

Post-Interview Follow-Up

Immediate Actions (Within 24 Hours)

- Establish next steps — don't leave the interview without knowing the timeline and follow-up process
- Confirm you have correct contact information for all interviewers
- Send a professional thank-you email to each interviewer within one day
- Reference specific conversation topics to stand out in their memory
- Express genuine enthusiasm and excitement about the opportunity
- Deliver any materials or information you promised during the interview

Ongoing Communication

- Check status at an interval appropriate to the company (every 1–2 weeks, or as agreed)
 - Fast-moving or smaller companies: one week may be appropriate*
 - Large or bureaucratic companies: two weeks is typical*
- Keep all follow-up communication brief, specific, and professional
- Maintain an enthusiastic but not desperate tone
- Always create a next step before ending any interaction — never leave communication open-ended
- If too much time has passed, be honest: "Time got away from me, but I remain interested in the position."
- If the position is filled, respond graciously — ask them to keep your resume on file and request any feedback they're willing to share

Managing Multiple Opportunities

- Be creative and open to opportunities outside your narrow technical field
- Work multiple leads simultaneously — 10–50 applications commonly yield one interview
- Be honest if asked whether you have other interviews or offers
- Continue networking even when one opportunity looks promising
- Maintain personal integrity throughout — your reputation travels with you

Building Relationships

Keys to a Good Relationship: Authentic | Trustworthy | Respectful

Be Authentic

- Play to your strengths and know what value you bring
- Be clear about why you want to work in the field
- Articulate your long-term goals
- After the interview: follow up with a thank-you note within one day, check status as discussed, be excited and honest in all communication

Be Trustworthy

- Be upfront and honest if asked about other offers
- Be clear on where you stand: if the offer isn't competitive, say so respectfully
- Evaluate the total package, not just the salary number
- Consider the long term: compare apples to apples across opportunities
- Your word is your bond: build trust by doing what you say you'll do
- Protect your professional reputation — it's the "wake" you leave behind you

Be Respectful

- Receive feedback graciously, even if it's not what you wanted to hear
- Assess your own performance after every interaction
- Review interview questions and develop better answers for next time
- Keep all communication brief and concise

LinkedIn & Professional Presence

- Complete your LinkedIn profile by listing all internships and relevant experience
- Connect with professors, company executives, and other high-value professional contacts
- Focus on quality of connections over quantity; employers will look at the company you keep
- Avoid adding recruiters if actively job hunting (they may use your network to poach)
- Search your name and associations and clean up anything a prospective employer shouldn't see
- Remove all inappropriate social media content everywhere: party photos, anything unprofessional

Working with Recruiters

- Understand that recruiters cost the company 20–30% of your first-year compensation
- A direct application may have an advantage over a recruiter submission (all else being equal)
- Use back channels and your personal network when appropriate
- Get references from peers and professional contacts, not just family and friends
- Leverage the professional goodwill you've built

Building Your Network

- Network with other students to compare interview experiences and share leads
- Network with alumni for industry insights and introductions; Cal Poly Pomona grads are everywhere in Southern California engineering
- Create a learning agenda for continuous improvement: don't wait until you're employed to start developing professionally

Salary Negotiation*The Negotiation Window*

- Understand that you are most powerful when responding to an offer; it's the only time the employer may want you more than you want them
- If you don't ask, it's an automatic no — and it's very difficult to renegotiate once you've started
- This is a brief, critical window: do your homework before you get here, not after

Understanding BATNA (Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement)

- Understand what BATNA means: your best outcome if negotiation fails. Examples: stay in current situation and continue looking, promising interviews with other companies, another offer pending)
- Your BATNA is shaped by supply and demand:
 - Tight labor market + specialized skill = stronger BATNA, more negotiating power
 - Slow market + many graduates competing = weaker BATNA, be realistic
- Know your BATNA (your bargaining chip) before entering negotiation and do not immediately reveal it
- Recognize that outcomes depend on who has the better BATNA — who brings more to the table
- Managers will try to determine your BATNA by asking about prior salary, probing about former employers, or posing scenario-based questions

- Build your BATNA through performance, additional responsibilities, and continuous skill development

