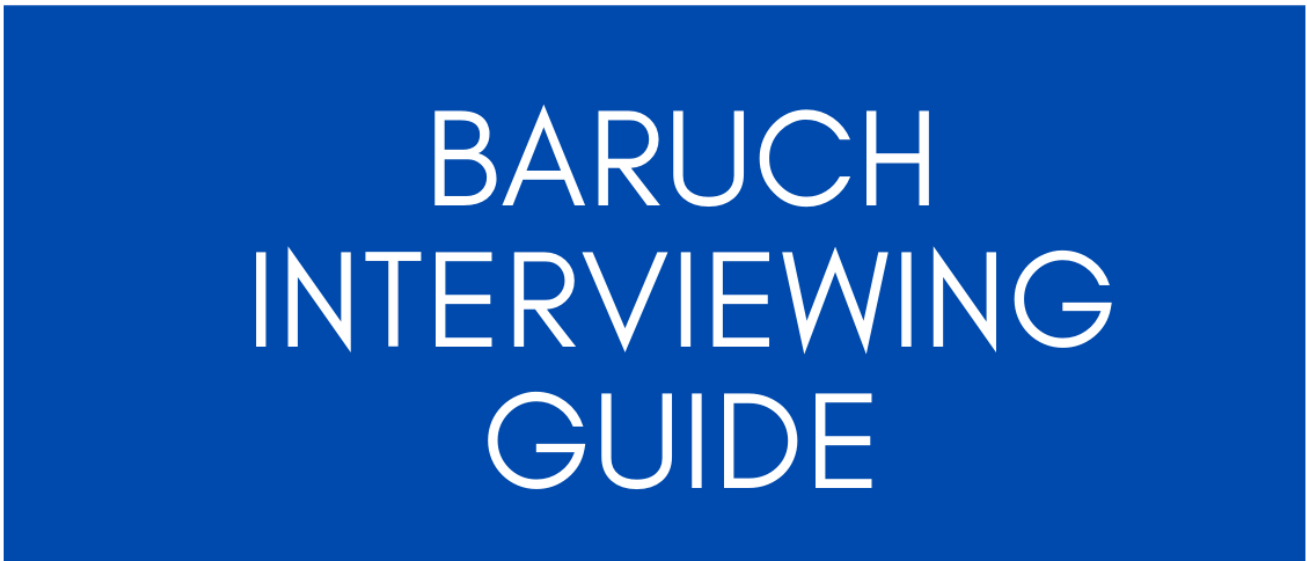




INTERVIEWING, RECRUITING, AND
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TIPS



BARUCH INTERVIEWING GUIDE

BY
STARR CAREER DEVELOPMENT
CENTER

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Do Your Research

It is important to do your research about the company that you want to interview. A question concerning your interest in the company is very likely to come up, but it is not guaranteed to be asked by the interviewer. Sprinkle in relevant company information into your interview answers, which will demonstrate your interest in the company and your initiative to learn more about them.

Some great resources for company research include Vault, Glassdoor, and LinkedIn, among others. Below are examples of areas to research and questions you can use as guidelines to assess the company before attending the interview:

- What is the mission/goal of the company?
- What major events are going on in the industry? Any major company events/leadership changes?
- What is the business model? How does the organization make its money?
- What products/services does the company offer? Have you used them? What do you like about it?
- Are there any diversity programs or initiatives supported in the company?

Writing a Professional Email

With this new transition toward digital/virtual interviews and remote jobs, it is important to have good email etiquette. We expect employers to move towards a more virtual platform on a permanent basis (as this is how most people communicate now). Below is a recommended format to follow when you send emails.

Tips to keep in mind: use professional vocabulary, utilize spacing, make sure your spelling and grammar are correct and include a proper signature.

Things to avoid: informal greetings such as “hey” or “yo,” addressing individuals you have not met by first name only (use a proper title + last name), casual speak seen in texting, etc.

