

Salary & Negotiations

Version 5

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In most cases, salary discussions begin once the employer has made a formal job offer. Prior to that time, you should not bring up the subject of salary or benefits, unless the employer does so, first. However, an employer may ask you to disclose your salary expectations during the job application process (in your cover letter or during an interview), in order to find out if your expectations are in line with what they plan to offer.

You will need to have a realistic idea of the low, mid and high salary ranges for the position you are seeking, keeping in mind the following factors:

- Geographic location (cost of living)
- Position level (e.g. entry-level)
- Academic/ Work Experience qualifications

Before entering into salary negotiations

Know what you are worth

Work experience or expertise warrants a higher salary. If you have any of the following, you may be in a position to negotiate for a higher salary:

- Relevant work experience (including internships, co-op placements, part-time or summer jobs) which positively impacts your ability to do the job.
- Specific expertise, certifications or an advance degree which is in high demand.
- A written offer from another company, stating a higher salary.

Know what can be negotiated

Salary is only one part of a total compensation package. Other items that may be part of the package and *may* be negotiable include:

- Stock or stock options

- Benefits (medical, dental, and vision) and life insurance
- Performance bonuses or profit sharing
- Vacation time or sabbaticals
- Tuition reimbursement
- Relocation costs
- A company car, fitness membership or technical equipment

Note: for some organizations the above items are not negotiable, and there may be in a non-negotiable fixed salary scale.

During Negotiation

After carefully considering the job offer, you may wish to negotiate.

During this process, it is important to:

- Ask questions about how the salary being offered was determined.
- Be realistic about your counter offer, and give evidence for why you feel your salary should be higher.

If the compensation is not negotiable, you can suggest other options (such an earlier performance review). Be creative. While salary is important, there may be other elements of the job offer that can be negotiated as well.

Salary Research Resources

- **Salary Expert:** Free salary reports to students and job hunters, factoring benefits, bonuses and cost-of-living
- **Monster.ca Salary Wizard:** Geographically adjusted national salary averages
- **PayScale:** Free customized salary report
- **Employment Profile of Ontario's College Graduates:** Environmental scan of graduates in the economy
- **HRDSC Labour Market Information:** Get an idea of what people are paid in various occupations across Canada

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