Congratulations! Your hard work has landed you a job or internship offer—or maybe even several to choose from! Even though you’ve got an offer or two in hand, your job or internship search is not complete. You have to make a choice: to accept an offer or not.

**FORMAL JOB OR INTERNSHIP OFFERS**

Offer letters provide formal written confirmation of the position offered, and clarification of terms such as:

- Job/Internship title
- Salary
- Start date
- Supervisor’s name
- Deadline for responding

The employer will let you know if the offer is contingent upon passing a background check or drug screening. The organization may also include benefits information such as health insurance, employee wellness programs, vacation and sick leave. If you do not receive information on benefits packages, you can always ask the employer to send it to you before making your decision.

**Chapter Action Items**

- See a career counselor to talk about weighing your offers. Go online to schedule an appointment.
- List the criteria you were looking for when you started your job or internship search. How well does your offer match your criteria?
- Login to Callisto to access the NACE Salary Calculator for accurate salary ranges by geographic location.
- Sign up for Callisto to download free Vault Guides at callisto.berkeley.edu.
- For insight into decision making, check the Career Center’s Planning Your Future web section or schedule a session with a career counselor.
- Practice your salary negotiation skills with a friend, family member, or career counselor.
- Respond to any offers in writing. If you need more time to make a decision, let the employer know.
- If you accept an offer, let all other organizations you are interviewing with know so they can extend offers to other candidates.
- When you accept an offer, inform your references and contacts of your job or internship status. Thank them and periodically update them on your career trajectory.
1. Make a list of the criteria you were looking for when you started your search.
Examples of possible criteria include:
• interest in particular job function, e.g., management, sales, consulting, design, program management, or recruitment
• opportunity to work on challenging projects
• opportunity to use skills and abilities that reflect or identify your strengths
• a setting that will allow you to express your values
• working independently and/or as part of a team
• opportunity to travel and/or work in a certain geographic location
• job security, opportunity for advancement, and professional development
• a position that will be compatible with a particular lifestyle, e.g., not working more than 40-50 hours per week
• a position that offers certain perks, incentives, or a certain salary level

2. Look over your criteria and give them a number rank:
1) items you definitely want
2) items you prefer but could do without
3) nice extras to have on the job

3. Evaluate the offer by analyzing how well it meets your ranked criteria.
Does the position include most of the items you definitely want? Or does it only offer one or two critical factors? If you only have one or two of your criteria met, will the position bring you satisfaction or will you be looking for a new opportunity soon? Other questions to ask yourself include:

• What are the tasks and responsibilities of the job?
• Would I enjoy the work? Is the work challenging? Is there variety in the work?
• Is there opportunity for advancement?
• Do I like the working conditions? Do I like my potential supervisor and coworkers?
• What is the organization’s reputation? Is the organization growing or downsizing?
• Do the organizational values and culture match my perspective?
• What is the compensation package? Does the salary meet my financial needs?

If you need more information after answering these questions, do not hesitate to ask the employer.

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<tr>
<th>CAN I ASK FOR MORE TIME?</th>
<th>HOW DO I ASK FOR MORE TIME?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes, but be prepared to explain why you need it and how much time you will need. Employers may not be allowed to give you more time, so also be prepared to make a decision if extending the offer deadline is not an option.</td>
<td>First, thank the employer for the offer. Then, use these sample scripts to ask for more time:</td>
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<td>You may receive an offer from one company before a preferred company extends an offer. Let your first choice know you have received another offer, but that you prefer their opportunity. If your first choice company is truly interested in you, they will speed up their process if possible. If your first choice company is unable to speed up their process, or if the company who made the offer is unwilling to extend your deadline, you need to make a thoughtful decision about what to do. If you feel unsure, schedule an appointment with a career counselor.</td>
<td>“I am excited about the opportunity to work at ITS Corporation. This is a major decision; therefore, I would like more time to consider this offer.”</td>
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<td>“I would like to have time to discuss this offer with my family.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I have a previously scheduled interview, and it is important to me to honor this commitment. In order for me to make the best decision, I am requesting more time to make a decision.”</td>
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Should I negotiate?
If you conducted salary research and found that the offer is fair, you may decide to accept it. In other instances, you might decide to negotiate. Keep in mind that entry-level employees do not usually have a lot of latitude for negotiation. Employers are also less likely to negotiate in slower job markets. Some employers have a policy of starting new employees at a set pay rate, while others allow for some negotiation. Public sector employers often have salary scales for various classes of jobs, and inexperienced hires generally start at the first step on the salary scale.

Conducting Salary Research
Before negotiating your salary, conduct research about a competitive salary for your level of experience, education, and expertise. There are many factors to consider when determining what an appropriate range is for the job you are considering.

Location: What is the cost of living for the local area?
Level: Determine if you will be an entry, mid or senior level employee. Most graduating seniors are entry level.
Industry: Consider what the salary range will be for your specific industry.
Public vs. Private: If the position is with a public organization such as a hospital, school or government agency, there is often a pre-determined salary for all levels of employment listed on their website. Private companies will determine the salary depending on factors such as education, technical skills and experience.