Are you a college student? Make a signature template. You can change/add/remove things as you need:

Sincerely,	
John S. Smith	← Full name
B.S. in Public Affairs	← Major
Baruch College, CUNY	← College
C: (917) 111-1111	← Contact Information

Do you have a company email now? Here is an example:

Best Wishes,	
Jane A. Bookworm	← Full Name
Investment Banking Analyst	← Position Title/Role
Bank of Banks	← Company Name
Fake Street, Floor 8	← Company Location/HQ
New York, NY 12121	
C: (917) 111-1111	← Company Contact Info
www.bankofbanks.com	← Company Website

Check with your supervisor for the appropriate signature format. Depends on your company’s guidelines, you may add a company logo and additional information such as the confidentiality notice at the bottom.

Recommended Business Attire

Dress for success, but keep in mind that some interviews may not require formal attire. A good rule of thumb is to wear **business formal** attire for an interview (e.g., a blazer and dress shirt paired with pant or skirt suit; tie; dress with a blazer), but you can *ask* the recruiter about the dress code. It is recommended that you dress in a *solid dark or neutral colors* and avoid bright or “unique” colors - for instance, a dark blue suit, a tie, white shirt, brown belt, and brown shoes. **Business casual** attire (e.g., blouse or button-down shirt with pants or skirt, dress in sweater) is appropriate for everyday working at most organizations but not quite formal enough for interviewing at many organizations in the business world.

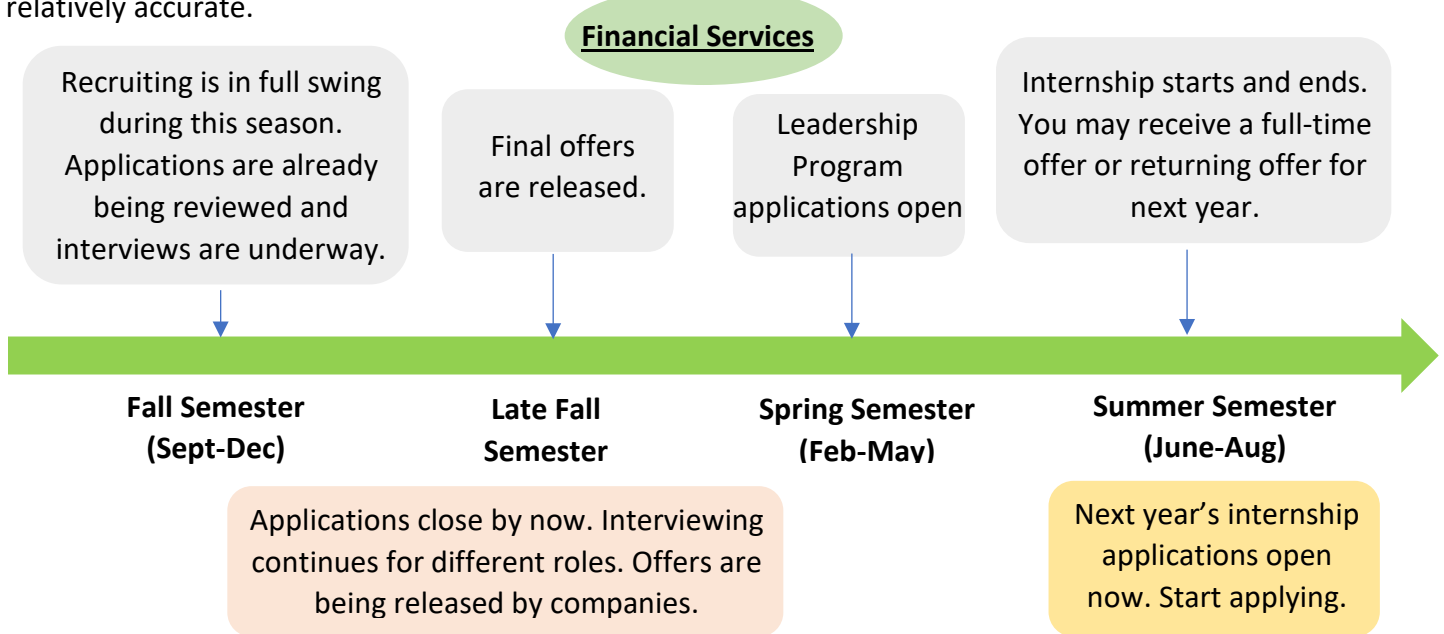
It is also essential to practice good hygiene and make yourself presentable. Clean your hair and nails, wear little to no perfume and wear modest accessories.



