



Salary Negotiation Quick Guide

The employer may raise the issue of salary at any stage of the job search process. Some may make a request for your salary requirements in a job listing (“Please submit cover letter with your salary requirements”), on an application, during the interview, or at the same time that a job offer is made. **Be prepared to answer this question before beginning the interviewing process. Do the following:**

- **Allow the employer to mention the salary issue.** Do not be the first to open the discussion on the topic. Avoid giving your salary range, if possible.
- **Know your worth and know the salary ranges for your field and your experience.** What exactly is ‘knowing your worth (or value)’? It is knowing the value or worth of your knowledge, skills, and talent- that is, knowing which are in demand! For example, do you have an in demand coding skill or speak an obscure language? Be able to convert these (and accomplishments, character traits, and “lessons learned”) into currency (Pollak, 2012).

When giving your requested salary range, make the lower number something that you can accept. Say this range out loud several times with confidence, practicing for the time when you will have to answer the question of what salary you require.

Consider your student loans and essential living expenses when deciding upon your salary requirement.

- **Use language that shows your knowledge, research, and flexibility.**
Examples:
-I am very interested in the position and would like to know what the current salary structure at your company is. Can you give me a range of what you have in mind?
-Can you tell me more about the position responsibilities? I’d like to be more informed about the scope of the position.
-From my research, I have an idea of what the salary range is in the industry, but I would like to know more specifically about the position and the benefits package available here.
- **Recognize that your salary is much more than your direct monetary compensation.** Consider the entire package when making a decision. This may include health insurance, parking costs, transportation, number of vacation days, bonuses, and other factors.

- ***Below is a suggested sample paragraph to include in cover letter (include only if requested):***
“Per your request, an acceptable salary range for this job, based on the description and my research, is \$X0,000-\$X0,000, not including benefits or supplements. My requirement is flexible and negotiable, depending on such factors as additional benefits, salary reviews, and advancement opportunities.”

Preparing for a salary negotiation

- A) First research what salary is typical for the industry, type of company, and geographical region to which you are applying. Also consider your level of expertise and number of years of experience. Use sites like salary.com or payscale.com. Gather information from your career services office or professional association(s).

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- B) Call Human Resources of the company/organization to get *salary range* of the position.
- C) David Gordon, Director of Internship Studies at Columbia College of Chicago, suggests answering these questions before discussing salary (Levit, 2014):
- *Are my personal salary requirements in line with the company’s range for this position? If not, is there a chance to get more money?*
 - *What is the lowest salary that I will consider?*
 - *What makes me worth more than what they are offering?*

If and when an offer is made,

If an offer is made, let the employer know if you like the package and ask for 24 hours to consider it. After the day, if you are accepting the offer, ask for the offer *in writing*. Then discuss the other components of the package like benefits (main and additional), salary reviews, and advancement opportunities.

If you feel the need to negotiate, then:

1. Restate how much you want to work for the company;
2. Put a human face on the situation.
3. Mention that there are other opportunities which allow you to earn your desired salary. Levit (2014) gives this as an example:

“I’m really excited about this position, and I think that I am a great fit for the company. I don’t think I can afford to take less than my minimum of [fifty thousand dollars] (\$50,000). I have several other opportunities that are in my

range, but I'd really prefer to work for you. Is there any way we could work this out?"

4. Keep in mind that there are possible objections like:
 - You not having enough experience
 - Other employees at that level making the offered amount
 - The budget not allowing the amount that you request
 - The offered amount being what new hires are paid

Levit (2014) recommends answering to these objections in the form of questions in order to keep the discussion positive and to reach an agreement that pleases both sides.

Be respectful at all times.

Also, remember that many entry level salaries are nonnegotiable or minimally negotiable (Pollak, 2012).

5. Know that it's OK to say 'no' to an offer.