

MPF1101: TALKING SALARY



Your knowledge and skills are valuable, and your time should be compensated at a rate appropriate to what you have to offer. Here's a guide to the basics of negotiation when accepting a job offer.

1 Do your research

Look up similar positions in your area with the same minimum qualifications. See what other employers are offering and what the national average is for your industry.



2 Build your case

Write down a few bullet points to present to your potential employer. Include unique experiences that make you a more valuable employee as well as information you found in your research.



3 Be flexible

Employers have their own constraints to consider. Maybe they can't offer you a greater annual salary but can increase your benefits somehow. Weigh your options and be open to suggestions.



Remember to get the final agreement in writing. It should be signed by the hiring manager and yourself.

If you're afraid of seeming rude or demanding during negotiation, try following one of these **scripts**.



MPF1102: BENEFITS BASICS

Employee benefits are non-wage compensations that are offered in addition to your salary. It's important to understand what these benefits are and their financial implications before making any decisions.



Federally Mandated Employee Benefits



These are the minimum benefits you can receive, regardless of your employer, as long as you are a US citizen. They are paid for through a combination of you and your employers' taxes.

- Medicare
- Social security
- Unemployment insurance
- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Paid Leave



Employers understand that you can't be at work everyday of your life. That is why they typically offer specific amounts of paid leave time that you can accrue over time and use at your discretion. This includes paid time off (PTO), paid sick leave, and extended or family leave to take care of infants and family emergencies.

Retirement Plans



Typically, both you and your employer contribute to a retirement plan. There are a variety of retirement plans available: 401(k) and IRA plans, 403(b) plans (for nonprofits), and simplified employee pension (SEP) plans. Graduate assistants at UF are eligible for a 403(b) program.

Insurance Plans



Most employers offer insurance plans to cover medical expenses, pharmacy costs, vision and dental care, and even life insurance. Insurance plans rely on premiums and deductibles and how much you pay for each should depend on your needs and financial situation.



Always do your research before picking an insurance or retirement plan. If you have a spouse with their own insurance plan, you may want to compare insurers to see which is best for you and your partner.

Non-Standard Benefits



Many employers will pay for you to earn required continued education credits without using your paid leave. Other non-standard and emerging employee benefits include living stipends and investment opportunities. You can also ask about working remotely to save on transportation costs, an accommodation many employers now offer.



MPF2101: PAYING LOANS

Feeling weighed down by student loans? Confused about how to pay them off? We've got you covered.



01

LOWER YOUR INTEREST RATE

Many lenders offer small interest rate reductions for enrolling in auto-pay. You can also **try refinancing** all of your loans into one larger loan with a smaller interest rate.

02

MAKE BI-WEEKLY PAYMENTS

Pay half of the minimum monthly payment for a loan every other week (two times a month). This will add up to one extra payment a year!



03

DEBT-AVALANCHE V. DEBT-SNOWBALL

These are two common approaches to paying off loans faster when you have multiple debts. Learn more about them **here**.



04

START A SIDE HUSTLE

Use your skills, hobbies, and knowledge for **freelance work**. Want an easy **side gig**? Drive for Uber or help others complete projects on TaskRabbit. Basically, there's a side gig for everyone.



05

FIND THE RIGHT EMPLOYER

Seek out employers with student loan repayment assistance in their benefits. Many government-sponsored jobs offer **loan forgiveness** after a certain time.



06

MAKE THE MOST OF TAXES

Tax deductions up to \$2500 are available for interest paid on **qualified student loans**. Consider putting your tax return towards your debt repayment as well.



MPF2102: BUILD CREDIT

Your credit score is your reputation as a borrower. Lenders use it to determine how risky of an investment you are and if you're likely to repay them.



Credit scores range from 300 to 850. Ideally, you want your credit score to sit comfortably above 600 to earn the smallest interest rates on loans, including on mortgages and other large purchases.



Your credit score is determined by 3 main details:

- whether your bills were paid on time
- whether your credit card balances were kept low (ideally, below 30 percent of credit limit)
- whether any debts went into **collections**

You can check your credit score for free **here** and no, checking your credit score *does not* damage it. Check up on your score often and try to improve it by paying bills on time or opening a **credit-builder loan**.



In order to have a credit score, you must have had at least one active loan or credit card account for at least 6 months. But make sure any money you take out on credit is money you can pay back.



Any credit cards you have should fit **your needs** and be **used responsibly**. You'll also want to keep credit card accounts open for as long as possible, as the age of your credit accounts makes up 15% of your score.



MPF3101: START SAVING

"The habit of saving is itself an education." - Joe Moore

What in the world is APY?

Annual percentage yield, or APY, is a standardized way of stating **interest rates** based on a compounding period of one year (i.e. earning interest on interest annually). APY is used to compare interest rates across financial institutions when shopping for different financial products.

