

JOB SEEKING SKILLS

Step 4: Starting work



15: Employment

Employment



So, they offered you the job. Congratulations!

Before you get carried away with the excitement of your success, you should study the offer before accepting the job.

Before you accept any job offer - make sure you receive an offer in writing.

The job offer



Evaluating the job offer

Most employers send a formal letter offering employment, with the employment contract enclosed, ready for you to read and sign.

There are a number of things to consider when deciding whether to accept the job offer, so it's reasonable to ask the employer for some time to think about it. They may have already specified a date that they need an answer by in a phone call or written job offer, but if not you can ask them this.

PROS

- Pay
- Training
- Company culture
- Use my skills
- Progression

CONS

- Travel
- Time to travel
- Other offers?
- Training time
- Am I a good match?

Also remember, talking things over with friends, relatives or career adviser can help you make a decision.

Even if you have no doubts about wanting the job, you should check the following criteria before saying yes. Aside from anything else, there could be simple clerical errors on the written contract that may need correcting.



1. Pay and conditions

- Check that the salary discussed or advertised is what is actually offered to you.
- Is it paid weekly or monthly?
- Does it seem a fair wage?

If there are any pension schemes, healthcare agreements, or bonus schemes, these should be outlined in a job offer too.



2. Working hours and location

- How many hours are you working? Does it fit in with your lifestyle?
- Will it be a straightforward commute to the business premises?
- If you are going by public transport, how much will it cost, and how frequent is the service?



3. Career prospects

- Does your performance and salary get reviewed on a regular basis?
- Is there scope for moving to different jobs in the company, or is there no scope for promotional opportunities?
- If not, will the skills and experience you gain there be good enough for you to progress to another organisation?



If there are any discrepancies in the job offer, these should be queried with the employer before you accept the job offer.

More than one job offer?



If you've attended a number of interviews and are lucky enough to be offered more than one job, you should evaluate each in the same way. You might want to make a list of pros and cons to help you decide. Once you have accepted the job offer you want, you should let the other employer know that you are declining the offer.

If you haven't had a decision about other interviews you've been to, you should still inform these employers that you have accepted another job.



Accepting a job offer

Most employers phone the successful candidate initially to offer them the job, followed up by an offer in writing.

Don't feel pressured into accepting straight away. Thank the employer and say that you are definitely interested and would like to read the full offer and that you'll let them know as soon as possible.

If you decide that you want to accept the job offer, call the employer to let them know and follow this up with an email or letter. You can use the examples from [8: Writing a cover letter](#) to see how to format the email or letter.

You will also need to sign a contract. This is usually with the offer you get in writing, but you can always check with the employer.

Declining a job offer

If you decide you don't want to accept the job offer, you need to tell the employer. You could phone them or send an email.

Either way, thank them for the job offer and then explain why you're not accepting. It could be that:

- you've had another job offer you prefer
- it will be too costly to commute
- you would prefer a job that offers more training.

If you're thinking that the employer will be unhappy if you decline the offer, don't worry – whilst the employer may be disappointed, they would rather you make the right decision at that point, instead of you starting the job and then leaving soon after.



Handing in your notice



Once you have a formal job offer in writing and you've accepted, you'll need to let your current employer know.

You would usually speak to your manager first to let them know that you have a new job and to discuss what your notice period is (it could be 1 week or 1 month, depending on your job). Try to let them know as soon as you are able.

Depending on the company's policy, you may have to submit your resignation formally in writing after this. This can be done by email or letter. You should use the same format as you would for other emails or letters. (You can check out [8: Writing a cover letter](#) on how to write letters and emails).

Even if it is not the employer's policy, it is good practice to send a letter. It gives you the chance to outline the reasons why you want to leave and how much you may have enjoyed or appreciated working for the company. As well as leaving things on a professional note and keeping good relations (should you ever wish to return there in the future) it is also useful for the employer's records.



TIPS



- Aim to make your decision and inform the employer within 24-48 hours.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions before accepting the offer.
- Always get the job offer in writing.
- Don't hand in your notice before you have a written job offer and have signed a contract.

