

Salary Savvy

Knowing that salary negotiations or discussions challenge even the most experienced job seekers may be of some comfort to prospective graduates preparing to enter the job market.

With minimal knowledge, however, you can approach interviewing with increased confidence, impressing the employer with your job search savvy.

Points to ponder

Although salary is important, avoid making it the primary factor in your job choice. Think long range and select the best career development opportunity offered.

- At any stage during the interview process, you may be asked to discuss your salary expectations, so be prepared!
 - Before going into an interview, determine a realistic salary range for your career field, level of experience and qualifications.
 - Research the cost of living in the geographical area where you are planning to work. Estimating how much money is required to meet your monthly expenses will prevent you from accepting a salary lower than you need to survive.
 - Let the employer introduce the issue of salary, not you. You will be at an advantage if the employer makes an offer and then you can negotiate from that point.
 - Have a salary range in mind but when asked, mention the high end. Hopefully the employer will agree, if not, there is still room to negotiate within your range.
- If the subject of salary and benefits is raised before you know much about the position, or before you have interviewed, you can mention that you prefer to first learn more about the position and its responsibilities before discussing salary. Do this in a very diplomatic manner.

Factors that influence salary

In addition to academic credentials, other factors could impact your salary potential.

- Experience gained through internships, summer, part-time, full-time or freelance work;
- The quality of your portfolio, demonstrated talent, or specific technical skills;
- How you present or market yourself to the employer;
- Geographical location of the city and region where the job is located;
- Current demand for employees with your qualifications;
- National and global economic issues;
- The nature or culture of the business or organization that interests you;
- Your job search savvy.