

Negotiating Your First Job Offer

Haggle -- and Don't Be Shy.

Only about 25 percent of new academics negotiate. Choosing not to negotiate can cost you upwards of \$150,000 over a 30-year career. Note: In the humanities, there are fewer opportunities to negotiate than in the social or natural sciences, but there are still crucial matters to consider, including moving expenses, the tenure clock, summer teaching and research support, travel to professional conferences, and policies regarding leaves and pregnancy.

Most department chairs expect you to negotiate.

1. Do not negotiate until you have a job offer
2. Don't accept the initial job offer immediately
3. Establish how long you have to make a final decision
4. Understand the institution's constraints
5. Contact other institutions where you are short-listed.
6. The department chair can be your best advocate.

Negotiating

Rule No. 1: Never accept a position when it's first offered.

Rule No. 2: Ask when the department needs an answer.

Rule No. 3: Ask, don't demand.

Rule No. 4: Consider the offer as a whole, rather than focusing on individual components: Teaching load, tenure prospects, quality of life, collegiality of the department)

Rule No. 5: Don't negotiate by email.

Rule No. 6: Try to anticipate the department's perceptions, values, interests, constraints. Remember: You are negotiating a long-term relationship.

Tone

1. Be professional, calm, straightforward, respectful – and realistic.
Being assertive is not the same thing as being aggressive.
2. Make the department chair your partner:
Ask what is negotiable and what is not.
3. Make requests in an informational rather than an aggressive or manipulative manner.
4. Be flexible—and don't be greedy.

How Long Do You Have to Decide?

Typically, two weeks. But increasingly departments make offers with a "short fuse." Fearful of losing other candidates, the department wants a quick answer.

But you can say that you need two weeks from the time that the offer is formalized.



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What is Negotiable?

1. The amount of time you'll have to decide on this offer
2. Your starting date (including deferment in order to take a postdoc)
3. Reduced teaching load (increasingly common for first year)
4. Lab facilities and equipment (a key element in relevant fields)
5. Computing equipment
6. Money for new library resources (including films, slides, CD's)
7. Summer research support
8. Travel funds for conferences
9. Early (or extended) sabbatical or leave (including parenting, if relevant)
10. Early (or delayed) tenure review
11. Extra T.F.'s or R.A.'s
12. Extra secretarial assistance
13. Office space/location
14. Parking permit
15. Moving expenses
16. Another campus visit
17. Your benefits package: health, life, disability, tuition, and retirement are the most common and frequently are available for spouse and dependents as well. Less common benefits include: on-site day-care, spouse employment assistance, and a pharmaceutical plan. See whether the employer has the ability to negotiate any of these items and/or the date when coverage begins.
18. Assistance in finding and sometimes in financing housing
19. Assistance in finding employment for a partner.

Questions You Need to Ask

1. Department Policies:
 - When will you receive your first paycheck?
 - What are the departmental policies regarding travel and research support?
2. Benefits:

Are there any special benefits, such as:

 - college tuition assistance for faculty members' children
 - housing or mortgage assistance
 - campus childcare facilities or a university-run school?

Finding a Job for a Partner

1. Wait until you have an offer in hand.
2. Discuss this with the department chair and perhaps the dean. This is no longer unusual.

The Tenure Process

Find out as much as you can about the institution's tenure process.

1. When will you come up for tenure?
2. What are the departmental and university expectations for tenure?
3. Will your prior teaching and publications count toward tenure?
4. When will you undergo a formal review?
5. Are you eligible to come up for early tenure?

What to Worry About

- Split appointments
- Jobs involving administrative responsibilities

In these cases, clarify in writing such matters as tenure requirements.

Can you Back Out of a Job Acceptance?