

The Offer Process

Oftentimes, the key to getting an offer is understanding the stages of the interview and offer process, and preparing for each stage appropriately. The following is an example of a typical interview and offer process and what you can expect from each stage.

First Round Interview

The first interview is often the shortest in length and depth of questions. Employers are looking for a positive first impression and for a measure of “fit” with their organization. The employer’s questions are often behavioral in nature, and you should come prepared with several questions to ask the employer.

Second Round Interview

This interview is often more in-depth. You may travel on-site to the company and meet with multiple people during the course of the interview. Tours, meals, and networking events may also be included along with a more traditional interview. Some employers will also incorporate a technical component into this stage of the interview process. Before the interview is over, ask for next steps, and be prepared to wait two weeks or more for an answer.

Receive an Offer

Employers will often call with an offer rather than email. Be ready for the phone call and make sure to return a missed call immediately. If you receive an offer and you accept immediately over the phone, you are accepting the initial terms of the offer and may not negotiate. You may NOT negotiate after you have accepted an offer. If you would like to negotiate, do so before you provide a final answer to the employer. See next page for a detailed breakdown of the negotiation process. If you would like some time to evaluate the offer, which is perfectly acceptable, be sure to express your appreciation and ask for a date by which you need to provide them with your final answer. Be sure to ask for a copy of a formal written offer, so you can evaluate all of the components of the offer, including salary, benefits, 401k, vacation policy, etc. Feel free to schedule an appointment with a career advisor if you’d like to talk through your offer.

As a general rule, employers are expected to give students a reasonable amount of time to make a decision. Exploding offers (offers that require students to accept an offer within a very short time frame, such as 48 hours) are unacceptable, and you should notify Career Services if an employer makes an exploding offer or exerts undue pressure on you to make a quick decision.

Accept or Decline Offer

It is customary to call with your final answer, whether positive or negative. Be sure to also follow up with an email to the recruiter, so they have your answer in writing. Once you have accepted an offer verbally or in writing for a full-time position or internship, it is ethically wrong to continue to interview, send letters of application, and conduct other job search activities for opportunities with similar or competing start dates as the accepted offer. If you do continue job or internship searching, you will be in violation of the SoIC Recruiting Expectations and will face consequences.

Reneging on Job Offers

Accepting a job or internship offer after you have already accepted an offer with a different employer or internship is defined as “reneging” and is considered dishonest, unprofessional, and unethical. By accepting a job offer verbally or in writing, you are making a formal commitment to the employer. There are no circumstances that would legitimize your reneging on an offer. Reneging on an offer is unacceptable and not only damages your personal credibility and professional reputation, but also reflects badly on the School of Informatics and Computing. In addition, the employer may decide to discontinue recruiting at the SoIC, thus jeopardizing opportunities for future SoIC students.

Consequences for students who renege on a job offer will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Reneging on an offer will likely result in loss of all SoIC Career Services rights.

The Negotiation Process

Negotiation is very common in the hiring process. It is an opportunity for you to have a dialogue with your employer about the components of your offer. Below is a breakdown of the negotiation process and the important steps you should take to ensure a successful negotiation.

When do you negotiate?

Timing is very important. You must be sure to begin the negotiation process after you have received an offer from the employer and before you have accepted it. If you attempt to negotiate after providing the employer with a verbal acceptance, you may risk losing your offer.

What do you need to know to negotiate?

Before you negotiate, do your research and come prepared with information to justify what you are asking for. Want to increase your salary? Refer to the School's hiring statistics and average salaries for our graduates. Know the average salary for employees in that company in similar positions. Be specific and knowledgeable. If you need help finding this information, contact Career Services.

What do you negotiate?

Almost everything is negotiable. Common negotiable aspects of an offer include: salary, start date, moving expenses, early reviews, vacation time, professional development money, performance bonuses, geographic location, parking, stock options, company car, and retention bonuses.

How do you negotiate?

First, you must show appreciation for the offer as it stands. Ask questions and make sure you know all facets of the offer before you begin the negotiation process. When you begin the negotiation process, begin by reiterating your interest in the position and appreciation for the offer and ask for time to make your decision.

Make sure your request is specific and actionable. So, say "I'd like to discuss the salary and the possibility of increasing the starting salary to \$60,000," instead of, "I'd like to make more money than \$55,000."

You must give the employer an appropriate amount of time to answer. If your answer has been requested by Friday, don't call and begin the negotiation process on Thursday at 3 p.m. Give them enough time to listen to your requests and come up with a counter offer.

What are some common mistakes?

Candidates make mistakes when they start the negotiation process too soon (i.e. before receiving the offer) or negotiate with the wrong person. You should always negotiate with your specific recruiting contact or the person who has been organizing your interview process. Additionally, if you don't adequately prepare your argument and appear greedy as a result, you risk creating a negative impression of yourself during the process and starting your new career off on the wrong foot.

Five Ingredients for a Successful Negotiation:

1. Express appreciation.
2. Explain reasons for your counter offer such as experience, education, transferable skills, market research, etc.
3. Be realistic in what you ask for and avoid having an inflated notion of your worth.
4. Describe your counter offer—be specific!
5. WAIT—be patient. It will take them some time to respond.