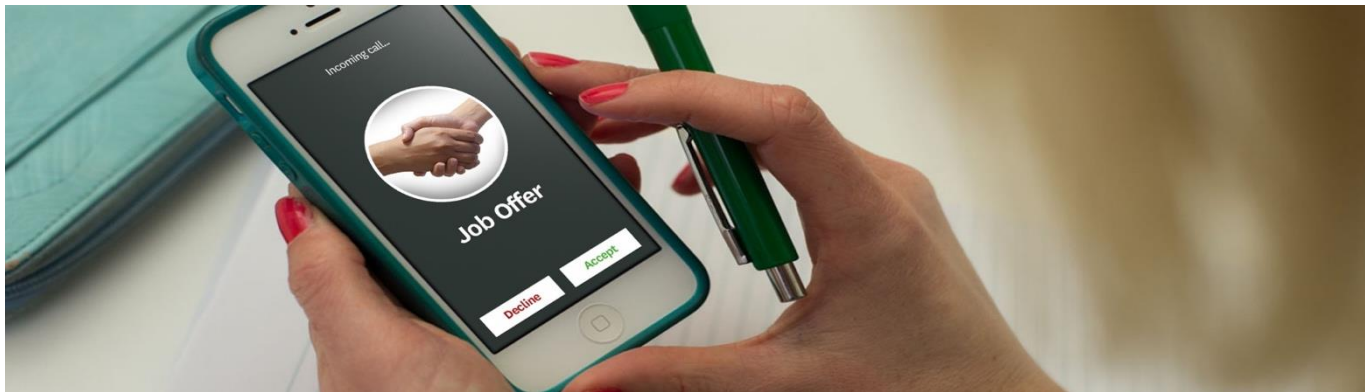


Wellington Careers and Employment

Career Essentials—Evaluating job offers

It may be tempting to rush into accepting a job offer, especially if you have been job searching for a while, but it is important that you take the time to carefully consider what an employer is offering so you can make an informed and balanced decision.



Any job offer should be carefully considered

- You may receive a job offer over the phone or in writing.
- Once you have confirmed your interest in the offer, the employer will usually send you two copies of the employment contract or agreement.
- A contract typically includes a description of the work, the location, working hours, holiday entitlement, and salary.
- You are entitled to a reasonable amount of time to seek independent advice about the contract before making your decision and should be given the name of the person with whom any concerns can be discussed.
- Seek advice if you have any concerns about the contract; any changes negotiated should be recorded in a letter or in the contract itself. You can get free advice about employment agreements from Employment New Zealand or the [Citizens Advice Bureau](#).

What to consider when assessing a job offer

A job offer may not meet all your criteria, particularly if you are at the beginning of your career or if you are changing career direction. An analysis can help you weigh up the risks and benefits. **We suggest creating a 3-column worksheet headed** “Conditions of employment”, “Benefits”, and “Risks”. What are the most and least important aspects of the job offer? Are there any that you are unclear about? Could you negotiate to improve these aspects of the offer without appearing either naïve or unrealistic?



What matters to you?

- **Location and physical environment** Will you need to commute or even relocate? Will you incur additional living costs for accommodation and transport? Will you have your own work area or share? Are work areas enclosed or is it an open-plan office?
- **Size of the organisation** Large organisations generally offer a greater variety of training programmes and career paths, more managerial levels for advancement, and better employee benefits than small firms. Smaller organisations may offer broader authority and responsibility, a closer working relationship with top management, and a chance to see the impact of your contribution on the success of the organisation.
- **Does the work match my interests and make good use of my skills?** It's often difficult to imagine what a job will involve on a day-to-day basis. At the interview stage, ask questions to help you clarify the role expectations. If you have more questions when you're offered the job, it's acceptable to ask.
- **Work hours** Some jobs involve regular hours, for example a 38-hour week, working office hours, Monday to Friday. Others involve variable hours including night, weekend, or holiday work. Some jobs routinely require overtime to meet deadlines or sales or production goals. You may or may not receive overtime pay or compensatory time off for working overtime. Consider the effect of work hours on your personal life.
- **Organisational culture** Do other employees seem positive, friendly, and motivated? How long do most people remain in the role? High turnover can mean dissatisfaction with the nature of the work, the management style, or personality clashes.
- **Professional development** Will you be encouraged to learn new skills? As your skills increase, are there opportunities for more responsibility? Could you move to other roles within the organisation? When career opportunities arise, will you compete with external applicants? Does the organisation provide support in terms of time or money to participate in development courses or part-time study?
- **Salary and benefits** Sometimes you will learn about the pay from the advert or the interview. However, many organisations will not reveal pay and financial incentives until they have decided to hire you. Your own research (ideally prior to an interview) will help you decide if their offer is reasonable. Sources include careers.govt.nz and [Trade Me's salary guide](#). [Hays Salary Guide](#) is produced annually and includes pay for a wide range of experience levels and disciplines in New Zealand and Australia. If relocating, allow for differences in the cost of living. How regularly are salaries reviewed and what is the process? How much can you expect to earn after one, two, or three years? Are there other benefits such as additional KiwiSaver contributions, health insurance, bonuses, or staff discounts?
- **Negotiating** The process of evaluating the offer may mean that questions arise that can only be answered by further discussion or negotiation with the employer. Be clear about the aspects of the offer that concern you and what action you would like the employer to take. Be courteous and professional. Explain why you need the information and express appreciation for the job offer and the time they take to resolve any issues. Results of the negotiation should always be confirmed in writing.
- **Accepting or declining an offer** If you decide to accept, sign the contract and return it. Thank them for the offer and clarify any arrangements such as start date, time, place, and the name of the person you will report to on your first day. If you decide to decline, give your reasons briefly and diplomatically, thanking them for the opportunity. Don't burn your bridges—you may apply to that employer in the future or come across the individual you have been dealing with elsewhere.

