

Playing Fair: Your Rights and Responsibilities As a Job Seeker

by the NACE Principles for Professional Conduct Committee

What you can expect from employers

1. Confidentiality

Employers are expected to maintain the confidentiality of student information, regardless of the source, including personal knowledge, written records/reports, and computer data bases. An employer shouldn't disclose information about you to another organization without your prior written consent, unless necessitated by health or safety considerations.

2. Accurate information

Employers are expected to provide accurate information about their organizations and employment opportunities. This includes, but is not limited to, positions available, responsibilities, career advancement opportunities, and benefits.

3. Freedom from undue pressure

Employers are expected to provide you with a reasonable amount of time to make a decision about accepting an employment offer. What is considered "reasonable"? The answer will vary, given industry standards, a student's prior experience with the employer, offer timing, and how close it is to your graduation date/start time. It is reasonable to request—and receive—additional time to complete other scheduled interviews, so you can make the best decisions for your career and for your future employer.

Employers also are expected to provide you with a reasonable process for making your decision. (An example of an unreasonable process is one in which the student is told the offer is good for a set amount of time; however, the same offer has been made to others, and the student who accepts first gets the job.)

It also is improper for employers to pressure you to revoke your acceptance of another job offer.

4. Timely communication

Employers are expected to inform you of your status in the hiring process and communicate hiring decisions within the agreed-upon time frame.

5. Fair treatment

If an employer is required by changing conditions to revoke a job offer that you've accepted, you're entitled to a fair and equitable course of action. That can include, but is not limited to, financial assistance and outplacement service. NACE's Principles Committee encourages employers to:

- Reimburse candidates for expenses incurred in their acceptance of employment, such as travel and relocation expenses;
- Provide candidates with short-term financial assistance; and
- Provide services to aid candidates in securing other employment.

6. Testing information

Employers should inform you in advance of any testing, the purpose of the tests, and their policies regarding disclosure of test results.

7. Nondiscrimination

Employers are expected to avoid discrimination in their recruitment activities and to follow equal employment opportunity and affirmative action principles.

What's your part?

1. Provide accurate information about your academic work and records, including courses taken, grades, positions held, and duties performed.

You can, however, refuse to provide an employer with specific information about any job offers you may have received from others. You don't have to name the organizations that have made you offers, nor do you have to provide specific information about what salaries you've discussed with those organizations. Instead, you can give broad responses to such questions, naming types of employers—"I've interviewed with employers in the retail industry"—and offering salary ranges rather than specific dollar amounts—"The salary offers I've received have been in the \$35,000 to \$40,000 range." Incidentally, it's in your best interest to research salaries and to let employers know that you have done so

2. Interview genuinely.

Interview only with employers you're sincerely interested in working for and whose eligibility requirements you meet. "Practice" interviewing is misleading to employers—wasting both their time and money—and prevents sincerely interested candidates from using those interview slots.

3. Adhere to schedules.

Appear for all interviews, on campus and elsewhere, unless unforeseeable events prevent you from doing so. And, if you can't make the interview because of an unexpected event, notify your career center or the employer at the earliest possible moment.

4. Don't keep employers hanging.

Communicate your acceptance or refusal of a job offer to employers as promptly as possible, so they can notify other candidates that the position is filled or that they are still being considered.

5. Accept a job offer in good faith.

When you accept an offer, you should have every intention of honoring that commitment. Accepting an offer only as a precautionary measure is misleading to the employer and may restrict opportunities for others who are genuinely interested in that employer.

6. Withdraw from recruiting when your job search is completed.

If you accept an offer or decide that full-time graduate or professional studies are for you, notify your career center and withdraw from the on-campus recruiting process immediately. And, inform employers that are actively considering you for a job that you are out of the running.

By doing so, you'll help your friends who are trying to get on interview schedules or who are being considered for positions.

7. Claim fair reimbursement.

If an employer has agreed to reimburse you for expenses you incur during its recruitment process, your request should be only for reasonable and legitimate expenses.

8. Obtain the career information you need to make an informed choice about your future.

It's up to you to look into career opportunities and the organizations that offer them, as well as acquire any other relevant information that might influence your decision about an employer.

9. Any information you post on the web is considered public information, including your personal web site, a blog, or personal information posted on a social networking site.

Of course, any public information could be used to evaluate your suitability for employment. It's best to review a site's privacy policy before publishing any personal information. Make sure you know who will have access to your information (and under what circumstances) and whether you can remove information or photos at a later date.