

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

STAND OUT EMPLOYMENT OFFERS



“The secret of joy in work is contained in one word – excellence.
To know how to do something well is to enjoy it.”

Pearl Buck

OFFERS

HOW DO I EVALUATE AN OFFER?

Whether you have applied for graduate positions or general positions, now or in the future, you will find yourself in a position of evaluating employment offers.

Firstly, congratulations on your successful offer of employment! You have a return on investment of your hard work and preparation.

If you are in a position where you have applied for multiple graduate roles or multiple general roles, accepting and declining offers becomes quite strategic and somewhat delicate. In this section we will discuss how to evaluate an offer, whether to negotiate with an organisation, and how to accept and decline offers.

In the process of evaluating an offer there are a number of areas to take into consideration. However, start with deciding if the offer meets with your expectations and original criteria. This is a great way to link your self assessment you have undertaken in the initial career planning phase and helps you to stop and reflect for a moment before making a decision.

Below are some suggestions to help you start evaluating.

RE-VISIT THE SELF ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

List or highlight the criteria that are still important to you from the initial self-assessment activities undertaken including skills, interests, values and your expectations of employment. Take into consideration the following:

Desired Tasks

How your core strengths link in with your interests. For example:

- Interests - analysing complex data
- Strength - attention to detail, excellent written and communication skills

Desired Work Conditions

Think about the type of work environment where you would be most productive but also enjoy. For example:

- Do you prefer structure with well set out tasks and duties?
- Do you prefer a high degree of flexibility where you manage your own tasks and time?

Desired Work Locations

Think about where you see yourself working, for example:

- A government organisation
- Internationally
- Rural

Tangible and Intangible Benefits

Does the offer match the intangible benefits you desired? For example:

- Salary and financial rewards
- The opportunity to advance
- The opportunity for training and personal development

And finally, cross-reference your offer with how well it meets your criteria.

- How many of your 'must have' criteria are met in the offer? If there are only one or two elements offered will the position offer you what you are looking for?
- Are you interested in the tasks and duties listed in the position description and do you want to know more about them?
- Are the work conditions suited to what you are looking for and what is important to you in a position?
- What is the culture of the organisation? Do you see yourself fitting into the organisation from what you have researched and observed?
- Does the financial package offered match your financial needs?

COMMON SCENARIOS: CAN I AND HOW DO I?

EVALUATING AN OFFER

With a company that is not your first choice

Do not feel under pressure to give an answer immediately. Thank the employer and re-confirm your interest, but ask them for some time to explore the offer in greater detail. You may also wish to ask them to put the details of the offer in writing.

If this offer is a second or third choice option and you are interested in pursuing your first choice, contact the organisation of your first choice as soon as possible and let them know you have an offer of employment. Ask them at what stage they are in the recruitment and selection process for your desired role and the status of your application. If this organisation is sincerely interested in you they may be able to hasten the recruitment process so as not to potentially lose you to another employer.

If this offer is not your first choice, but you do not have any active applications at present, you need to decide if you should accept the offer or continue your job search. A tough decision! We encourage you to come and make an appointment with the CDC as well as seek advice from people within the industry, especially from the information interviewing you have undertaken to help you make your decision.

When you need more time to make a decision

It is okay to ask for more time but be prepared to explain why and how much time you will need. At this stage, employers may be constrained with deadlines for offers so they may not be able to give you additional time. In this instance, be prepared to make a decision if extra time is not an option.

Here are some sample scripts to ask the employer for more time.

- "Thank you for the opportunity of this offer of employment with ... It is a significant decision, and I would like to request some more time to consider the offer."
- "I am excited about the opportunity to work with... However, I have a previously scheduled interview and it is important to me to keep this commitment. I would like to have more time in order for me to make the best decision."

Where you want to accept the position but continue applying for other jobs for a better offer

This depends on your personal ethics. The reality is you may have applied for a few graduate programs, each with clear preferences. You may be faced with making this decision at some point in your graduate recruitment process. Just as organisations seek the best candidate from a pool of many, they also know their applicants may have a range of options and preferences. There are many second and third round offers taking place for this reason.

If you are in this position, come and talk with one of the team at the CDC to assist you as there are many scenarios!

NEGOTIATING AN OFFER

With multiple organisations where you have received offers

Before you commence this strategy, come and see at the CDC to further discuss how or if to commence negotiations. This strategy is most successful if you have researched effectively. That is you know the organisations are competitors in the same industry with similar market rates. In this instance, a strategy may be to state you have received a higher offer from an organisation and encourage the current organisation to match it. However, this is commonly undertaken when you have significant marketable experience, thus having something of value to bargain with. It is not recommended to start negotiating with graduate offers as chances are, they already have set packages with a common market rate across the industry.

A tip! Never state you have received a higher offer when you haven't, no matter how tempting it may be. An organisation may know their competitors quite well.

