

EY Center for Careers

Preparation for the Full-time Position

Congratulations on your offer and acceptance of a full-time position. The next phase is to prepare for your upcoming full-time position to help ensure your success in terms of fit, challenge, growth, etc. Whether you will be working in public accounting, private industry, government or not-for-profit, the more you know about the upcoming position and expectations, the better prepared you will be to get your career started on a positive note.

1. Multiple Offers

- If you receive more than one offer for a full-time position, unless you are very sure of which offer you want to accept, take the time provided to make the best decision for you. You can utilize the opportunity during the offer phase to do more research and networking to learn as much as you can about each employer.
- Gather your list of key decision factors and compare each offer to your list. Weigh the factors to identify which position seems to match most closely with your key factors.
- Then, check your gut (your feelings) and see if there is alignment with the objective comparison above.
- If you still aren't sure which offer to accept, you are welcome to come to the EY Center to discuss your offers; I will help you weigh your options and you will make the decision.
- With the larger CPA firms, you generally have two weeks to make a decision. With other employers, it will vary. If you feel pressure to make a quick decision, I may be able to help you negotiate the offer process.
- Once you are ready to accept an offer, do so as quickly as possible. Then, inform the other employers that you are declining their offers. Contact the recruiter directly (best by phone), thank them for their interest. Reach out to other professionals with whom you connected during the recruiting process. While this may be uncomfortable, it is important not to burn any bridges as you can foresee the future, and you may cross paths with an employer and professionals at any time during your career.

2. One Offer

- If you receive one offer, and you are ready to accept, do so as quickly as possible. Communicate with and thank everyone at the employer with whom you've connected throughout the recruiting process. It is good to let them know you are excited about the opportunity.
- If you receive an offer, but you are not sure if it is a good decision for you, please come to the EY Center to discuss. We will discuss your career goals and interests and the short and longer-term benefits and potential risks based on your career goals and interests.
- You can take the opportunity during the offer phase to do more research and networking to learn as much as you can about the employer.
- With the larger CPA firms, you generally have two weeks to make a decision. With other employers, it will vary. If you feel pressure to make a quick decision, I may be able to help you negotiate the offer process.
- If you decide to decline the offer, contact the recruiter directly (best by phone), thank them for their interest. Reach out to other professionals with whom you connected during the recruiting process. While this may be uncomfortable, it is important not to

EY Center for Careers

Preparation for the Full-time Position

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3. Differences between the Internship and Full-time Position

During an internship, the employer is typically interested in extending you a full-time offer with the hope and expectation that you will accept. So, while you are assigned work, it may not be as intense and challenging as when you work in a full-time role. Typically, you do not work overtime, except in rare situations. Especially the larger CPA firms will continue the “recruiting process” by adding goodies such as lunches, parties, Disneyland, etc. to further entice you to sign with the firm. The winter internship tends to parallel more closely with the full-time position as there is usually more work and less time for casual networking. However, unless you are working full-time during the winter internship, you will still find the work and hours quite different when you transition to full-time.

When you start full-time, the “goodies” will mostly disappear, the work and expectations increase, and so do the hours, especially during busy season or month-end, quarterly and year-end closes or special projects such as system implementations and re-structuring.

4. Preparation for the Full-time Position

Before you start your full-time position, continue to learn as much as you can about the employer and, if possible, about the structure and expectations when you start. Your primary contact is the recruiter, so start with her/him. Confirm the date(s), times, location and parking (i.e., if parking is covered or reimbursed at the office and/or at a client? and where to park - make sure you know which is the correct lot, especially downtown). Determine what you still want / need to learn about the organization and potential career paths. It is beneficial to continue networking prior to the full-time position to learn as much as you can in advance, and strengthen your relationship with the firm (see more about networking below).

Questions to consider: “What is the onboarding / training process?” “What will I be doing during the first three to six months?” “How is the work assigned?” “What are the performance expectations at each stage?” “Is a career advisor/mentor assigned to me, and how does the program work?” “What if that person is not responsive or helpful?” “Where should I seek assistance if I have questions, need additional training, or need specific help?” “How will I be evaluated, how often, and how will I know that I am performing well?”

5. Continue Networking Prior to the Full-time Position

It is very beneficial to continue networking with a firm after you receive a full-time offer. Continue to learn more about the employer, the structure, the different departments (in private industry or government) or the practice areas, industries and clients, how the work is assigned, and who does the assigning (in public accounting). Also, based on the questions above, learn about the onboarding and training process and expectations during your first few months. Know how you will be evaluated so you know how you are performing once you start.

EY Center for Careers

Preparation for the Full-time Position

** For the Big 4, you may be asked in advance what are your top 4 industry preferences. Depending on the popularity of a particular industry, you may not get your first choice. If you do not yet know what industries and clients you prefer, networking will help. Once you do know, networking will continue to help. Connect with the managers and partners who are in charge of specific practice areas, industries and clients. Set up a “coffee chat” to build a rapport (see the Coffee Chat guide on the EY Center website).

** With a Mid-Tier firm or other employer, it is also beneficial to network in advance of your internship. While you may not be assigned a specific industry, you will be assigned to specific clients and projects, and it is to your advantage to learn about your options and advocate for the assignments that most interest you.

6. Attendance

Always arrive early / on time - do not arrive late. Showing up late indicates a lack of interest and commitment, and it will reflect poorly on you and possibly impact your growth and retention. If you are ever running late, call and let the employer know that you are late, on your way and when you expect to arrive. Don't schedule any vacations or days off soon after you start, unless absolutely necessary. Discuss with the employer in advance, if at all possible.

Ask ahead about the expected dress code (at the office and at a client) and dress appropriately.