How do I negotiate salary?
If you choose to negotiate, approach the employer early in your decision-making process and maintain professionalism throughout all interactions. Be prepared to indicate your interest and to present an appropriate salary range for the position. Before you contact the employer, plan what you want to say and practice aloud. Provide reasons to support your request, such as relevant internship experience, special skills, high GPA, or current competing job offers.

While salary information is available online, entry-level Bay Area salaries are higher than salaries in other states. National salary surveys often reflect mid-level rather than entry-level salaries. If you plan to relocate, consider that a “low” salary by Bay Area standards may be more than adequate in other states. For example, a $40,000 salary in Oakland is equivalent to $35,155 in Phoenix, AZ. Use the following resources found on career.berkeley.edu to find more salary information:

Current job listings on Callisto provide current, comparable salaries.
GlassDoor.com, CareerOneStop.org, and Salary.com provide salary information by job type and region.
Talk to professionals to get the scoop on salaries.

What else can I negotiate?
Start date. Give yourself a vacation before you start work. Remember that new employees must accrue vacation time. It may be a while before you become eligible to take a vacation.

Performance bonus. Received at the end of the year and based upon your performance or the organization’s performance.

Early performance review and salary review. Propose an early review date tied to a potential salary increase.

Vacation. If you want an extended ski vacation in December and you start work in August, negotiate in advance for the time off.

Professional development. Employers often cover professional association dues and conference fees. Some employers offer tuition reimbursement as well.

Relocation expenses. Reimbursement for moving expenses.

Flex time. Nonstandard work hours can help lessen commute time and accommodate other interests.

Signing bonus. A one time cash bonus received when you start working.
EXPLODING OFFERS

Exploding offers are offers with “short fuse” deadlines. Employers may attempt to pressure you into accepting their offer immediately, thereby lessening the opportunity for competing offers. Examples include:

- An employer requires candidates to accept offers within a very short time frame (24-48 hours).
- An employer extends offers to candidates that exceed the number of openings available, and tells candidates that they will be hired on a first-come, first-served basis.
- An employer gives signing bonuses only to candidates who accept offers immediately (24-48 hours).
- In a tight market, employers may use these questionable tactics. If you ask for more time, some employers may extend more time; others will not.

If faced with an exploding offer, schedule an appointment with a career counselor as soon as possible.

ACCEPTING AN OFFER

Call the employer; accept the position and follow up with a confirmation email or letter. Be sure to include the position, start date, rate of pay, and any recently negotiated items in your confirmation letter. Keep a copy of the letter for future reference.

If your application is pending with other employers, let them know that you have received an offer and wish to have your name withdrawn from further consideration. It is unethical to continue interviewing once you have accepted an offer.

Thank the individuals who acted as references for you. It is a thoughtful gesture and will be appreciated. The references will also remember this if you need to contact them for a future job search.

See “Accepting an Offer,” p. 57 for sample letter.

DECLINING AN OFFER

Contact the employer formally by email and indicate your appreciation for the offer and the opportunity to interview. State that you are declining their offer. You may tell them why, although you are not required to do so.

Decline offers as soon as you are no longer interested in them or immediately after accepting an offer from another organization.

See “Declining an Offer,” p. 58 for sample letter.

Note: After accepting an offer, you also are expected to withdraw from the interviewing process with other organizations as a courtesy.

BENEFITS

After you receive an offer, ask to speak to the benefits counselor for benefits information. Ask questions like, “When do the benefits start? What is included? Are dependents covered?,” etc. Benefits may include:

- Vacation
- Sick leave
- Health plans, medical, dental insurance, vision
- Disability insurance, short-term
- Life insurance
- Relocation/moving expenses
- Stock options
- Retirement
- Profit sharing
- Educational assistance/tuition reimbursement
- Training and development
- Health and fitness programs
- Bonus—signing or performance
- Commission

Job & Internship Guide • 15-16
To: Ms. Megan Harris@paso.com
From: <nibo3@yahoo.com>
Subject: Public Affairs Specialist offer
Date: April 10, 2016

Dear Ms. Harris:

I am delighted to accept the offer to join Porter & Associates as a Public Affairs Specialist. I look forward to working directly with you and Mr. Bermudez on the upcoming media campaign.

Per our telephone conversation on April 5, 2016, I understand the monthly salary will be $______ and the organization will pay for my relocation expenses, inclusive of moving costs and assistance locating new housing.

Thank you for sending the employment forms. I will bring the completed forms when I report to work on July 6, 2016.

Sincerely,

Niles Bohon
To:       Peter Williams <p.williams@gis.com>
From:    Jasmine Peters <jazzpea@berkeley.com>
Subject: Systems Analyst offer
Date:    April 19, 2016

Dear Mr. Williams:

Thank you very much for offering me the position of Systems Analyst with your organization. After careful consideration, I have decided that this position is not an optimal match for my career goals, and so I respectfully decline the offer.

I appreciated the opportunity to interview with you, and was especially pleased with the discussion we had about the direction you are taking Garner Information Services. I wish you success with your new ventures.

Thank you again for considering me for the position.

Sincerely,

Jasmine Peters

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