Industry Recruiting Timelines

It is important to be aware that most large companies, especially in finance, tech, accounting, and consulting, have specific recruiting periods. Generally, they follow a similar recruiting timeline for internship roles, so this will be useful in understanding when you should begin scouting for positions.

Keep in mind that each company has its own timeline. This is simply a reminder of the time of year when industries are most likely to be active. It can change depending on various factors, but historically, these are relatively accurate.



Financial Services

Internships: Applications *open in June* for roles in the following year—for next summer. Deadlines are usually by January. Highly recommended to apply very early. Interviews begin around early January—March, or earlier if on a rolling basis.

Full-Time: Interns receive full-time offers. Or apply depending on company needs.

Accounting

Internships: Applications *open in Aug-Sept* for the following-year *summer AND winter* roles. Deadlines in mid-September—early October. Interviews occur September—November. Offers roll out by Oct—Dec

Full-Time: Applications/Deadlines will vary based on needs

Technology

Internships: Applications generally *open in the Summer-Fall* season. Deadlines are in November—January for summer internship roles for the following year. Interviews begin around early January—March, or earlier if on a rolling basis.

Full-Time: Applications/Deadlines will vary based on needs of the company. Check their career website.

Consulting

Internships: Applications generally *open in the Fall* semester. Deadlines are in November—January for summer internship roles for the following year. Interviews begin around early January—March, or earlier if on a rolling basis.

Full-Time: Applications/Deadlines will vary based on needs

Most other industries (marketing, non-profit, healthcare, education, creative fields, etc.) hire on a rolling basis. You might inquire with specific companies to learn more about their timelines by attending information sessions or career fairs, networking, or reaching out directly to employers.

Elevator Pitch or Personal Pitch

It is important to have a good elevator pitch (also called the personal pitch) that lasts around 30 seconds. You do not want to be talking for a long time, so keep it brief. Stick to these key points below. And do not forget to tailor it to your environment (ex: career fair, coffee chat, meeting someone accidentally). It will have a different tone/subject depending on how you meet the individual.

Here is an example of an elevator pitch format. This would be suitable for the ***Starr Career Fairs***, networking events, or forums where you meet with recruiters:

Explain why you picked your major/background what [field/industry] are you interested in	}	30 seconds
Describe your work experience and leadership roles on campus OR highlight transferrable skills relative to the role		
Explain why you are interested in the company		
Explain how/why you are the ideal candidate for the role—look at the job description		
Ask an inquisitive question regarding company/role/application		

Here are two examples:

My name is Jennifer, and I am a junior at Baruch College. My major is corporate communications with a minor in marketing. I'm eager to break into media and entertainment because of my strong passion for creativity and artistic expression. I also believe that my work experience as a student leader and digital marketing intern lend me the necessary skills to contribute to [company]. I saw that [company] took great initiative to expand their diversity programs, which drew me to the company.

My name is Brian. I am a senior at Baruch College, completing my bachelor's degree in Public Affairs. I have always been interested in politics and community development. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to intern with a state senator last year and learned how to engage with local residences on many important issues. This experience validated my interest in pursuing a career in government. I am excited to explore the opportunity to work with legislators on policy development. What are examples of initiatives that the legislative aid worked on this the past?

Below is an area where you can write your own pitch. Bring this sheet with you when you have an appointment with the Starr advisors so you can work on your pitch.

Interview Question Bank

Here is a compilation of potential interview questions you may encounter during your interviews. These range from behavioral to technical. Remember to do specific research pertaining to your industry as they each have specific core topics that they are likely to ask for the position. You can find them on websites like Glassdoor.

