3 Salary Stats to Know Before the Second Interview Published
by: Cathryn Vandewater

You aced the first interview, and now you’re pressing your suit for a second. The prospects are looking good—you have a feeling you might get an offer. But before you get too excited, make sure you know what you will (and won’t) accept salary-wise—before you’re in the room.

Why? Because you might very well be asked to name your price. Budget is a big factor in hiring these days, and you need to be careful when about choosing your number: too high, and you may remove yourself from the running; too low, and the interviewers might start to wonder why you’re undervaluing yourself (and if they take you up on it, you could lose out on thousands of dollars over the years).

Thus, it’s best to learn as much as possible about the workload, benefits, and advancement potential of the position before answering—and to factor that in when calculating the following three figures:

1. The Average Pay for the Position
This is a necessity for orienting yourself in the current market and grounding your expectations in cold, hard reality. The average salary for a job title can be obtained from a variety of websites—like (ahem) this one—to the Department of Labor’s online handbook. A general range should give you a loose number to begin playing with—the eventual goal being to factor in your—years of experience and special skills for an ”asking price.”

Remember: your location is a big factor in the wage equation, since cost of living varies from place to place (executive assistants, for example, make nearly double in New York City what those in a small town in middle America do). Be aware of this, especially if you’re relocating, so that you’re able to keep up your standard of living on the new salary.

2. Your Minimum
Now that you have your average pay range, take a look at the numbers on the low end of the spectrum. Make lists of big expenses like rent or mortgage payments down to weekly groceries and regular deposits to a savings account. Considering your budget, what’s the smallest amount you could comfortably maintain your lifestyle on?

Consider too whether non-monetary benefits to a job may be worth adjusting your standards of living for. Would tuition reimbursement for your MBA be worth a pay-cut? What about great health coverage for your family? Maybe work/life flexibility like telecommuting or a shorter workday could be more valuable in the long run than a certain dollar amount.

3. Your Desired Amount
Now the fun part: finding the highest salary you could justifiably ask for. Consider the difference between your average and minimum numbers to approximate. (For example, if your minimum is $80,000 and the average salary
for the position is $90,000, you might consider $95,000-$100,000 a "want" range. As for the justification, write a few bullet points for the value you’d add to the company that makes you worth the big bucks. Be sure to take into account any previous track record for success as well as other offers you’ve received.

Also important to know: would you be willing to accept a higher salary for fewer benefits? What about more hours at the office? Have a clear picture of your boundaries before the meeting so that you won’t make promises you can’t (or won’t want to) keep.

Salary is never an easy or comfortable conversation to have, but being prepared to discuss it takes a lot of the anxiety out of the process. Just keep in mind that knowledge really is power; the more questions you can get answered about the position (its benefits as well as its pitfalls) before putting a number on the table, the more likely you are to suggest and receive a salary that everyone’s satisfied with.

**Upcoming Events**

**Utilizing Your Ag Degree in Other Industries Panel**
March 31, 5:30-7, Kleberg 121

**Exploring Your Options with Your Ag Degree Panel**
April 14, 4-5:30, Location TBA

**Featured Career Center Service**

**SIGI3**

What is SIGI3?
SIGI3 — pronounced “siggy three” and standing for System of Interactive Guidance and Information — is a special tool that can help you to plan your career. It was developed by a team of researchers and specialists at Educational Testing Service (ETS), and recently revised by Valpar International Corporation. SIGI3 is one of the most advanced education and career planning systems available. It combines the unique capabilities of the Internet with thoroughly researched information about occupations, work-related values, interests, personality types, skills, educational programs, and more.

How can a computer decide on a career for me?
It can’t. However, SIGI3 can help you systematically examine your work-related values, interests, personality types, and skills. Once you enter your own preferences, the program searches its occupational database to find those careers that most closely match your preferences. It can save you literally days of leafing through catalogs and career books, and it may well find career options you never knew existed.

What can a computer know about me?
A computer is only a machine. It knows what you tell it; nothing more. That’s why it’s so important for you to think hard and respond honestly to the questions in SIGI3. Even if you are asked a question you’ve never really considered or that you find hard to answer, make the best choice you can. In this way, the career possibilities SIGI3 presents will be as germane as possible.

What does SIGI3 include?
Lots of stuff - occupational information, majors, course lists, surveys, videos, comparisons, analysis tools, links, job finding, and a portfolio to put the important parts in.

Best of all, it contains step-by-step guides for the most common uses of SIGI3, such as finding a major.
**How do I use SIGI3?**
Think of SIGI3 as a bag of tools. Each is useful for something - finding information you want, narrowing the list of majors and occupations appropriate to your desires, or help with ancillary things such as coping with the stresses of college life and resume writing. Each question you have about careers and work can be answered with some collection of these tools (that's where the guides come in).

Tools sitting in a box are not going to accomplish anything. Tools are only effective in the hands of someone who knows how to use them. That someone also needs to have a goal in mind.

SIGI's tools are easy to learn, so it won't take you long to get up to speed. You have to come up with your goal, though, and allocate enough time to reach it using the tools at hand.