Starting a job

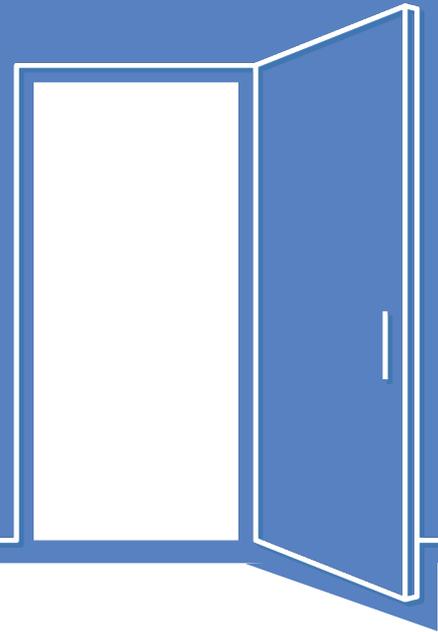
Starting a new job is always a bit nerve-wracking, especially if it's your first full time job.

Will you like the people? Will they like you? What should you wear? What if you make a mistake? With all of this going through your mind it would be a miracle if you weren't nervous.

Fortunately, everyone who has started a new job knows exactly how it feels. So, your fellow workers will be trying their best to make you feel welcome.

What can you do to make the move into your new job a bit less daunting?

Here are a few ideas to help you get ready for work.



1. Get Prepared

What to do before you go?



- Try to get an early night, even though you may be too excited to get much sleep.
- Get your clothes, and everything you need to take with you, ready the night before.
- Set at least one alarm clock.
- Try to eat breakfast – it might be a while before your first break.

What will you wear?



- This depends on the job and the company.
- Clean, smart and appropriate is best.
- Some larger companies and organisations have a 'dress code' – ask if they have one.
- If you need to wear a uniform your employer will tell you in advance, and usually supply it – if in any doubt just ask.
- You may need to wear protective clothing or footwear, especially on building sites or in workshops – check with the employer whether or not they'll supply these or if you need to buy them.

How will you get there?



- Check bus or train times in advance (going and coming back).
- Set off early just in case of unexpected delays.
- Have a back-up plan in case the bus or train doesn't show up on time.
- If you're driving, have a practice run before you start, and allow time for rush hour traffic.
- Do everything in your power not to be late, but if you are ever a victim of 'circumstances beyond your control' (accident, emergency, train strike) phone, apologise and explain.

What do you need to take with you?



- A method of paying for transport and lunch.
- Starting letter (take the letter offering you the job and telling you who to report to).
- Lunch (take something to eat and drink, unless you know you'll be able to buy lunch at or near work).
- Work clothes and tools (if you need things like work boots, overalls or tools the employer will usually tell you in advance, but if in any doubt ask the employer before you start).

What should you do when you arrive?



- If you arrive too early, then try and go somewhere to wait until nearer the time, like a nearby cafe or shop. The person you are reporting to may not be prepared for you yet. Reporting at the agreed time gives a positive first impression.
- Ask for the person you've been told to report to.
- Smile and try to relax.
- Listen carefully and watch what's going on.

How can you make a good impression?



- Concentrate, listen and be prepared to learn.
- Work hard.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Be polite and friendly.
- Be on time.
- Don't get involved in gossip.
- Keep your sense of humour.

2. Coping Mechanisms

What if you don't understand what they want you to do?



- Ask them to explain it again.
- Keep asking questions until you're clear about what to do.

What if you make a mistake?



- This is bound to happen at some point, so don't panic. Everyone makes mistakes, especially when they're nervous.
- Own up, ask how you should have done it and do the task again.

What if I can't remember people's names or instructions?



- Have a notepad to hand and write things down – there's a lot to remember in a new job.

What if you feel you've made the biggest mistake of your life?



- It's easy to feel overwhelmed on your first day – there's so much to remember and learn, so try not to panic.
- When you get home and have the chance to talk about things you'll soon put things into perspective.
- Fitting in takes time – you won't get the real feel of the place and the people on the first day, or even the first week – don't expect too much too soon.

In Step 5 you'll cover in more detail other aspects of working life, such as understanding your payslip and knowing your employment rights.



Activity 1: Your thoughts and experiences

Have a look at the [Activity 1 worksheet](#) and answer the question most relevant to you.