Each question is looking for a particular answer. Make sure to identify the reasoning behind why the interviewer is asking it. They are looking for a specific skill.

SITUATIONAL

- You noticed a mistake in your project. If you want to fix it, you will miss the deadline. What do you do?
- What would you do if you were tasked with leading a project where you have no experience in?
- What do you do when you have problems with your direct manager/supervisor/coworker?
- What do you do when your team resists your idea for a project that could potentially resolve the issue?
- What do you do when a coworker is performing below average on a team project?
- Tell me a time when you worked effectively under pressure.
- Have you ever faced a challenge with a specific team member? How did you handle it?
- What do you do when you have a deadline in 4 days, but you need key information from a coworker/client who is unresponsive?
- How would you prioritize multiple projects?
- You have a supervisor/coworker who is violating company policy. What do you do?

COMPANY SPECIFIC

- Why [this company]?
- Why [this division/team]?
- Why [this role]?
- What are your greatest strengths?
- Can you describe your weaknesses?
- Tell me about yourself.
- Walk me through your resume... I noticed you wrote [thing] on your resume. What happened?
- How would you describe [company] to a friend?
- How will you contribute to our [team/company]?

BEHAVIORAL

- Tell me a time when you were creative in solving a problem.
- Tell me a moment when you made a mistake and failed at something.
- Describe a time when you were a leader.
- Why should we hire you?
- How have you leveraged data to develop a strategy/solve a problem?
- Tell me a time when you were on a team that was not working well together.
- What mistakes have you made in previous work experiences? And how did you deal with it?
- Tell me a moment where you were given a task with little to no instruction. What did you do?
- Name a time when you handled a difficult client.
- Tell me a moment when you went above and beyond for work.

FINANCE/INVESTMENT BANKING

- How are the three financial statements linked?
- What is a DCF and how do you calculate it?
- What is net debt and why is it used when a company is valued?
- According to CAPM, does the marketplace compensate for systematic or specific risk?
- What is WACC? And describe its components.
- What industry/product groups do you follow?
- What is going on in the market right now and why are you interested in it?
- Which firm has a higher P/E, an all equity firm or an all debt firm?
- Walk me through an LBO analysis.
- Pitch a stock to me. Why should I invest in it?
- Walk me through an income statement.
- What do you look at when using leverage?

BRAIN-TEASERS/ESTIMATION

- How many windows are on the Empire State Building?
- How many people own cars in Los Angeles?
- How many water bottles would it take to fill a football field?
- What is the electronics market in South Korea?

MARKETING/CREATIVE

- What do you think of our current social media presence? What would you improve?
- If we conducted a client survey and the vast majority of clients said they don't use social media, would you recommend we keep investing in our social media channels?
- Tell me about a marketing trend that's caught your eye. What about it interests you?
- How would you manage the launch of a new product or service?
- What research techniques do you use to identify potential customers for a new product or service?
- Can you describe who is our target market?
- How would you handle marketing our product?
- How would you respond to a negative review or comment from a customer?

NON-PROFIT

- Describe your passion for our mission and how you might help the organization reach its goals.
- How would you go about recruiting and maintaining volunteers?
- What do you think of our fundraising strategy?
- What do you think are the greatest challenges facing our cause today?
- Is there any demographic you are especially comfortable working with? Least comfortable?

CONSULTING

- Client A wants to enter the whiskey market; how should they go about doing so?
- Client Z is deciding how best to enter a new market. They have a choice of buying an existing company or developing the technology in-house. How would you think about advising them to make the best decision?
- Atlantis is a country in South America and the government has reached out to our firm because they want to make major developments in the quality and quantity of education in 15 years. They have a free-market economy, however they recently transitioned to a democratic republic after decades of communism. What are the issues you would want to investigate in diagnosing the condition of the current school system in Atlantis?

