Chapter 9 - Evaluating Job Offers

Decision Making Criteria
At least half of your waking day will be spent at work performing your new job. Evaluate how the position fits into your short- and long-term lifestyle and career goals and how it will provide opportunities for job satisfaction, enjoyment, and personal growth. A nice starting salary is great, but if you don’t get up in the morning looking forward to going to work, no amount of money is worth it.

Supervision

What is the company’s reputation? Its size and sales? Its growth potential and position in the market?

Is the management style hierarchical or consensus-oriented?

Does the company welcome and value people of differing cultural, ethnic, or racial backgrounds?

Work Environment

Who do you report to? What is that person’s management style? How much day-to-day supervision will you have?

Who gives you assignments? Who approves them?

How much independence and decision making go with the position?

The Position

What will you be doing on a day-to-day basis?

Will you have the opportunity to use your background and experience in a meaningful way?

What skills are required? What are the prospects for learning new skills?

How much responsibility will you have, and how soon?

Is the work routine or project-based?

How big is your work group and what is your role in it?

Does anyone report to you?

What percentage of time will you travel?

The Company

Is it a large, multi-national conglomerate or is it a small startup company where you know everyone, including the president?
Potential for Advancement
• Is the position compatible with your career plans?
• Are you able to move cross functionally?
• What is the upward mobility?
• Is transfer or relocation necessary or desirable for advancement in the company?
• Is training available?

Compensation and benefits
• Is the base salary competitive?
• Does the salary start high and peak or begin lower with potential for significant increases?
• What is the quality of the medical and dental coverage?
• Does the company provide relocation expenses or allowances?
• What “perks” can you expect, such as a health club membership, company car, or expense account?

Performance Evaluation
• Is a formal appraisal system in place?
• Will performance goals be set and measured?
• Are salary increases and bonuses tied to performance?
• Does individual performance affect your annual bonus or profit-sharing potential?

Recruitment Policies
The Career Center believes that students should have sufficient time to make important career and internship decisions. With this in mind, we have implemented specific Employer Recruitment Policies to guide on-campus recruiting activities, posted on the Career Center website. As a student you should be aware of the guidelines set forth for employers who recruit on-campus at UCLA.

For full-time and summer internship positions, students should be given a minimum of two weeks to make a decision. Employers should not make offers or pressure students to accept “early” offers that require a quick response time nor should they attach incentives involving diminishing bonuses, reduced options for location preferences, etc.

The Career Center also takes very seriously the education and conduct of students throughout the recruiting process. Our Student Responsibilities for On-Campus Recruiting (OCR), including specific guidelines for making decisions and handling offers, were created in regards to this commitment. You should be knowledgeable of these policies, found on our website at career.ucla.edu/OCR and BruinView™ prior to participating in the recruitment process.

Per these guidelines, students participating in on-campus recruiting are responsible for:
• Accepting an offer of employment only after careful consideration and honoring professional commitments.
• Understanding that reneging after accepting and offer of employment is unacceptable.

A student rejecting an offer after having previously accepted (reneging), for any reason, is a serious recruiting violation and is subject to serious repercussions – through the Career Center and potentially Academic Affairs.

Handling Multiple Offers and Offer Deadlines
In the generally fast-paced employment market, where employers are eager to secure students, often months before they will start work, dilemmas you may face are what to do if you receive multiple employment offers, and how to handle offer deadlines given by employers when you have not finished talking to all the organizations you are interested in. For example,
you are given two weeks to accept an offer by X Corporation, but have an interview scheduled in two weeks with Y Corporation, who you are potentially more interested in. Given the variability of employers’ hiring practices and time frames, combined with your unique needs and schedule, this is a complex issue and unfortunately there are no clear rules for every situation.

That being said, there are some important things to keep in mind and steps you should take. The first is, if possible, consult with a UCLA career counselor. Come to the Career Center for a Same-Day counseling session where we can help you assess the situation and examine your options.

Here are some other valuable suggestions and guidelines for handling multiple offers and offer deadlines:

- Experience shows that the best employment decisions for both you and employers are those made without pressure and with the greatest amount of information. If you are given sufficient time to attend career fairs, participate in on-campus interviews, and/or complete the interviewing in which you are currently engaged, you are more likely to make good long-term employment decisions.

- Communication is key. Maintain regular contact between you and the employer from the time the offer is received.

- If you are waiting on a preferred employer, contact them and ask how far they have proceeded with your application and when you are likely to hear of their decision.

- Contact the employer who has made you the offer and ask if they are prepared and willing to extend the offer acceptance deadline, if needed. This is a common practice and does not automatically imply that their offer is second best, especially if you explain that you want to complete the interviewing cycle in which you are currently engaged, in order to make the most informed decision. If the employer does insist on your making a decision quickly, you might ask yourself whether you want to work for an organization which is pressuring you to make a hasty choice. Do not stretch their patience too much, though – they deserve to know your decision within a reasonable amount of time so they can offer the position to someone else, should you withdraw or decline.

- Do not accept an offer that you are not comfortable with, or to “hedge your bets” in case your preferred offer doesn’t come through. You’ve successfully secured one offer – you can do it again.

- The onus is on you to do as much self-assessment and employer research as possible to be in the best position to make informed decisions.

- The onus is on employers to not improperly influence and affect your job acceptance. A career counselor can help you with this!

Additional Pointers

- Be sure to give yourself time to reflect on any offer extended to you.

- Ask for the offer in writing so there won’t be any misunderstandings later.

- If you decide the job offer meets your criteria, call the employer to accept and follow with a letter. Restate your understanding of the agreed upon terms, such as starting date, position title, salary, and benefits.

- Once you have accepted an offer, write a polite and tactful letter declining other offers you may have received.