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**FAQs - Frequently Asked Questions**

**What are the system requirements?**
- An Internet connection. Dial-up will work but DSL, cable modem, etc., are better.
- Internet Explorer 5.5 or better; Netscape 6.2 or better; Opera; FireFox
- Javascript 1.5 capability

**How long will it take me to use SIGI3?**
That depends on what you want and how much time you are willing to devote to planning your future. You can go through all the sections systematically or only those you think apply to you. A section can take anywhere from a few minutes to half an hour. If you prefer, you can work on just a few sections at a time and then come back for another session. You can set your own pace, and you can stop whenever you want. SIGI3 remembers the results of your activities, so you can pick up where you left off.

**How private are my responses?**
The first time you access SIGI3 you create your personal record by choosing a user ID and password. SIGI3 saves your results in its database and your record can only be accessed using your user ID and password.

**Can I do stuff over?**
Yes. You can use any SIGI3 tool as many times as you like. The new results will replace the old results.

**Can I change a response I’ve made?**
Yes. Click your browser's BACK button, enter your new response, and continue in a normal.

**How can I remember all the information that SIGI3 provides?**
Bookmark it! That will save your favorite occupations and videos so it's easy to get back to them. You can also make printouts of any of the information provided by SIGI3, except the videos, because they don't print.

**How do I get started?**
Your school was provided a link (URL) to SIGI3. It may be on the school web site or you may have to go to the counselor's office. Click the link to start SIGI3. On your first visit, set up your user ID using the NEW MEMBERS frame on the login screen. On subsequent visits to SIGI3, enter your ID and password in the EXISTING MEMBERS frame.
Current postings on HireAggies.com:
Yellowstone National Park Lodges
Wyoming

Position Type: Full Time, Internship
Summer 2011 Positions

Opportunity: Yellowstone National Park Lodges operated by Xanterra Parks and Resorts provides services for the more than three million visitors who come to Yellowstone National Park each year. We are in the guest service business and our job is to help guests experience Yellowstone. Up front, we help guest plan their visits and register them for their rooms, cabins, and campsites. We serve them in dining rooms, cafeterias, and fast food shops. We help them select a souvenir of their stay and experience the park through activities such as interpretive tours, horseback rides, fishing trips, and boat tours. Behind the scenes, we clean hotel rooms and cabins, prepare food, and wash dishes. We have opportunities in a variety of departments for people with all levels of experience and backgrounds, including management positions. Not all of the jobs are glamorous and you will work hard. You will also have the privilege to call Yellowstone "home" for awhile and have ready access to the amazing outdoor recreational opportunities that the Park has to offer including hiking, backpacking, fishing, geyser gazing, wildlife watching, etc. We believe in what we do and every employee contributes to the experience our guests have. Come join our team!

Suffolk County Department of Parks
Suffolk County, New York

Position Type: Internship

Job Title: Endangered Species Program Intern

Opportunity: Suffolk County Department of Parks is currently accepting applications for seasonal openings in its endangered species protection program for the 2011 season. The position involves helping to manage nesting shorebirds (least terns and plovers) at seventeen sites throughout Suffolk County. While this job is anything but a “day at the beach,” the candidates will gain an intimate knowledge of bird behavior and of the unique management issues their presence creates.

SUCCESS IN THE 2010 JOB/INTERNSHIP SEARCH

Name: Kate Bradley
Major: B.S., Agriculture Journalism, ’05
M.S., Agriculture Leadership, Education and Communications, ’10

Company: Western Horseman magazine
Job Title: Assistant Editor

1. Explain what you do:

At Western Horseman, I develop and produce both text and photographs for feature stories relating to the stock horse enthusiast, and I also compile product information for our product preview page. I work closely with our editor to catalog and track story ideas and lay out the editorial calendar. Along with those duties, I handle customer requests, story and photograph submissions by freelancers, and answer correspondence with readers.
2. What were the best and worst parts of the job search process?

The worst part of the job search process is sending out résumés and waiting for an answer. The best part of the job search process, for me, was learning how best to respond to an interviewer. I learned how best to present both my skills and myself in the best light.

3. Do you have any advice for those students who are in the same place you were one or two years ago?

I was very lucky to apply for and obtain the first job I had out of college, in 2005. That was not the case in 2010. I spent a lot of time sending out résumés, going to interviews and following up in a field that was not what suited my skills—teaching. I thought I wanted to take that route. However, the first résumé I sent directed toward my original goal—writing and journalism—was successful, I was hired for the position. Always trust your instincts and do not be afraid to send out a résumé or application for a position that is a bit above what you believe your skills to be. Some of those rejections lead to better opportunities!

4. Did you use the Career Center during your job search or in any way during your time at Texas A&M?

I did use the Career Center’s resources for job searching and picked up materials on interviewing.

Questions?

If you have any questions or comments about your career search as a College of Agriculture & Life Sciences student, please contact us!

Good places to start your job search…


www.usajobs.com  www.agr.state.tx.us  http://greatjobs.tamu.edu