Before accepting a job offer, you need to understand and evaluate the entire job package, including financial benefits and fit with the institution. This process can be confusing and stressful, especially for new graduates negotiating for the first time. It’s essential to know what to expect and to prepare for it.

**NEGOTIATING AN ACADEMIC JOB OFFER**

A job offer is more than just your salary. Your full package includes medical and other benefits, such as relocation assistance, paid time off, evaluation procedures, and terms of employment. Overall compensation can vary significantly.

Prioritize your goals in the negotiating process. Decide which things you really want and which things you're willing to be flexible on. Advocate for yourself in a firm, professional way that is not overly demanding. You want to start the job in a positive manner.

**Negotiating Salary**

Schools vary enormously in resource allocation and overall compensation. Although it's difficult to predict which items in a contract are and are not negotiable, salary is almost always flexible. Below are some tips for how to talk – and not to talk – about your salary requirements.

- **Delay** talking about the salary for as long as possible. If asked during the interview process, say that you assume the salary will be based on education, experience, and the industry standard. Avoid giving a number, which may be too low.
- **Don’t decide immediately.** When an offer is extended, show appreciation and interest but tell the employer that you need time to review it (ask for it in writing) before making a decision. Ask the employer when a decision is expected from you.
- **Ask for more time** to research the school, compare offers, or look at cost of living factors. When asking for a higher salary, point to specifics, such as cost of living issues, average salaries for your position type, and years of experience you have in the profession.

**Other Considerations**

Many aspects of a job offer, such as health insurance, retirement benefits, and service requirements, are not negotiable. In addition to salary, the items listed below often are negotiable, so ask about those that are appropriate to your situation.

- **Signing Bonus:** Many universities cap salaries at particular levels. If you’re at the higher end of a pay scale, you may not be able to negotiate a salary increase but you may be able to secure a signing bonus.
- **Office & Lab Equipment:** Yes, this is often negotiable. Inquire about the office or lab support available, as well as access to office supplies, printers and copiers, computers, phones, etc.
- **Research Assistance:** Does the institution fund research travel? What are the conditions of such funding? What kind of departmental and institutional support can you get for seeking or managing grants?
- **Teaching Assistance:** If you're teaching large lecture classes, will you have teaching assistants? How many? Is it possible to have teaching relief/course reductions during your first year?
- **Sabbaticals:** Inquire about the length and number of sabbaticals. They are important for conducting further research and preparing manuscripts for publication.
- **Partner Accommodation:** An institution may not be willing to hire your partner, but it may offer other resources for helping partners find academic or non-academic employment.
- **Relocation Expenses:** Institutions will often cover all or part of your relocation expenses.
Academic Job Search, Part III:
Negotiating Job Offers

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Understanding the Negotiation Process
● Sheridan Center’s Negotiating a Job Offer for an Academic Position
● Quintessent’s Salary Negotiation and Job Offer Tools and Resources for Job-Seekers

Negotiating an Offer in the Sciences
● Bob Dolan, MIT, “Negotiating The Job Offer” (2014)
● Pathways to Science, “Negotiating a Postdoc Position” (updated 2016)

Negotiating a First Job Offer
● Chris M. Goode, “After the Offer, Before the Deal: Negotiating A First Academic Job”
● Columbia University GSAS Teaching Center, “Negotiating Your First Job Offer”
● Jennifer S. Furlong and Julie Miller Vick, “Negotiating That First Offer” (2007)

Determining a Fair Salary
● Valerie Lipow, “What Am I Worth?”
● CNN Cost of Living Calculator
● Average faculty salaries by institution, state, or sector
● Average faculty salaries (2014-2015)
● Median faculty salaries (2015-2016)