, specific desired skills, job location, and other factors.



Career and Salary Survey Results 2022-2023

Degree Level Summary

	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate
Responses by Degree Level	2,057	2,171	301
Response Rate	48.73%	32.88%	54.83%
Avg. Salary	\$89,942	\$123,910	\$113,507
Median Salary	\$84,500	\$120,000	\$115,000



Degree Level
(All) ▾

College
(All) ▾



Step B. Follow-Up Meeting(s)

1. Start with gratitude

- Thank them for the offer
- Convey a sense of excitement about the opportunity
 - Share any specific reasons why you're excited about the job
- Make sure your language is positive

2. Approach it as a conversation, not a demand

- Maintain a polite, collegial, and collaborative tone at all times
- The recruiter or hiring manager will be the ones advocating for your values to the decision-makers
- Focus on solutions that can benefit both you and the employer
 - Don't forget that they are **your future colleagues** (if you accept the offer)

Build Your Script

1. Thank the employer for the offer
2. Express your excitement about the job
3. Indicate you would like to discuss _____ about the job offer
4. Referring to /using bullets, detail each question/observation about the offer
5. Reference your research to make your counter-offer
6. Offer to discuss further, or with a relevant party, as needed

NOTE: Don't get greedy and be mindful of your tone!

Step B. Follow-Up Meeting(s)

Example

“Thank you for the offer for the XXX position and also for your time to speak with me today. I am very excited about this opportunity with Company X, especially the chance to work on the Y project, which I learned during the interview. Before I accept the offer, I have three items I would like to discuss with you. First, I would like to see if there is any wiggle room to increase the proposed base salary because [reasons why you need more].”

3. Wrap up the meeting

- Thank their time and support
- Request your final offer in writing to ensure all your agreed-upon points are updated accordingly

Step C. Finalizing Details

1. Assessing the final offer

- Compare the offer with your previously identified minimum requirements
- Reflect on whether the compromises made are sufficient for you to happily accept the offer and begin your new position
- Again, don't get fixated on one item

2. Communicating your decision

- Communicate your decision as quickly as possible
- If you are not accepting the offer, make sure to express gratitude for their time and their willingness to negotiate
 - Maintain professional relationships for the future

Thank you!
Any Questions?