*You must ask the interviewer clarifying questions. These are intentionally vague—similar to the estimation question. You may also receive situation descriptions and client goals in which you would have to identify a solution to a problem. There are typically multiple questions within a case study interview.

HEALTHCARE/SCIENCE

- How do you stay informed about current healthcare advancements?
- Where do you see the future of healthcare going?
- Imagine you need to communicate bad news to a patient concerning their health. How do you go about it?
- What kind of experience do you have collecting and analyzing biological data?
- Describe a time when you successfully used scientific rules or methods to solve a problem at work.
- You are working with a patient who you discover did not disclose important information. How do you manage the situation?

CASE INTERVIEW

- Your niece runs a lemonade stand. Yesterday she was open from 10:00-2:00 and sold 2 cups. What should she do differently tomorrow?
- What would be your approach for introducing a product into a foreign market? What are the risks and benefits to consider?
- XYZ Firm is considering purchasing a competitor's company. Would this be a wise decision for XYZ Firm?
- How would you redesign the Chase mobile app to make it more user-friendly?
- A company that produces various flavors of soda has found that it is operating at a loss despite high revenue. What are the possible reasons for this situation?

"WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR ME?"

- What are some favorite moments/challenges that you've faced working in [company]?
- Can you tell me how your career has developed at the organization?
- I read on your website that [insert company news]. Could you tell me more about how this has impacted your work?
- What qualities do you notice amongst your most successful interns?
- What do you enjoy most about working here?
- Can you tell me about your career path?
- If I were to be hired, what can I do to prepare/review/learn before I start?
- How would you describe promotional/growth opportunities at [company]?
- How would you best prepare for entering this industry?
- How is performance measured/evaluated in this role? How is feedback given?
- What does your typical workday look like?
- How do you see X industry changing within the future?
- How have you grown professionally/personally since you've started at X company?
- How does your company approach a work/life balance?
- What kind of interesting/difficult projects have you worked on?
- What gaps do you see in the company culture?
- How is the onboarding/training process at your [company]?
- Is there anything you wish you knew beforehand about your position prior to you starting it?
- What particular skills or talents are most essential to be effective in [role]?
- Can you share more about the day-to-day responsibilities of this position? What is a typical day like?
- What are things/issues that most new employees struggle with the most?
- Do you have any recommendations or tips for someone who is starting out their career?
- What could I do to make a strong impact within the first 30-60 days?
- Is there something that you look forward to when you go to work?

Types of Interviews

Depending on the company, interviews can be conducted differently. It is important to be aware of the types of interviews that you can encounter in the workforce. Below is a brief list:

- Group Interviews
- Superday
- Luncheon Interviews
- Panel Interviews
- Back-to-Back Interviews
- Phone Interview
- Video Interview
- HireVue Interview
- Take-Home Assignment
- Case Interviews

You need to change your approach and improve different skills based on how the interview is structured.

HireVue/Phone/Video Interview: A mix of behavioral and situational questions to assess your fit with the company. They are usually conducted by recruiters. Dressing professionally is highly recommended for video and HireVue interviews.

Case interview: Whereas traditional interviews seek to understand a candidate's past experiences, a case interview presents a candidate with a scenario to assess how they approach a problem (analytical and problem-solving skills), how they engage with people (communication and interpersonal skills), and what they know about the business. Usually, you will receive a description of a situation and several questions that you need to answer. The most important thing that recruiters are looking for is your ability to ask questions and to think through your solution. This means you need to communicate your entire process and ask the recruiter questions because the prompt will be deliberately vague. Conducted by employees on the team or individuals with experience. Dress professionally. For more information, consult the case interview guide in Vault.

Take-Home Assignment: You will receive a prompt or case problem in which you will need to solve under a certain period; depending on the role, it is recommended to save a portfolio of work that you can use to showcase your skills and knowledge.

Group Interview: You will be invited to an interview with 2-4 other candidates where there are 1-2 interviewers who will ask a series of behavioral and situational questions. In these interviews, it is important to be aware of your ability to communicate in a group setting. Do not excessively dominate questions and do not interrupt others.

