Evaluating Job Offers

You Have an Offer...
What’s Next?

Engineering Career Resource Center
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Key Points

• Job Offer - It’s exciting but do you want the job?
• Meeting the offer deadline
• Evaluating the offer
• Determine a negotiation strategy
It is very exciting when you are presented with a job offer!

In the moment you hear that you have an offer there can be a lot going through your mind. Be sure to take good notes, and if the employer doesn’t refer to an offer letter be sure to ask for one so you have the offer details in writing for reference. Offers and offer letters usually address the following; your job title, department and location of your position, base salary and any bonus information if applicable, reference to a start date and the mention of some benefits. The employer may refer you to another source for more detailed benefit information, if they don’t be sure to ask.

You should avoid accepting a job offer on the spot. Give yourself time to absorb the information and determine if you have any further questions. This is a big decision and you want to take time to fully consider it!
What is important to you when you think about having a job?
You might think you know what is important about a job at the start of your search. However, it is possible that your priorities could change during your search or at the time of the offer. Simply put, you might uncover things you weren’t aware of that causes you to reassess what might really matter to you.

For example, maybe you never thought you would relocate and live in the Midwest. That wasn’t ever a consideration for you, geographically you’d hope to be on the East Coast. HOWEVER, this position is EXACTLY what you want to be doing, not to mention the company has other locations in more desirable places where you could potentially transfer to at a later date. Could these facts change your priorities? Maybe or maybe not, only you can make that decision!

A job search can take a lot of time and effort. It is in your best interest to do your due diligence and make a well thought out decision.
Take a deep dive into your considerations, make sure all of your questions have answers. If you didn’t ask something during the interview process that you are now thinking about or might be important to know, it’s not too late. Recruiters and hiring managers are more than happy to make sure you have all the answers you need during the offer stage. Before you accept the position, ask them!
Offer Deadlines
Do you need more time to decide? Do you have upcoming scheduled interviews or other offers that are expecting?

- Offer deadlines may be negotiable – solely at the employer’s discretion
  - Determine how much time you need
  - Don’t wait until the deadline to ask for more time
  - Reach out to the employer with your request, this is best accomplished via telephone, email if necessary - express appreciation for the offer

- The employer may grant or deny your request either way you will need to communicate a decision on or before the deadline date

- Should you choose to decline the offer, do so graciously

Employer Offer Deadlines
Employers set offer deadlines at their own discretion. Sometimes employers might have non-negotiable policies on how much time they allow for candidates to make employment decisions and sometimes employers will determine deadlines based on their current needs or timing. If you think you want more time to consider the offer, consider asking for an extension on your deadline. The employer may or may not accommodate your request. You won’t know unless you ask!

When requesting more time you want to be gracious and express appreciation for the offer. If the employer agrees to the additional time, be sure to deliver your decision on or before the new negotiated date, asking for more time more than once should be avoided.

Turning down a job offer
If you decide to turn down the job offer do so graciously. Express your appreciation for the offer and the time they spent considering you. This approach may help to keep the door open should you wish to consider the employer again in the future.
Offer Guidelines and Code of Ethics

Employer Offer Guidelines
The ECRC encourages employers recruiting with Michigan Engineering to give students adequate time to fully consider an offer of employment.

Student Code of Ethics
Accept your job offer in good faith, once an offer is accepted, discontinue campus interviews in accordance with the cancellation policy stated in the ECRC Job Search Code of Ethics.

Avoid reneging on your commitment
Going back on your word negatively impacts YOU, CoE, University of Michigan, the employer and the other candidates who were turned down by the employer because you accepted the job.

Employer Offer Guidelines
The ECRC encourages employers offering full-time and internship offers to students adequate time to fully consider the offer. It is highly recommended that employers offering full-time and internship offers remain open until November 30 and for at least a period of three weeks. This recommendation extends to offers given to current/previous interns and co-ops. These guidelines are encouraged, however, as mentioned previously, it is up to the employer to determine offer deadlines.

Student Code of Ethics
The student offer and acceptance policy can be found at https://career.engin.umich.edu/career/job-search-policies/. Direct any questions you have regarding the offer and acceptance policy to the ECRC at ecrc-info@umich.edu.
The above talking points gives you some idea on some important points to touch on when asking for more time to make your decision. Stay positive, express appreciation and share your request.

