



careers advice pack

14. Negotiating your job offer



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Your hard work has paid off, you're through to the final interview and sense you're getting close to a job offer. But you have some concerns about the salary and/or hours and want to negotiate.

These are some suggestions to help you agree terms with your potential future employer and get off to a great start.

- Choose your moment. If you are worried about rate or working hours, the final interview may be the best point to raise these issues. But you do risk giving the edge to another candidate. Good timing can make all the difference, whereas bad timing could mean you're shown the door.

You need to trust your instincts: assess the character of the person (or people) interviewing you. Also consider factors such as whether the job advert said the role is open to flexibility – if it did, it's appropriate to ask about this at final interview.

- If you decide to wait until you're offered the job, respond with enthusiasm and thanks for the offer, but don't say yes immediately. Agree when they need to know by.
- Before you go away to sleep on it, make sure you are clear about the job location, salary and hours you have been offered, and when they would like you to start.
- If you are currently employed elsewhere, never hand in your notice on a verbal offer. Always wait until after any negotiations, when you have the final offer in writing.
- You're in a strong position to negotiate once an offer has been made to you, but you still need to use your judgment on how appropriate it is to do this. You need to know your worth, and have good reason to ask for either an increase in the salary, or to talk about flexibility and how your hours are spread through the week.



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- When negotiating on salary, do your research; look at similar jobs in the marketplace and see what the role is worth. Appreciate that the market rate is likely to be lower if you are applying for work at a charity or social enterprise. Find out if your potential employer uses bandings or grades – you don't want to price yourself out of the market.
- If you are looking for a shorter working week, read the job specification carefully and consider if you can achieve what's expected of you in less time. If you have good experience in this area, work efficiently and have good support, it may be that you *can* do the job in fewer days – or perhaps work one day at home. Many employers will be happy to consider extra flexibility for the right person.
- When can you start? Take your time to think through when it will be practical for you to start. You might need time to put childcare in place or make other arrangements. It's not realistic to keep an employer waiting ages for you to start, but equally it is important that when you do start, you can do so confidently.
- Is there anything else you need to know? You may want more information before you can make a decision - e.g. confirmation of how much travel would be included in the role, what the holiday allowance is, whether there are any additional benefits.
- Is there anything you need to let the employer know? e.g. Any adjustments needed to your work environment to accommodate a disability.
- When you call the employer to negotiate, remember that it's all in the delivery. Stay calm and polite, and don't get emotive! Even if you don't get what you want, most employers will respect you for asking.
- If you applied for the job through a recruitment agency, you can ask your consultant to negotiate on your behalf. Be completely honest, open and up front with them about what you want – it's in the agency's interests to get the job fit that is right for you.
- Finally, do you want this job? It can be hard to turn down a job but if, after consideration, you decide it is not right for you, then it's best to decline the offer. You've been offered this job and you will be offered others.