For a higher salary

When deciding to negotiate for a higher salary, come and make an appointment with the CDC. Again, the strategy is most successful when you have something of value to bargain with. For a graduate program the packages are set at the market rate and there may be little difference from one organisation in a similar industry to the next.

However, some organisations expect you to negotiate, not necessarily for more money, but additional benefits as part of the package on offer and may have deliberately offered a lower sum initially, anticipating that you would respond with a counter offer. This may be more prevalent in executive roles where negotiating finer details are more commonplace especially when bargaining for valuable talent.

For further research on salary, have a look at the following links to prepare yourself more effectively

- www.hays.com.au/salary

WHAT ARE THE OVERALL BENEFITS?

When evaluating the offer and / or employment contract, take into consideration all the benefits on offer. Are you satisfied with all / most of the points? Would you be satisfied for a longer period of time? Think about:

- Annual leave entitlements
- Bonus systems for meeting key performance indicators
- Career progression
- Carer's leave entitlements
- Further education opportunities and study assistance
- Maternity leave
- Paternal leave
- Personal development / training
- Relocation assistance
- Sick leave entitlements
- Superannuation contributions

ACCEPTING A JOB OFFER

Are you ready to accept an offer? Here's how:

- Contact the employer and advise them of your decision. Follow up, with a letter or email that confirms your offer in writing before signing the contract.
- If you have further applications pending, contact the organisations and let them know you have accepted an offer and wish to withdraw your application.
- Send your referees a thank you card. Your referees will remember this when you are undertaking future job search.



SAMPLE LETTER - ACCEPTING AN OFFER

Joe Bloggs
20 Star Avenue, Robina, QLD 4226 Australia
Email: jbloggs@hotmail.com Ph: 0412 123 456

20th September, 2010

Nicole Smith
ABC Bank
830 Money Parade
Brisbane, QLD 4000

Dear Nicole,

I am delighted to confirm my acceptance of the Graduate Program with ABC Bank and look forward to commencing the role on the 10th February 2012.

As per our telephone conversation on the 18th September, I understand the salary package will be ___ per annum including superannuation and the ABC Bank will assist with the cost of relocation. Thank you for sending the employment contract and associated forms. I will complete all documentation and post them as soon as possible.

I would once again like to express my appreciation for your offer and my excitement about joining the team at ABC Bank. I look forward to commencing training in February.

Sincerely,
Joe Bloggs

DECLINING A JOB OFFER

Some would say it's an ideal situation to have many offers made to you, but often this can be a very stressful time and a big decision to make.

Once you have accepted what you consider to be the best offer, the CDC has compiled a list of guidelines for rejecting offers gracefully:

The Format

You can reject the offer in a number of ways. You can reject it over the phone, via email or a formal letter. If you are going to opt for a phone call, we recommend you follow this up with a letter. As many recruitment programs today are based completely online, email is perfectly acceptable.

Be prompt to say no

This is courteous to the organisation that was so kind as to offer you a job. Although they will likely be disappointed that they will not gain your services, they will appreciate the advance warning, such that they can make alternate plans and offers.

Show your gratitude and be humble

Your communication should be polite, firm and exceptionally grateful for the opportunity. Let the Human Resource Manager know how impressed you were by the organisation and make a sincere specific compliment about the firm. A lot of time, effort and money has been spent on the recruitment process and it is imperative that you acknowledge this effort when you decline an offer. If you have contact details, thank each person that you came in contact with and who interviewed you.

Be gracious as to why you turned the offer down

Cite that you have chosen another option which you feel 'better suits your career objectives' or 'for personal reasons'. Firms will often email you back asking which firm you ended up choosing, requesting feedback on their application process. Although you can certainly give some meaningful feedback, do not criticise the organisation.

Do not burn your bridges

This is a classic mistake made by many candidates. Remember, you do not know who you may eventually work for during your career. You must aim to maintain a positive, strong relationship with any potential employer. The best possible outcome is to gain your interviewers as future contacts in the industry - even if you don't end up working for them. Leave the door open for further communication saying, 'I hope that our paths cross again in the future.'

SAMPLE LETTER - DECLINING AN OFFER

Joe Bloggs
20 Star Avenue, Robina, QLD 4226 Australia
Email: jbloggs@hotmail.com Ph: 0412 123 456

20th September, 2010

Nicole Smith
ABC Bank
830 Money Parade
Brisbane, QLD 4000

Dear Nicole,

Thank you very much for your telephone call and letter offering me the graduate position with ABC Bank. While I believe in ABC Bank's vision for growth and appreciate the opportunity of the program you offer I have had another offer which I believe aligns more closely to my long term aspirations. After much careful deliberation, as discussed over the telephone, I have decided not to accept your offer.

I sincerely appreciate the time and effort placed in considering me for the position and the courtesy and hospitality extended to me by all the staff. It was a pleasure meeting you and I wish ABC Bank every continued success.

Best Regards,
Joe Bloggs