There can be many factors to consider when determining how much more time you will need to ask for. Contact the Engineering Career Resource Center (ECRC) and set-up an appointment with a Career Services Advisor to discuss your situation further.
Offers of employment can contain a variety of components, differing among employers. Employers view an offer of employment from the perspective of ‘Total Compensation’, this includes all aspects of compensation; salary, any other monetary offering like bonuses and company benefits. Further details are provided below relating to compensation.

**Base Salary** - Base salary is the amount per hour or per year that you are paid for performing a job. Your base salary can be adjusted over the time of your employment with increases (raises) or perhaps with promotions or movement to different jobs.

**Bonus Eligibility** – Bonuses are usually associated with personal performance, division and/or company performance or associated with pay grade for certain positions. If your offer includes a bonus component, it is important to understand the bonus structure this may mean you need to ask additional questions to have a better understanding.

**Commissions/Incentives** – This type of compensation is generally seen more in sales positions or those jobs tied directly to productivity levels.

**Sign-On Bonuses** – This type of bonus may be offered by an employer as a sign of good will and/or encouragement to accept the position, or to assist with expenses incurred with relocating. This type of bonus is a one-time bonus paid out when work commences. It is taxable and may come with a repayment agreement in the event you leave the position within a certain timeframe.
Benefits vary from employer to employer, it is OK to ask questions specific to benefits for clarification at the time you are considering the offer.

Here is some general information to give you a background regarding a few of the benefit options above:

**Healthcare Plans (medical/dental/optical)** – Usually you will have more than one healthcare plan to choose from. Typically healthcare costs are shared between the employer and employee, with employee contributions tied to payroll deductions.

**401K / 403B Retirement Plans** – These plans offer you the chance to start saving for retirement.

Two important details to know:
1. Is there an employer match? Which means will your employer also contribute to your retirement?
2. What is the vesting policy on the employer match or contribution to your account? Which means how long do you have to be employed before the money that the employer contributes to your account is fully yours?

**Healthcare Flex Accounts** – This benefit allows employees to contribute and save to an account to offset healthcare expenses that might not be fully covered through your healthcare plan.

**Relocation Assistance** – Some employers will offer monetary assistance if you have to relocate to a new geographic location for your job. This benefit typically has a repayment agreement associated with it in the event you were to leave the employer within a certain timeframe.
**Negotiating**

**Determine Your Strategy**

1. **What element of the offer do you want to negotiate?**
   - Salary, Start Date, Time Off, Relocation, Professional Development?

2. **What is your rationale for your request?**
   *Example:* If you are negotiating your base salary what is your rationale, i.e., a salary offer lower than your research suggests, competing offer, higher cost of living, experience that you possess that sets you apart from another, etc.

3. **Determine who to talk to at the company (HR or Hiring Manager)**
   - Have your negotiation discussion over the phone
   - Express appreciation / maintain positive tone
   - Address all your questions and concerns at the same time

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*Is there something about the offer you received that you want to revisit with the employer?*

Maybe you were expecting a different base salary offer, perhaps the start date the employer is suggesting isn’t what you had planned. What part of the offer do you want to negotiate? Keep in mind that there are some elements of job offer’s that may be not negotiable. Some examples of non-negotiable benefits could include Healthcare and 401K plans, life insurance and short and long term disability.

If you choose to negotiate any aspect of your employment offer, be prepared to articulate the rationale for your request. This conversation yields the best results when you can have a discussion, so typically conducted over the phone vs. in an email. You will want to express appreciation for the offer and maintain a positive tone throughout. If you are unsure of who to contact, a good place to start is with the person who extended you the offer.*
Do your research to determine the salary range that is commensurate for the job (or major) you are seeking. Review salary data from reliable sources and gather multiple data points to look for trends. Be careful with information considered hearsay, typically this doesn’t provide you with the whole picture. Ideally, starting this research during your job search may help you navigate any question of salary expectations that could come up during your interview.
Remember...

- Consider all aspects of the offer and opportunity
- Maintain a positive tone throughout any negotiations
- Should you decline an offer do so graciously – keep the door open to potential future opportunities
- You are encouraged to schedule an Offer Evaluation appointment with an ECRC Advisor to discuss your particular situation

The Engineering Career Resource Center (ECRC) is available to provide guidance and support as you navigate a job offer. Make an appointment through your Engineering Careers account or you can contact ecrc-info@umich.edu if you have limited time before you have to meet your offer deadline.