



Negotiation Strategies for the Emerging Scholar

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As emerging scholars venture into their chosen career paths, one important skill to develop is the ability to negotiate. This article will offer some suggestions on how to prepare for and progress through the negotiation process when a job offer has been made.

Negotiation involves communication between two parties so as to reach an agreement without causing future barriers to communication. While negotiation only occurs after the individual has received an offer for the position, it is vital that research is conducted beforehand to ascertain what is potentially negotiable. During this time, it is important to identify your priorities and deal breakers.

In addition, seek information from resources such as professional associations, mentors and advisors, personnel and publications at the institutions of interest, and published figures from sources like *The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac* or *The Collegiate Times*. Some terms and conditions that are potentially negotiable include the start date, the duration and position of funding, salary, a benefits package (health, life, disability, retirement), moving expenses, vacation, office space, lab facilities, equipment, computer/software, research assistants, conference and travel funds, grant writing support, journal subscriptions, teaching load, student advising, patent rights, acknowledgements for projects and publications, work schedule, parking, housing, on-site childcare, and spouse/partner employment. Initially, post-doctoral scholars may have less negotiating power, but as they gain experience they will have more leverage when negotiating.

After receiving an offer from the potential employer, send correspondence expressing pleasure for receipt of the offer and enthusiasm about the position and the institution. Be sure to ask for a copy of the terms and conditions of the offer and find out when the individual making the offer would like a decision.

While reading the offer, consider it as a compensation package instead of only a salary figure. Seek to negotiate for mutual gain and find common interests in areas that may seem to have the most conflict. Negotiation occurs in stages and, as such, you can change your requests and/or priorities during the process. However, be aware that vacillating may undermine your credibility. During each contact throughout the negotiation process, ensure that you convey your enthusiasm for the position. At the completion of the negotiation process, express thanks for their willingness to respond to your concerns and restate the offer, then request it in writing so that both parties will have a record of common understanding of the conditions of the offer. Finally, inquire when you would receive the final decision on the offer.

When you have received the agreed upon offer, request some time to think about it before making a final decision (no more than two weeks). Know that you will be bound to the decision after you have made it so if you are waiting for offers from other employers, contact these institutions, explain your situation and ask whether they can provide you with a decision within your time-frame.



After you accept an offer, notify the other institutions where you had applied about your decision. Also, communicate this to your advisors and others who may have helped in your search. If you do not accept an institution's offer, explain honestly and constructively why you did not and write a follow-up letter articulating your regret that the position didn't work out along with providing your positive impression of the process.

Learning how to negotiate is an important step to successfully getting what is most important to you as you progress from an emerging scholar to a respected leader in your chosen career.

There are several online resources that can also help you in your decision making:

- "What is Negotiation?": www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/negotiation.html
- "Negotiating a Postdoc Position":
www.ibparticipation.org/pdf/Postdoc_Negotiating_a_Postdoc.pdf
- "Negotiating Style Self-Assessment":
womennegotiationinstitute.com/doc/WIN_Negotiation_Style_Assessment_0711.pdf
- "Negotiation Preparation Form":
www.aligncorp.com/images/Align_Negotiation_PrepSheet.pdf