Phase 1: Preparation

- Know your number — calculate your personal expenses now that you're graduating (rent, student loans, transportation, cost of living in the region where you'll work). Use an online expenses calculator.
- Define your target point (ideal salary) and reservation point (lowest you'll accept) before any negotiation begins
- Research current market value for your skills and degree — use multiple sources, not just one:
 - Cal Poly Career Center — top resource; has salary and negotiation data built in
 - Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) — detailed, reliable government data
 - Salary.com / Salarylist.com — enter experience, industry, city/state for ranges
 - Glassdoor, Indeed — useful but cross-reference with other sources
 - Industry-specific surveys — professional associations often publish salary benchmarks (e.g., CalGeo for geotechnical, ASCE for civil)
 - Public sector pay scales — in California, government agency salaries are public record. Look up entry-level classifications for agencies like Caltrans, Metro, or LA County for benchmarking.
- Be aware that salaries are regional — a national average mixes Boise with Orange County. Always filter your searches by your discipline, job title, and region.
- Quick math: to convert annual salary to hourly, divide by 2,080 (52 weeks x 40 hours)
- Understand supply and demand for your specific skillset — this determines your negotiating power
- Research the company's financial health and compensation including the pay band range for the position
- Understand the entire job offer, not just salary — benefits can make a significant difference
- Focus on your value to the company, not your personal needs

Phase 2: The Conversation

- Assume the job offer is negotiable — 8 out of 10 recruiters expect negotiation
- Position yourself by selling your value when presenting any counter
- If the offer seems low, ask about the "pay band" and counter higher within the range
- If told negotiation isn't available, ask what experience or milestones are needed to move up
- "Expand the pie" by negotiating beyond base salary. If you don't ask, you don't get. Consider:
 - Flexible schedule / remote work — increasingly standard; ask about the policy
 - Signing or annual bonus, opportunity for early performance review
 - Stock options (more common at senior levels, but worth asking)
 - Vacation accrual, previously planned trips honored
 - Office location, remote/hybrid flexibility, relocation and moving costs
 - Equipment: laptop, phone, home office stipend
 - Tuition reimbursement — especially valuable if planning bachelor's-to-master's. Ask directly: "What's your policy on tuition reimbursement?"
 - Professional memberships like ASCE, IEEE, etc. Ask about reimbursement policy
 - Commuting support including transit passes, parking, mileage
 - Student loan assistance: some companies offer this; it doesn't hurt to ask
 - Accelerated performance review — if you're confident, ask for a review at 6 months instead of 12
- Re-anchor the conversation by reviewing your value with heartfelt passion

- If you have another offer, place it on the table — but only if genuine
- Express enthusiasm throughout; negotiation is not adversarial
- Pursue a win-win outcome; don't renegotiate repeatedly
- Articulate your expectations clearly and don't expect them to read your mind
- Know your worth; negotiate factually with data, not emotions
- Know when to walk away

The Offer Letter

- Get the offer in writing — it should include salary, benefits, start date, and a response deadline
- Typical response window is about 10 days
- If the offer letter doesn't include a response date, propose one yourself
- If you need more time to evaluate other offers, be honest — ask for an additional week or two. Don't go much further than that.
- Employers often ask whether you're pursuing other offers. Be honest — they respect transparency, and they want to know your timeline too.

Practice Scenarios — Prepare Responses For:

- Employer agrees immediately to your counter-offer — great outcome, but reflect: were you too low? Make sure your research supports the number.
- Employer low-balls: "This is our final offer" — this is where "expanding the pie" matters most. If base salary is rigid (common in government or large companies), negotiate benefits and perks.
- Employer makes a small concession: "How about...?" — this is an opening to expand the pie further. What additional benefits can you ask for?
- Employer asks you to propose: "What will it take for you to join our team?" — this is where all your research pays off. Have a specific, well-supported number ready.

Values Alignment — Money Isn't Everything

- Step back and evaluate whether the organization fits who you are — your job is far more than 8 hours a day when you count commute time and mental energy
- If the company meets your minimum requirements and aligns with your values, it may be worth accepting even if the number isn't your ideal target
- If you can't survive on what they're offering and you believe there are better options, be prepared to walk away — but know that this is scary, and it's okay to feel that way
- Throughout the negotiation, keep selling yourself and communicating the value you bring — negotiation is not adversarial

Negotiating for Internships

- Expect intern pay to be lower than entry-level staff positions — roughly up to 20% less, but it should be well above minimum wage
- It is appropriate to ask about a relocation stipend, especially if the internship requires moving
- Avoid unpaid internships — your skills as an engineering student have real value
- Treat internships as auditions — many companies make full-time offers to interns who perform well
- Count internship experience in months on your resume (not hours or years)
- Consider the BATNA of the organization offering the internship — if it's in an expensive area, they may have budget for housing or relocation assistance

Critical Reminders

Always:

- Be honest — if life delays your follow-up, say so
- Research the company thoroughly before any interaction
- Maintain a thick skin throughout the process
- Consider your first boss carefully — they leave lasting fingerprints on how you see your career
- Protect your professional reputation at all costs

Never:

- Give anyone the opportunity to say you wasted their time
- Blame others rather than accepting responsibility

Your differentiator: attitude, preparation, relationships, and willingness to continuously improve. And never forget — attitude is the multiplier in your value equation.