Negotiation

Do your research

What data are available?
Check Glassdoor.com for salary and benefit information for that position at that company in that location. If that information is not available, search for similar positions and companies in that area, cross-referencing with LinkedIn for more details on what particular titles mean. Use the Cost of Living Wizard on salary.com to compare the buying power of salaries in different cities.

Ask people you meet about their experiences at various organizations, including what hiring salary range you might expect, benefits, and other elements that are negotiable.

What is negotiable?
Many variables go into a job offer besides salary. Many will be fixed or not part of your position, but the rest can be part of your negotiation.

All Positions
- Base salary
- Annual bonus (how is it determined?)
- Moving expenses (flat rate or itemized? funds to visit to find a home?)
- Vacation days per year
- Sick days per year
- Retirement benefits
- Health, dental, and vision insurance
- Start date
- Housing allowance
- Technology allowance (phone, computer, etc.)
- Expense accounts
- Professional memberships
- Conference travel
- Professional development opportunities
- Telecommuting days per week
- Intellectual property rights
- Deadline to decide on the offer

Non-faculty Positions
- Signing bonus
- Time to first performance (potential for a raise)
- Company stock or options
- Tuition reimbursement
- Car allowance
- Downside protection (guarantee of severance)
- Non-compete policies
- Responsibilities/projects included in the job description

Faculty Positions
- Research budget and timeline to spend
- Time to tenure review
- Teaching load (number of courses or preparations)
- Administrative duties/service to the department
- Availability of research assistants
- Assistance searching for jobs for a significant other

Define your targets and minimums
After you have found salary and benefit information, you should consider what you believe you should receive based on your education and experience. For some, this starts as a salary range, but you should also settle on a target salary. You’ll likely start the conversation with a slightly higher figure so that there’s room to negotiate down to your target. Be sure to consider the minimum you would accept so that you define ahead of time when you should walk away from an offer.
Having the Conversation

Phone is better than email

While email may feel less confrontational, a phone call is the best way to keep the conversation grounded. In an email, tone is difficult to convey, and you may come across as demanding. On the phone, you’re one human talking with another.

Lead with questions

From the above ideas, you may be wondering what the organization’s standard policies are and what’s negotiable. Turn these into a list of questions to ask at the beginning of the conversation. For example, “I was wondering how bonus amounts are determined, and during what times of year are they are given.” For questions about basic benefits policies, ask human resources, especially for personal topics such as family leave.

Show your excitement

Whenever needed to keep the conversation positive, emphasize that you are excited for the position or other points, such as working with the people you met in the interviews.

Make it about problem solving

Engage the employer in brainstorming options to help you get an offer that suits your needs and qualifications. Resist making demands or threats in the process (these are your future co-workers, after all).

Explain your thought process

Make sure they understand that you’re negotiating using evidence.

- “Based on my background and the salary figures I’ve found for that area, I’m looking to earn $X. Would you be able to meet that?”
- “My children get out of school early on Fridays, so it would be helpful if I could work from home on those days. Is that possible?”
- “From the quotes we’ve received, moving will cost us $5,000. Will the company be able to cover that expense?”
- “In talking with some of your employees, I heard that the company covers the cost of attending industry conferences. Would you also be willing to pay for a professional membership for my first year with the company?”

Additional Resources

- Faculty salaries are published by the Chronicle of Higher Education and state university salaries are publicly available https://data.chronicle.com/
- Coursera course on negotiation https://www.coursera.org/learn/negotiation
- https://www.themuse.com/tags/negotiation-money
- https://leanin.org/