Super Day: This is a 2-day event where you will have to visit the office on-site and undergo a series of interviews to assess your candidacy. Before the Super Day, there is usually a networking event where you will have the opportunity to mingle and network with other candidates or recruiters/employees at the company. The networking event is held the night before the interviews or during the morning of the interviews. Finally, you will have 3 back-to-back interviews, usually 45 minutes each. Throughout this event, you must be aware of your ability to communicate with employees and candidates and to endure several hours of interviewing and networking.

Panel Interview: This interview has a panel of interviewers, usually with recruiters and members on the team which you're applying for. You may have 2-3 interviewers who may ask you a range of behavioral to technical questions. It is important to study your technical skills or research about the specific team because it is more likely that they will ask you questions directly related to the role. Also, you want to use this opportunity to illustrate your fit with the team, so try to be someone who they would like to work with for a long time.

Luncheon Interview: This is more of a casual conversation than an interview because you will be eating lunch with the team or relevant employees. Eat food that is easy to eat so that you can focus on your conversation, do not drink alcohol, and have some basic table manners. You must be an active listener. Overall, the purpose of this interview is to assess your fit with the team and your personality.

Networking

This is one of the best ways to find a job or internship. If you grow your connection and successfully network, you will be able to find new opportunities from your connections. Also, keep in mind that a referral from an employee in the company you want to work for can be a great advantage because it will give your application a greater likelihood of serious consideration by the recruiter. **However**, this does not mean that you should bluntly ask for a referral when you first meet a new networking contact. You need to develop *rapport* and build a meaningful connection with them. Find a common interest or demonstrate your curiosity about their experiences. LinkedIn is an online networking site that serves as a great resource to discover new and old connections. Build a great LinkedIn profile by attending a Starr workshop!

Another good way to connect with professionals is to conduct informational interviews. An informational interview is **not** a career counseling session. The networking contact may offer you suggestions or give their opinion about your path or plan, but you should enter this meeting being able to clearly articulate your path and interests in a simple, coherent, clear fashion. If you may have a couple of avenues that you want to pursue, you need to be clear about who the networking contact is, what he/she does and how they may be of help to you so that your communications about your plans make sense to how they may assist you.

Networking is always a two-way street, and you need to approach it as such. If you are always approaching someone with “I need,” “Can you help me with,” “Could you please,” etc., your networking contacts are going to become burned out and eventually tire of helping someone who they feel is only out for themselves. So, make sure you learn how to build solid reciprocal professional relationships.

You want to communicate a genuine interest in building a substantial network of professionals from a variety of experiences within the field. At the end of the meeting, ask if they have other suggestions to connect with to further your knowledge. This is a great way to expand your network in a meaningful way. An informational interview is a very critical part of the job search process, but the meeting in and of itself is not what is important. What is important is that you are clear about who you are and that you approach the meeting as a person who is interested in and passionate about the field you’re in or planning to pursue and wants to build with others within that field.

Avoiding Job Scams

Sadly, there are email and job scams out there, so it is important to be vigilant and discerning in your job search. If a job opportunity seems too good to be true, it probably is; if you are invited to interview by a recruiter with an unclear identity who wants to communicate only by text, be suspicious.

Some red flags include: a request to send money as part of the application process; unprofessional emails from a recruiter (poor grammar, punctuation errors); a recruiter’s email address that does not seem to match the place they say they work for; and opportunities that prioritize urgency over qualifications (e.g. a request to start right away, no questions asked.) For more guidance on avoiding job scams, see the Starr website at <https://studentaffairs.baruch.cuny.edu/starr-career-development-center/>.

Before The Interview

You should always prepare ahead of time for your interview. Practice behavioral and technical questions that you expect to be asked during the interview. You can gauge potential interview questions by researching online resources, like Glassdoor.

Make sure your appearance is professional and clean. For virtual interviews, make sure that your background is clean and uncluttered. Have confidence in your abilities and understand the key qualities that you want interviewers to take away from your interactions. Identify the characteristics and skills that make you a great candidate and craft strong stories that showcase it. Do power poses.

