

EVALUATE & MAKE DECISIONS

Many factors affect the number of job offers you will receive. Most of this booklet has been devoted to a key factor: **your preparation**—which is completely under your control. Not under your control is the cyclical economy. But even in the worst of times, jobs are available. Expectations may have to be changed, however with an effective, focused job search, you will find a job.

THE OFFER

While it is unlikely that you will be hired on the spot or told that an offer will definitely be forthcoming, be prepared. If an offer should be extended then, always ask for a chance to think it over. Accepting immediately is poor policy because you lose your opportunity to give thorough consideration to all aspects of the offer. Even if you think the offer is exactly right, the employer's enthusiasm and your own may cloud your objectivity. Show appreciation, but always ask for time to consider the offer as well as a formal offer in writing.

When the written offer arrives, read it carefully. It should specify your job title, salary, and the name of the department and supervisor to which you will be assigned. The offer may be contingent upon your passing a physical exam and/or drug test. It will usually have a deadline by which you must accept in writing, ranging from two to eight weeks, depending on the time of year and the current market. The actual starting date may be specified then or after your acceptance.

Keep in mind that you and the employer have different concerns about "time." You most likely would like ample time to hear from other employers and consider all your alternatives. Employers, on the other hand, want to know your decision as quickly as possible. If you reject their offer, they will need to quickly contact second-tier candidates.

Offer deadlines are taken quite seriously. If you do not meet the deadline, the offer may be withdrawn; if you need more time to consider an offer, ask for an extension. Be specific as to how much time you will need to make a decision. Show appreciation, enthusiasm for the offer, and emphasize the importance of making the right decision.

While making a decision on an offer, be sure to talk to all other employers who showed interest in you. Contact them directly, explaining that you are close to making a decision regarding your job search, are very interested in their opportunities, and ask about your status with them. Hopefully, they also will be able to make an offer if interested.

In summary:

- Only consider job offers after you receive them in writing. (Co-ops and interns should consider verbal offers, although it is good to request a written offer.)
- It is acceptable to ask for additional time to consider the offer. A minimum of 2 weeks is generally offered.
- Once you accept, honor your commitment to the employer. Don't accept an offer while at the same time hoping that a better one will come along.
- Decline all other offers immediately to allow other candidates the opportunity. Discontinue all interviewing and other job search activities.

Should you accept? Things to consider:

- Will you enjoy working with your future co-workers and supervisors?
- Will you have a good opportunity to express yourself on the job?
- Is the working environment satisfactory?
- Will you be fully using your primary skills?
- Is there sufficient diversity and challenge?
- Will you be able to get the kind of feedback you require to see the results of your efforts?
- Is there an opportunity to learn and expand?
- Are there open avenues of communication?
- Will you be able to get value from your work?
- Do you clearly understand what your responsibilities will be, to whom you will report, and how evaluations will be conducted?
- Do you clearly understand typical work hours and overtime expectations?
- Is the company product or service something you believe in?
- Is the offer within your expected range? Check ECS resources for average salaries.
- What priority do you place on location? How long is the commute?
- Are your favorite activities or recreations readily available?

Job offers are often made verbally first, followed by a written offer containing various details. If you are fortunate enough to obtain more than one job offer, take time to compare and contrast various components of the offer, the employer, and the location.

Consult with an ECS staff member before accepting a position for guidance on evaluating offers.

TESTING

After the second interview, many employers will make an offer contingent on a negative test for drugs and controlled substances. This test takes the form of a specimen analyzed for presence of a substance. Be aware this test may occur and be advised that failure to submit to a drug test may end further employment consideration. Tests often need to be completed within 24-48 hours of the offer or it may be withdrawn.

SHOULD YOU NEGOTIATE?

In many cases, yes! It does not hurt to ask. It is important to know market rates and ask, not demand. How you ask is important. The best position from which to negotiate is to have more than one offer and strong qualifications. Generally, most students are interested in negotiating salary.

Review the following options and considerations:

- Negotiations may not be necessary. The job may be appealing and with a good employer. You may like the people with whom you'll be working and the geographic location. The salary may be within the average range for an engineer with your background and experience. The benefits also may be good. The market might be tight. Then, there is no need to negotiate.
- Timing is critical. The opportunity to negotiate exists only between the times an offer is extended and before it is accepted.
- Do not talk salary or negotiate until an offer has been extended. If the recruiter discusses salary prior to making an offer, you might respond, "Perhaps we can discuss the salary once a job offer is made."
- Base your salary negotiation on fact, not emotion. Use cost-of-living statistics and UW-Madison or national salary averages.
- Base salary negotiation on your market value, not on what you think you "need" or "want."
- Choose negotiation items carefully. Do not negotiate every item. Prioritize your needs.
- Do you feel you deserve a higher starting salary? Relocation expenses? Different start date? Another week of vacation? Does your spouse require assistance in a job search? Ask for only one or two items. Base your request on fact.
- Be fair. Do not be greedy. On rare occasions, job offers have been rescinded due to what has been viewed as very unrealistic candidate expectations.
- Do not take negotiations personally. Employers may be unwilling to negotiate some items.

ACCEPT AND DECLINE ALL OFFERS IN WRITING

Once you have made the decision to accept or reject an offer, verbally accept and immediately follow-up in writing. Be sure to clarify the "start date," relocation reimbursement, salary, and other important issues in your letter, and in particular, items that were modified during negotiations.

Immediately decline (in writing) all other offers. This is a professional courtesy, as well as a way of making opportunities available for others.

Notify all other employers who are still considering you. Thank them for their interest and tell them that you have accepted another offer.

In addition, thank your references, professors and any others who served as mentors throughout this process.

REPORT JOB OFFERS TO ECS

Look for instructions in the **Offers & Negotiation** section of the ECS website to report your job offer.

Find it at: ecs.wisc.edu/students/offers-and-negotiation

Note: The College of Engineering uses aggregate information for national rankings, salary surveys, and ABET accreditation.

RESCIND POLICY

Rescind: To take back your acceptance

Never accept a job with the intent to continue looking for something "better". Carefully consider an offer and accept or decline based on the merits of the position and your interests. You may schedule an appointment to talk with ECS about evaluating and negotiating offers. Do not continue to interview or search further once you have accepted a position.

Rescinding reflects negatively on you, your department, the College of Engineering, and UW-Madison. Rescinding results in loss of ECS and Handshake privileges. Speak with an ECS advisor if you are considering rescinding.

ACCEPTING A JOB OFFER

Send after first accepting job offer by phone (*in person*).

I am pleased to formally accept your offer for the industrial engineer position with Maynard, Inc. After our phone conversation of last week and after reviewing your written offer, I understand my starting date will be January 15, 2007, and that my monthly salary will be \$4,020.00.

Enclosed is a copy of your formal offer letter with my acceptance signature. I look forward to beginning my career with you.

Thank you for your confidence in my qualifications. I will work hard to meet and exceed your expectations.

REJECTING A JOB OFFER

This letter confirms our phone conversation this morning indicating that I will not accept your job offer to join the staff at Rollando Products. As you know, this was a very difficult decision for me, but I have decided to accept another opportunity.

As I approach graduation and reflect on my experiences and prepare for the future, I am grateful for the many opportunities offered me. While at Rollando as an intern engineer, I learned a great deal. You have always treated me with professionalism and provided me with mentorship that forms a solid foundation upon which I will build my career.

Thank you.

NOTE:

Do not “burn bridges.” Graciously turn down an offer while keeping the door open for future opportunities.