



Handling Job Offers and Rejection

The job offer

While you may initially be informed of a job offer verbally, by telephone or in person, it is a good idea to then request it in writing. This will provide confirmation of the terms of the job offer and should include details such as:

- employer's name
- job title or a description of work and start date
- salary
- hours of work
- working location

Be aware, however, that a verbal offer and acceptance can be enough to form a binding contract of employment if they are both unconditional. You may therefore wish to make your verbal acceptance conditional on receiving the offer in writing. If you accept an unconditional offer and then change your mind the employer could technically:

- make you work out any contractual element of their notice
- sue you for breach of contract

While this is unlikely to happen in practice, it is important to think carefully before accepting a job offer. Pulling out of the contract at a late stage can give recruiters a bad impression and appear unprofessional.

Do you want to accept the job offer?

Yes

If the job you have been offered meets your criteria and you are confident that you wish to accept it, you should respond without delay. It is normal for candidates to initially accept an offer verbally then follow up in writing. You should keep a record of this letter or email, along with the written offer from the employer, as this forms the basis of the employment contract. More information about employment contracts can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) and the [ACAS website](https://www.acas.org.uk).

Example acceptance letter/email

Dear Mr Smith

Graduate Marketing Trainee Job Offer (Ref: 1235678)

Further to our telephone conversation and email correspondence on 1 April 2015, I am pleased to confirm my acceptance of your offer to join Smith & Sons as a Graduate Marketing Trainee. I look forward to joining your firm on 1 September 2015, to advance my marketing career with your company.

As discussed, I shall bring the signed contract of employment with me on my first day, however please do not hesitate in contacting me should you require any further information prior to my commencement date.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Bloggs

Once you have accepted a job offer, it is best practice to withdraw any outstanding applications with other organisations, explaining that you have accepted another position and thanking them for their consideration.

Tips for negotiating terms of employment

- Thoroughly research the salaries and benefits typically offered for this type of role and sector, taking into account the location of the job. You can get help with researching average salary ranges from the Careers Service.
- Requests should be realistic and you should expect to compromise. While some employers may not have much scope to vary wage levels they may be able to offer you other benefits such as performance related bonuses or pay reviews.
- Negotiations should be conducted professionally at all times, with respect being given to the employer's final decision.

No

If you decide to turn down a job offer, you should contact the employer indicating your appreciation for being considered for the role but stating you decline the offer. Your mode of communication should reflect that used by the employer. You can provide a reason for your declining the offer, but this is not necessary. You should ensure that you decline the offer as soon as you are no longer interested, or have accepted a different job offer, as the organisation will need to contact other job candidates on the basis of your decision. It is important to leave a professional image of yourself with that organisation as you may wish to work with them in the future.

Example declining letter/email

Dear Mr Smith

Graduate Marketing Trainee Job Offer (Ref: 1235678)

Thank you for your email offering me the post of Graduate Marketing Trainee. After careful consideration, I am writing to let you know that I must respectfully decline your job offer. I have decided to accept another opportunity that is more in line with my skills and career goals.

I am very grateful for the opportunity I was given to meet you and your colleagues and wish you all the best in your future ventures.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Bloggs

Unsure

More difficulties will arise if you are unsure as to whether you wish to accept a job. This might be because you are waiting to hear back from other applications you have made, have received other offers or are not sure that the role or company are a right fit.

It is perfectly acceptable to ask an employer for more time to consider their job offer. They do not have to agree to this, although the request is more likely to be granted if you can provide a reason and how much time you will need, with generally 1-2 weeks being the most that can be expected so other candidates are not left waiting. For example:

'I am excited about the opportunity to work for your organisation, however, as this is a big decision I would like more time to consider this offer. Would it be acceptable if I got in contact with you by the end of the week with my decision?'

OR

'Thank you very much for your offer. I have a previously scheduled interview with another organisation and it is important for me to honour this commitment. As such, and in order to make the best decision, I would be grateful if I could provide you with my decision by next Thursday'

OR

'I very much appreciate being considered for the role of Graduate Marketing Trainee with your company. If possible, I would like to have some time to discuss this offer with my Careers Consultant, could I therefore give you my decision on Monday?'

If waiting to hear back from other more preferred employers, you can contact them explaining the situation and asking if they would be able to make a hiring decision within your agreed job offer decision period. This may not be possible, in which case you will have to decide whether to accept your less preferred option. Alternatively, you may end up with multiple offers you will need to carefully weigh up in order to decide which to accept. The Careers Service can help you think about your options and the below Job Evaluation Activity may also help, although ultimately it will be your decision.

Job Evaluation Activity

1. Make a list of the criteria used when you began your job search, for example:
 - job role and responsibilities
 - type of skills and strengths utilised
 - career progression
 - salary
 - ethical standards and principles
 - work/life balance
 - location
2. Review the criteria and rank them in terms of (1) essential (2) desirable and (3) bonuses
3. Apply the criteria to the job offer(s) received and evaluate how well it meets the ranked criteria. Does the role meet most of your requirements or is one or two essential criteria not met? It is also important to think about the long term prospects of the job, such as if progression within the company will allow for other criteria to be met in the near future.

Rejection

It is difficult not to feel disheartened when rejected by an employer, but it is important to remember that this happens to most people at some point in their job hunt. If you reached the interview stage of the recruitment process you should request feedback from the graduate recruitment team, which may provide valuable advice for future interviews or point to areas of weakness in your skillset. You should always be polite to the employer even if you do not necessarily agree with their feedback. Some employers may not be able to offer feedback, in which case you will have to accept this and move on.

If you find that you are continually not reaching the interview stage of the application process, you may wish to make an appointment with the Careers Service to discuss your application strategy and to get feedback on the applications you are submitting.

April 2015