

OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

EVALUATING JOB OFFERS

Receiving a job offer is what you aim for in a job search, but it can be confusing when it actually materializes. It may be tempting to take the first offer that comes along, particularly if your search has been long, but remember that you have to live with a job day-to-day, so you want to make sure it's the right one for you. Therefore, it is worth the effort to evaluate all offers carefully before accepting or rejecting them.

We recommend that you also review the *Salary and Cost of Living Websites* fact sheet on the OCS website at <http://tinyurl.com/sipafactsheets> (Fact Sheets: Career Development).

Few employers expect you to give them an answer on the spot, so you usually have anywhere from a few days to two weeks to make up your mind. Some basic thoughts to consider when evaluating offers include:

1. Am I ready for an offer? This may seem like a silly question, considering the whole point of a job search is to get a job. But, you might get an offer very early in your search and be worried that there won't be better offers yet to come. Or, you might get an unexpected offer while you're still in the early phase of researching career options and not yet really sure about the direction you would like to go.

Do you have enough information about the organization, your supervisor, team, and work you will do? If not, consider seeking the answers you need. You may need to do more self-evaluation and exploration of your career options before you can be sure that a particular job is right for you.

2. Don't panic and accept an offer on the spot. Remember, if you receive one offer, you're likely to receive others. Be aware, also, that an employer should give you at least a few days to consider any job offer. In fact, "exploding offers," or demanding an answer to an offer on the spot, is considered to be unethical. When asking for some time to consider the offer, always convey enthusiasm for the job and appreciation for the offer so that you won't close off any doors if you decide later that you would like the position. Explain that you have just begun your search and have other interviews scheduled and need a little time. Employers want to know that you are making as careful a decision as they are, so they will usually respect your position.

3. Do I have other offers in the works? Frequently, job searches don't progress in an orderly fashion. You might get an offer from an organization that is second or third on your "wish list," without having heard yet from your first choice. There *is* a way to juggle job offers successfully.

First, evaluate your priorities. If you feel very strongly about working for a particular organization or getting a specific type of job, then it may be worthwhile to turn down offers until you get the job you want. It's not easy to turn down offers, but if you have evaluated your priorities, you will know you are doing the right thing and will be happier in the long run.

Be aware that you have control over the situation. Remember that you are an active jobseeker, not a passive one. Now is not the time to relinquish control. Use the offer you have as leverage with places from which you haven't yet heard. If you really want to work for Organization A, but they haven't made their hiring decisions, go to them and say that you have an offer from Organization B, but would rather work for Organization A. This shows Organization A that you are genuinely interested in them and may help speed up their decision-making. Whatever your situation, actively communicate with all parties involved rather than passively waiting for offers.

4. Carefully evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each offer. Be sure to consider your whole compensation package – benefits, vacation time, profit-sharing, and don't be afraid to turn down an offer if you are not at least 99% sure that it is right for you.

5. Talk to someone who can be objective about the decision you have to make. Speak with an adviser in OCS, a professor, friend, significant other, or family member. Using another person as a sounding board may help you bring up issues or concerns you might not have otherwise considered and assist you in making the best decision regarding your job choice.

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