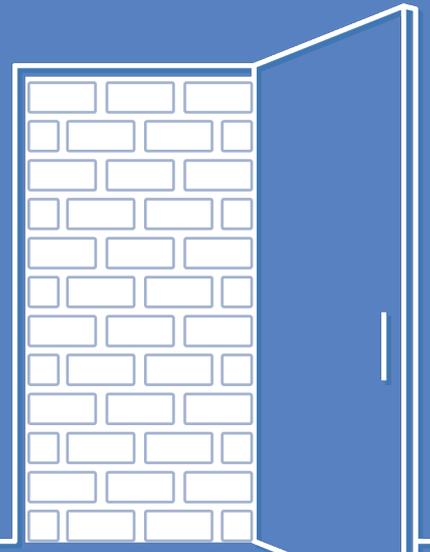
Not getting the job

Rejection after an interview

Getting a rejection letter, phone call or email is disappointing and you'll no doubt feel downhearted. You might have felt that the interview went well, so thought you had a good chance of getting the job.

However, you need to remember that there are many different factors involved when an employer chooses a successful candidate and there may have been nothing more you could have done.

How you deal with a rejection is what really matters. It can be a chance to learn and reflect.



Initially, it's important to try not to take the rejection too personally.

Competition for jobs can be tough and even though you didn't get the job on this occasion, remember that you did make it to the last few candidates, so you have got potential.

Here are a few tips to help you to keep your self-esteem intact and prepare for success in your next application.

1. Coping with rejection

- It's natural to feel hurt and upset.
- It's easy to feel it's all your fault and that you ought to have done better.
- It's also easy to blame everyone but yourself.
- Share your feelings: talk to your family and friends; give them the chance to boost your confidence by telling you how great you really are.
- Don't beat yourself up about anything you did wrong.

Take time to remind yourself of all the positive things going on in your life and all the great things you have to offer.

2. Reality check

Be as honest as you can with yourself. We all have our off days.

INTERVIEW PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST

Did you do enough preparation?

- Did you do enough research on the employer?
- Did you prepare for questions that could be asked to the best of your ability?
- Were there questions that took you by surprise?
- Did you make a note after the interview of the questions that caught you out?

Did you give the best impression of yourself?

- Could you have been more enthusiastic when talking about yourself, or the job?
- Did you turn out as smartly dressed as you could have been?
- Were you punctual and did you come across as organised?

If you really feel you performed well in the interview, ask the employer for some feedback.

3. Learning from the experience

If you decide to contact the interviewer after an unsuccessful job interview, do remember to:

- be calm and objective
- thank them for letting you know the outcome of your application
- ask if they'd mind giving you a bit of feedback to help you to make a better impression in the future
- listen to what they have to say.

You will either:

- get some constructive criticism which will help you with your next job application; or
- get confirmation that you were a really good candidate, but this time, not right for the job.

This is really valuable information that can help you reflect and prepare for the next time.

Rejection during the application stage



Getting a rejection at any stage in the application process is disappointing.

You've invested time and energy into perfecting your CV or application form and you might feel that it was wasted. However, remember that competition for jobs can be tough and there could have been 50 applicants or more!

Follow the previous tips and consider if you:

- displayed enough knowledge about the company and what they do in your cover letter or application
- could have done any better matching your skills, strengths and qualities to what was required for the job
- made sure there were no mistakes in your CV or application form.



You can still ask an employer for feedback at this stage.

They may be able to give you some helpful advice about your CV or application and why you didn't get any further.

Just remember that there is always something to learn from getting knocked back.



VIDEO TIPS!

Watch this video to hear lots of advice and encouragement from someone who didn't get the job they applied for.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TvtFdDs03k&ab_channel=SoniaNicolson



Your next move

If this isn't your first rejection, maybe this is a good time to get some feedback on your CV, or brush up on your interview skills, so go and see your career adviser.

You could sign up with different recruitment agencies and speak to your network of people that you identified in [3: Where to find job opportunities](#).

You could consider getting some experience (paid or voluntary). At the very least it could help you to feel good about yourself because you're doing something for other people. And it could help you move closer to your target career.

And don't give up – keep trying.



Activity 2: Dealing with rejection

Have a look at the [Activity 2 worksheet](#) and answer the question most relevant to you.

Now that you have learned about how to deal with a job offer or rejection, you could look into

[16: Volunteering](#)

Or [click here](#) to return to the main screen.