TRADITIONAL

The type of account you typically think of (and that you may already have) when you hear "savings account." These accounts are good for the short- or long-term with low minimum deposits but typically offer a low APY.

HIGH-YIELD ACCOUNT

Offers a more competitive APY than traditional accounts with few fees (especially when using an **online bank**) and typically have low or no minimum deposits. Think of them as the better version of the traditional savings account.

CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT (CD)

Carries a higher APY but requires putting money aside for a set amount of time that cannot be accessed without incurring a fee.

This account is best for increasing the value of money you won't need for a long time.

MONEY MARKET ACCOUNT

Typically runs on a tiered system that requires higher balances to earn the greatest APY rates. Money can be withdrawn at any time without incurring a fee, up to a certain number of withdrawals.

SPECIALTY SAVINGS ACCOUNT

Tailored to specific savings goals such as down payment on a home or health savings accounts (HSAs), but may have restrictions on when money can be withdrawn and can carry strict tax rules.

INVESTING

Commits money to an endeavor, typically in the **stock market**, with the expectation of additional income or profit in the future when the endeavor exceeds. The potential for high reward is balanced by the risk of heavy losses.

HOW TO CHOOSE

Shop around with a clear vision. Write down your financial goals for the next 5 or 10 years, then take a look at your current bank accounts. See what money you can set aside now as savings. Once you have your goals and situation figured out, research the APY rates and financial tools that best fit your needs. And remember, the best time to save money is when you have some!



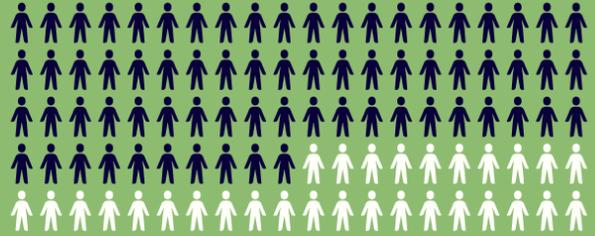
MPF3102: FINANCIAL EMT

There is a financial EMT you can rely on if the worst happens - the emergency fund is an account set aside as a safety net in the case of a major unexpected expense. It should be kept in its own account.



28 percent of Americans have no emergency savings, according to a 2019 Bankrate survey.

Over 70 percent of Americans used up half or more of their emergency savings during the pandemic.



Ideally, an emergency fund should equal 3-6 months of necessary expenses, but even setting aside a few dollars when you can could make a difference in an emergency.



STEPS TO AN EMERGENCY FUND

-  Calculate one month's total *necessary* expenses, multiply by how many months of expenses you would like to save for
-  Set a reasonable time frame for when you would like to reach your emergency fund goal
-  Calculate how much money you would need to set aside each month to reach your goal
-  Include monthly emergency fund saving goal as an expense in your budget and get to saving!



It can feel overwhelming, or even pointless, to set aside money for an emergency that may never happen. However, an emergency fund is crucial to a financially stable life.



MPF4101: ELECTIVES

You're almost a Master of Personal Finance! As your last course, here are some extra tips to help guide your financial journey.

01 AVOID LIFESTYLE INFLATION

There is always the temptation to spend more when you earn more, known as **lifestyle inflation**. Instead, put any extra money towards savings or paying off debts.



02 NEGOTIATE UTILITY BILLS

Consider negotiating rates with recurring service providers, such as those for your cable and phone. If you would like to avoid the hassle of going through customer service reps, use sites such as **billcutterz**.

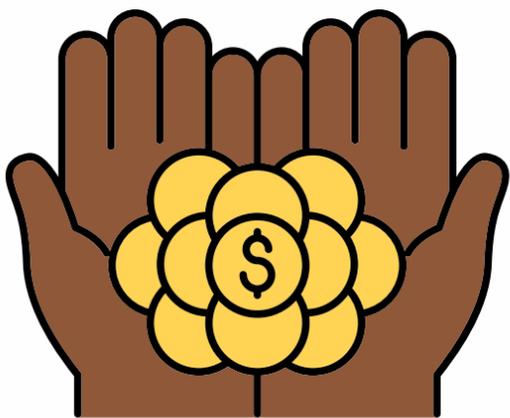
03 SEEK HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT

It's impossible to know everything about finances but there is always someone with the answer you're looking for. **Financial counseling** is an excellent place to look for help. **Financial webinars** are also a great resource for more information.



04 GET MULTIPLE QUOTES

If you're planning to take out a large loan at any point, such as for a house or car, be sure to get estimates from more than one lender. Compare their terms, fees, and interest rates, potentially saving you hundreds or thousands in the long run.



05 GENERATE EXTRA INCOME

It's often said that the average millionaire has seven sources of income. Although you don't need to be a millionaire, taking up a side gig or investing can offer an extra financial buffer and provide something to fall back on if you lose your main income.

CONGRATS!

You're a master of personal finance! Consider sharing your thoughts on this series here and remember, learning is lifelong. We encourage you to continue your own research into financial wellbeing.

