



NYU | WAGNER

CAREER GUIDES

NEGOTIATING OFFERS

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INTRODUCTION

Offer negotiation is the process of agreeing on your compensation, title, and other terms of employment for a new job or a promotion at your current company. It is your opportunity to create a package that works for both you and the employer.

Offer negotiation is *not* just about asking for more money. It is about showing your value, finding common ground, and setting the stage for a strong working relationship. The right approach can help you start a role with clarity, confidence, and mutual respect.

OFFER NEGOTIATION PRINCIPLES

Your approach to negotiation can make or break the outcome. Keep these principles in mind:

1. Salary is best discussed when an offer has been made

The best time to discuss salary is after you've received an offer. At this stage, the employer already sees your value and is more likely to be flexible. A premature salary discussion can shift the focus away from your strengths and limit opportunities for higher-paying roles.

2. Consider all parts of the offer

Salary is just one part of the deal. Benefits like health insurance, time off, flexible schedules, professional development, and bonuses all add value. Consider what matters most to you and weigh the entire package before deciding on a number. Employers may also be more open to salary adjustments if you need fewer benefits.

3. Know what you are worth and what the current market will bear

Know what someone with your skills, experience, and education earns in your field. Talk to professionals, review salary ranges for similar roles, check the organization's size and budget, and use reputable salary calculators. Solid research helps you make confident, realistic requests.

4. Most offers are negotiable

An employer's first offer is rarely their final offer. Many start at the lower end of the pay range to leave room for discussion.

5. It's okay to ask for what you want

Accepting a job is a big commitment, and it's reasonable to expect fair compensation in return. Research comparable salaries so you know what's realistic, then make your request respectfully. If you are tactful and prepared, most employers will not withdraw an offer simply because you tried to negotiate.

MANAGING SALARY QUESTIONS FROM THE EMPLOYER

During the Application Process

Some applications ask for your salary requirements to screen candidates. If asked, you can:

- Say you'd be happy to discuss salary after learning more about the role
- Provide a range and note that you're flexible (but only if you truly are)

Giving numbers too early can limit your options. Decide case by case which approach feels best.

During the Interview

If asked about salary history or requirements, try to postpone the conversation until the end of the process or after an offer. Focus first on the value you bring.

If You Want to Know the Salary Range

Rely on your research to estimate the range. Keep in mind that benefits and growth opportunities may make a lower salary more appealing.

If the Employer Brings Up Salary Early

You can respond with:

- "Since salary is only part of the picture, I'd like to learn more about the role before sharing my requirements. Can you tell me more about... [insert question]?"
- "Would you mind sharing the typical range for this role? My requirements are flexible, and I'd like to consider that before giving a range."

If asked about your past salary:

- "I'd prefer to review the full scope of the role before discussing salary. Can we revisit this later in the process?"

Many cities, including New York City, prohibit employers from asking about salary history. Check your local laws.

If the Employer Insists on a Number

Give a range at the higher end of the role's pay scale. For example, if the range is \$80,000–\$90,000, position \$80,000 as the middle or low point of your range.

If you don't know the range, base your answer on market research for similar roles.

NEGOTIATING THE OFFER

Congratulations! You got the offer! But your work isn't over yet. Take time to review the full compensation package, get answers to any remaining questions, and make sure the role aligns with your goals before deciding.

Responding to the Offer

Whether the offer comes by phone, email, or in person, you should:

- Thank the employer for the offer
- Ask follow-up questions (e.g., vacation time, benefits, start date, title)
- Request time to consider (a few days to a week is standard)
- Confirm it's okay to follow up with additional questions before deciding

Sample Phone or In-Person Script:

"Thank you very much for extending the offer. Again, this is an excellent opportunity. Can you tell me more about the benefits package (vacation time, health care benefits, the performance evaluation process, etc.)? Great, thanks for clarifying those details. I'd like to take some time to think about the offer. Can I contact you with my decision by... [insert date or time frame]? If I have any questions before that time, do you mind if I give you a call? Thanks again, and I look forward to speaking with you."

Before You Decide, Ask Yourself:

- Is my interest in the organization still strong?
- Will I gain or strengthen valuable skills?
- Does the role fit my short- and long-term goals?
- How close is it to my "ideal" job?
- How will it affect my personal life and relationships?
- Does it offer the flexibility and balance I want?
- Does the salary meet my needs?
- How do the benefits (healthcare, vacation, remote work options, professional development) compare?

Managing Multiple Offers and Opportunities

If you get a written offer from one employer while still interviewing elsewhere, let the other employers know. Be professional and keep doors open. You may be able to align timelines so you can consider multiple offers.

Sample Email:

Dear [Hiring Manager],
Thank you again for taking the time to interview me for the [Position Title] position. I wanted to let you know that I'm also in the process of interviewing with other

organizations and recently received an offer for a similar role. I remain very interested in working with your organization and believe I could make a significant impact as part of the team. I've been asked to give an answer by mid-next week and wanted to see if your timeline would allow for a decision on my candidacy by then. Do you have time today or tomorrow for a phone call to discuss? Thank you for your time and consideration.

Deciding Whether to Negotiate

- If you're happy with the offer: Accept as is and thank the employer.
- If you want changes: Negotiate in good faith only if you're seriously considering the job.

OFFER NEGOTIATION CONVERSATIONS

FIRST REQUEST TO ENHANCE THE OFFER

If you decide to negotiate an offer, you must be clear about the aspects of the position that you would like to have improved. Remember to consider every aspect of the job. Do not feel compelled to focus exclusively on salary. Contact the employer well before your stated decision deadline.