Most importantly, be early to your interview and be friendly to all the employees that you interact with, like the receptionists or administrative employees. For virtual interviews, ensure that you capitalize your first and last name when you join. They could impart some positive or negative observations about you to recruiters.

During The Interview

Greet your interviewer with a smile and a firm handshake. Try to strike a light conversation before the interview begins. Also, it is important to maintain good body language and exude positive vibes because nonverbal cues contribute to a good first impression.

Show enthusiasm and personality throughout your interview. You want to show that you are an individual that they would want to work with on a long-term basis. Do not be robotic or monotonous. Try to build a good rapport with the interviewer and make a strong impression on them.

After The Interview

Once your interview is finished, the recruiter or interviewer will ask you, “Do you have any questions for me?”

This is the perfect opportunity for you to prepare good and engaging questions to ask. You can show your knowledge, preparation, and avid interest in the company by asking relevant and good questions. Always have a list of 2-4 questions to ask after the interview. Here, you can ask if you could take notes on a piece of paper while they answer your questions.

However, there are topics that you should avoid. Once you enter the interviewing phase, you should *not* ask or inquire about the salary or benefits. Avoid questions regarding compensation during the first, second, and final round interviews. Those questions will be initiated by HR if you receive an acceptance offer. It is also recommended that you avoid asking overtly negative questions about the company.

Post-Interview Tips

We highly recommend that you write a thank-you letter after the interview. This is a good way to reiterate your interest and to sincerely thank them for their time. You can also use this as an opportunity to connect with the interviewer and leave a lasting, positive impression on them.

As mentioned earlier, if you took notes from the interview—then you can include those topics into your thank-you letter to make it more personalized. It is a good rule of thumb to add information about yourself and the interview to remind them of who you were. You can get advice on writing thank-you letters from the Starr center advisors and mentors. There are examples listed in the Baruch Resume and Cover letter Guide as well.

Negotiate Your Salary

In some new grad roles, you may not be able to negotiate your salary because the industry standard has a fixed amount. However, if it's possible to negotiate your salary, then you need to identify your value and contribution to the company while researching accurate salary ranges based on factors like industry, position, and location. Also, consider aspects of a compensation package other than salary that you might negotiate if the salary is immovable – e.g., do you value flexible working hours? Vacation/personal time? Tuition reimbursement?

Firstly, allow the company to bring up the issue of negotiation first, preferably at the offer stage. If you are asked about compensation needs prior to the offer stage, you might respond in one of these three ways:

- “Whatever is fair and equitable based on the requirements and responsibilities of the position and what I bring to the position.”
- “I would like to talk more about the opportunity, company, and myself. Could we discuss the compensation at a later time, as the opportunity as a whole is most important to me?”
- “I am negotiable.”

If you are being pressed about the compensation and salary:

- Describe the range you would like based on the research you conducted about the company, position, and industry standards.

You should never accept an offer extended on the spot. Negotiating occurs after the offer has been formally extended. However, what should you think about before negotiating takes place?

- What would you realistically accept? Is there a certain limit that would prompt you to walk away?
- Understand your values and priorities. Develop a script.

During the negotiation

- Maintain eye-contact, smile, have a firm handshake.
- Be confident and stick to your top priorities.
- Avoid explicit salary statements.
 - Ex: “I realize that every company is different; however, my review of data for compensation on market researchers at area companies employing more than 500 employees suggests that the average compensation for someone with my level of education and work history is about 10% higher than what you’ve offered, & an upper end about 20% higher. I know you want to get the best talent for this opportunity...”
- Start your statements with the following:
 - I appreciate your thinking here...
 - Thank you for taking the time to walk through this with me...
 - I can understand how important this is to the company...
 - I am excited to chat about this with you...
- Stress your value to the organization.
 - Measure it based on your skills, work experience, education, and passion.
- Is there tension and unwillingness to back down? Back off and be amenable on certain points.