7. Performance and Participation

Participate fully in the work you are assigned. Ask questions (there can be many different kinds of challenges which may arise throughout your employment, depending on your specific situation) to help you perform at and above expectations. Don't make any assumptions about how well you think you are doing - seek periodic feedback, listen to constructive feedback and work to improve performance and skills. Don't let problems mount up or worsen. Deal with situations appropriately, and quickly, to resolve problems. Try to understand the different management styles of each of your seniors and managers, and learn how best to approach them if you do have questions. Reach out, if necessary, to other people at the employer with whom you have connected, to seek their advice as well.

If you finish an assignment early, ask for additional work; do not sit idly. Especially in public accounting, chargeability (the number of hours charged to clients) is important. Even in private industry/government/not-for-profit, productivity is important as well. Look for opportunities to get involved, where and when appropriate, learn as much as you can, and continue to improve and expand your skillset. Get to know your fellow staff to enhance the team orientation and your overall experience.

As mentioned above, each firm may assign and schedule work differently, and it may vary by practice area and industry group. As you learn more about projects, departments, practice areas, industries and clients, you may begin (if not previously) to develop preferences and/or strong interests. Identify the key professionals (managers, directors and partners) for those projects, departments, practice areas, industries and clients as they will be in charge of who is selected for specific work assignments. While there is no guarantee, those who network within the firm with the professionals in charge of the industries, clients and schedules are

EY Center for Careers

Preparation for the Full-time Position

more likely to get assigned the industry(ies) and client(s) they desire. If you do not know yet what practice area, industries and clients interest you, networking can be very helpful as well. See the Networking and Coffee Chat guides on the EY Center website for additional assistance.

Continue to network with other professionals throughout the organization - you know the importance of networking and that, in most cases, it helped you get into an organization; now, you should continue to learn about the employer and build relationships with others including staff, seniors, managers, directors, partners and other key individuals.

You will benefit greatly throughout the duration of your employment with an organization if you establish and maintain strong professional relationships. (While many public accounting firms will assign a “mentor” or “career advisor” when you start, the key relationships you develop with managers and partners before you start and throughout your employment will provide you with a lot of helpful guidance and support.)

What if you are “shy”? Many of our students tend to be more “shy” than “outgoing”. So, if you consider yourself to be “shy”, how can you feel comfortable and network and participate effectively?

When starting a conversation with a professional, ask them about their work, how long they’ve been with the employer, what are their goals, how they have navigated successfully thus far, and what they like to do for fun. In other words, be curious and show genuine interest. Avoid talking about any controversial topics such as politics and religion.

The key to networking is getting to know others while continuing to learn about the employer (structure, culture and politics, career paths and opportunities for growth, ongoing and special organizational changes, trends, profitability, etc.), and developing a rapport and possible friendships with others.

In addition to work, there may be other events and activities (social, networking, recruiting) to which you are invited. While it may not be required for you to participate, it is recommended that you do so whenever possible. It is important to demonstrate your level of interest and commitment to the organization and take part in activities.

8. Dining Etiquette

You may be going out to lunch and/or dinner at a nice restaurant with co-workers and other professionals, clients and/or student recruits, and proper dining etiquette is important. Here are some tips to help you navigate the meal(s):

- Do not order the most expensive item on the menu. Pay attention to what others are ordering, and do similarly.
- Do not order alcohol.
- Order something that is both easy to eat and filling.
- Observe others who have dining experience as to where to put your napkin and utensils when not using them.
- Watch your table manners - don’t reach across the table, try not to spill food or drink, do not eat too much at one time, and do not talk with your mouth full.

EY Center for Careers

Preparation for the Full-time Position

- Try to get to know others during the meal. This is a casual, yet important part of the networking process. Listen carefully, participate in the conversation, and smile appropriately. Ask questions and share similarly as to what others are doing.
- Be yourself, and if you tend to be “shy” (as discussed above), make an effort to stretch your comfort zone and make conversation. Once you get started, it will get easier.
- Most importantly, enjoy the opportunity to get to know others in a more casual setting.

9. Commuting / Mass Transit and Parking

If you work in public accounting, no matter what practice area you are joining, do not assume that you will only work at the office. With any employer, ask about the parking options. If you plan to take public transportation (bus or rail), ask if you will have to go to a client with short notice, and determine how best to handle it if you are not planning to drive your car to the office on a given day. It can be challenging if you do not have your car on a given day and are assigned to go to a client that is not near public transportation.

10. Once you have accepted a full-time offer (following one or more internships), you cannot continue recruiting. It is unprofessional etiquette to accept an offer and continue looking; you risk losing an offer and burning a bridge that might follow you throughout your career. You have two appropriate options: (a) Accept an offer and stop recruiting - or - (b) Decline all offers and re-enter the recruiting process.

11. CPA Exam and License

If you are pursuing the CPA license, it can be very challenging to balance work, once you start, and especially if you are working a lot of overtime, and effective studying for the CPA exam. Alumni have shared that the CPA exam is more difficult than the mid-term and final exams while at school, and requires an entirely different level of commitment and effort to achieve success. It is recommended that you focus on passing the CPA exam before you start and during your first year as a full-time Staff (Associate) - it can get more difficult the further away from school due to a possible decline in study habits, and an increase in responsibilities as you move from new staff to experienced staff to senior, etc. Each firm has its own requirements for CPA licensure relating to eligibility for promotion. Many offer \$\$ incentives to pass all four parts of the CPA exam within one or two years.

12. Once you have accepted a full-time offer, it is not OK to accept an internship offer with another employer without first discussing it with both the employer with whom you have accepted the full-time offer and the employer offering the internship.
13. If you have any questions and/or would like career and job search assistance, please come to the EY Center (appointment or walk-in). I do not tell students what to do (except regarding ethical behavior). I will help you understand and explore your options based on your interests and needs.