"As I mentioned before, I'm very interested in the position and I believe I can bring _____ and _____ to the agency. I was wondering if it were possible to enhance the offer in terms of [salary, vacation, benefits, opportunities for review, etc.]?"

After asking, *stop talking*. Don't fill the silence with extra explanation, an apologetic sigh, or nervous laughter. Wait for the response.

If The Employer Does Not Agree To Consider Your Request To Enhance The Offer

Maintain a positive, gracious tone. If you won't make a second attempt, thank them again and confirm you'll give your final decision by the original deadline. If you want to try again, see the Second Request section.

If The Employer Agrees To Consider Your Request To Enhance The Offer

Thank them and then share the enhancement you had in mind.

For salary: Avoid naming your exact goal. Instead, suggest a realistic round number slightly above it. *Example:* If you want \$75,000, you might say, "I was hoping to move towards \$83,000."

- **If the employer agrees to your figure:** Thank them. If satisfied, accept on the spot or confirm by the deadline.
- **If the employer does not agree:** Thank them, then ask what enhancement they *would* consider. Respond with appreciation and confirm you'll decide by the deadline.
- **If the employer needs time:** Thank them and ask when you can expect a response.

SECOND REQUEST TO ENHANCE THE OFFER

Some candidates choose to continue negotiating after the first conversation. If you believe a second round could add value, follow up before your agreed decision date.

If The Employer Did Not Agree To Consider Your First Request: Ask about a different part of the package. Some employers are more open to areas like flexible hours or transportation support than salary.

- “I understand. In lieu of a salary increase, would you be able to consider _____?”

If The Compensation Package Was Enhanced From Your First Request: Thank them, then add your next request.

- “I really appreciate that! It’s certainly helpful. Would you also be willing to consider _____?”

If The Employer Agrees To Your Second Enhancement Request: Thank them. If satisfied, accept on the spot or confirm your decision by the deadline.

If The Employer Does Not Agree To Your Second Enhancement Request: Thank them and either accept immediately or let them know you’ll respond by your deadline.

CONCLUDING NEGOTIATIONS

When negotiations end, ask the employer to confirm the offer in writing.

If you decide to decline, call or schedule a virtual meeting to let them know. Thank them for the offer and keep your response polite, clear, and concise.

“As I mentioned before, this position is an excellent opportunity. However, I’ve decided to pursue another opportunity at another organization. Thank you again for your consideration, and I wish you all the best as you move forward with the successful candidate for this position.”

After the call, send a formal declination email as a professional courtesy. This leaves a positive impression in case your paths cross again. Your email should include:

- A statement of appreciation for the offer (mention the position).
- A respectful decline of the offer.
- A closing statement that keeps the door open for future contact.

USING AI TO PREPARE FOR SALARY NEGOTIATIONS

Generative AI tools like ChatGPT can help you practice and build confidence before entering a salary negotiation. While AI cannot provide accurate or up-to-date salary ranges, it can support your preparation by helping you rehearse conversations, clarify your goals, and strengthen your communication.

AI can help with tasks such as:

- Practicing a negotiation conversation through role-play using ChatGPT's voice feature or chat functions
- Rehearsing how to make specific requests, such as a higher signing bonus, flexible start date, or relocation support
- Clarifying how to communicate your value based on your experience and the job description

How to Use ChatGPT's voice feature:

To start a voice conversation with ChatGPT:

1. Open the ChatGPT mobile app on your phone (iOS or Android).
2. Tap the headphones icon in the bottom right corner.
3. Begin speaking. For example, say:

"I'd like to rehearse negotiating a job offer. You're the recruiter for this position {paste job posting}, and here's my background {paste resume}. I want to request a higher signing bonus and a later start date. Let's begin."

This interactive role-play can help you practice tone, timing, and confidence in real time.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

As you prepare to negotiate your job offer, you have access to a wide range of resources across NYU.

The NYU Wagner Office of Career Services (OCS) provides direct support to students and alumni of Wagner via:

- [Career Advisement](#): Schedule a 30-minute appointment with a Career Services advisor via the Career Directory. Career advisors can help you prepare your negotiations.
- [Wagner Career Directory](#): Wagner's online job database. Use it to search and apply for jobs, internships, and fellowships, and to RSVP for career events.
- [Career Guides](#): Comprehensive guides for all areas of career development, including cover letters, networking, interviewing, resumes, and more!
- [Professional Development Resources](#): A collection of job boards, professional associations, and other helpful industry resources to assist in your career exploration. Learning more about your chosen field will help you identify networking opportunities.
- [Wagner Student Groups](#): Join groups to network with other Wagner students who share your professional interests.
- [Wagner Alumni LinkedIn Search Page](#): Search for and connect with alumni in your field of interest.

Additionally, all NYU students and alumni can access these campus-wide resources:

- [NYU Wasserman Center for Career Development](#): NYU's central campus career provides advising, professional resources, and events available to all NYU students and alumni.
- [NYU Wasserman Industry-Based Career Communities](#): Career Communities help you explore career paths, prepare for the job search, and connect with opportunities based on chosen industries
- [NYU Handshake](#): Handshake is the NYU Wasserman Center's online job and event database. Use it to search and apply for jobs, internships, and fellowships, and to RSVP for career events.
- [Violet Network](#): NYU's online networking tool provides access to students, faculty, staff and alumni across all career fields and interest areas. Use it to request informational interviews and join affinity groups with like-minded people from around NYU.