

Handling job offers

Congratulations! You have a job offer. All your hard work has paid off. Make sure you deal with all aspects of job offers professionally

Not knowing the formal processes when it comes to job offers can induce a lot of anxiety. Here's all you need to know.

Receiving a job offer

Most often, the employer will call you with a verbal offer of the job and outline the job title and salary. This is done to get an initial reaction to the offer and to check if you have any questions or reservations.

- Even if you don't have questions, thank the employer or recruitment consultant and ask if you can have a day to respond to the offer.
- Thank them for the offer by email and indicate the date and time you have agreed to send your response.
- Raise any questions you may have and ensure that they are answered before accepting the offer.

Negotiating a job offer

If you want the job but would like to change some of the terms you may need to negotiate. Terms most often negotiated at graduate level are start date (if you have any prior commitment), salary, salary reviews and performance bonuses.

- Candidates often negotiate salary when their skills are scarce or in high demand or they have another offer. If you have another offer, the company may ask for proof.
- If there is a significant difference in the salary on offer relative to what the market is offering, then justify your request for a higher offer, but be sure that you benchmarked the salary correctly.
- www.payscale.com is a great resource for you to benchmark your salary based on your experience and qualification.

If you are unable to secure an increased salary at the start, consider negotiating an increase in 3 or 6 months based on performance targets, and confirm that all the relevant details will be included in the employment contract or an addendum thereto.

- Before saying no to an offer, consider the total package – companies often pay for costly training/courses that add significantly to your skills set, or they offer significant bonuses.

Accepting a job offer

Decide on an offer based on what suits you and not because it's the first you receive. Don't accept offers because you feel bad about saying no. Research shows you are more likely to resign within 3 - 6 months, which is not great for you or the employer.

- Love a verbal offer and the company? Accept it at the time of the offer or when you agreed to do so. Many companies set a date for a response, so check this with the person making the offer.
- Be clear about the conditions of the offer (benefits, leave, development opportunities, working hours, flexibility, checks, etc.) and the start date!
- If you negotiated any changes to the terms and conditions, be sure these are reflected in the written offer.
- If deletions or additions are made to the document, make sure you and the company representative initials the changes and that you receive a new copy signed by the company representative.
- Email acceptance using good grammar i.e. no text language (See a template below).

Juggling job offers

If you are interviewing for multiple roles at the same time, you may be offered a job by one company whilst waiting to hear back from your preferred company.

- As a first step, contact the initial company and thank them for the offer and ask for time to think it over/ consult with family/significant others before accepting it.
- Most companies will give you a weekend or about 2 -3 working days before responding.
- Contact the second company requesting feedback on your application and find out if they are nearing a decision. You can tell them you have received another offer. Hopefully you will get a response within your timeframe. If not, accept the first offer and get your foot into the door. Once you reject an offer, you cannot take it back.
- If your 1st offer is not your 1st option: Ask yourself - what the offer or company lacks and whether these aspects are negotiable or not? Consider whether the company and role will offer you growth opportunities if you do accept.
 - **If there are limited growth opportunities and you don't see a personal fit** – you might want to consider declining and take a calculated risk to wait to hear from your preferred company.
 - **Do not accept your 2nd choice solely to keep your options open and revoke your acceptance if you hear positively from your preferred company** – this will burn a bridge and not leave a good professional impression.
 - **If the 2nd choice offer offers you growth opportunity, fair remuneration and your 1st choice is not nearing a decision soon** – you should consider accepting your 2nd choice and sticking with it.

Declining a job offer:

If you have already accepted a job or realise that one you shortlisted for is not for you, notify the company to say you are withdrawing from the process. Call first and follow up with an email, referring to the call you made and the person you spoke to.

- The sooner you do this, the company can offer the opportunity to someone else. If you know of someone else who would be suitable for the role, make a recommendation.
- You don't have to provide detailed reasons for your withdrawal from the process or for declining an offer. But do thank the company for the opportunity to be part of their process.

Handling a job offer - Do's & Don'ts:

DO's

- Be professional in all communication.
- Thank the company for the opportunity when declining an offer.
- Welcome keeping in touch when declining an offer.
- Ensure all agreed terms are in writing in your written offer.
- Consider the full offer (not just the salary), when deciding whether to accept or decline an offer.
- Stick to the timeframe in giving the company an answer on their offer.
- Withdraw from a process if you accept another job or decide there isn't a fit for you.

DON'T's

- Decline or accept an offer only telephonically - always confirm your decision in writing.
- Keep a company waiting for longer than a few days, while you wait to hear from another company.
- Be unreasonable in negotiation – remember that you are a new graduate and still need to earn your stripes in the working world. The more experience you have, the more negotiation power you earn.
- Come across as entitled to a higher salary if negotiating – always be polite and maintain professionalism.
- Hold onto a job offer that you aren't likely to accept.