HANDLING JOB OFFERS PROFESSIONALLY

• You should respond to a job offer in much the same way you would respond to any invitation—
  with appreciation and sensitivity to the need for a prompt response. Always thank the 
  employer profusely for the offer, whether or not you are enthusiastic about the job 
  being offered to you. 
  If you are unsure about your reply ...ask for a couple days (no more than 3 working days)...but still sound 
  enthusiastic!! Don’t make them wonder if they made the wrong decision offering it to you...

• Ask any questions you have about terms of employment: salary, hours, start date and so forth.

• After thanking the employer, you should tell him/her that you must consult with your co-op 
  coordinator before accepting the offer. If you feel you need to buy additional time (because 
  you are hoping to get another job offer), ask the employer if you can get back to him/her within 
  three business days. Ultimately, however, you must respond to the employer within the 
  guidelines that they set.

• Be sure to respond to the employer within the time specified. The employer risks losing his/her 
  other applicants if left waiting too long.

• If no other job offers have materialized in the space of time specified, you must choose whether 
  or not to accept the position. Once you have accepted the offer, you are committed to that 
  position.

• Notify other employers that you have interviewed with, that you have accepted a position. 
  Do not take further interviews once you have accepted a job.

• To decline an offer, contact the employer promptly and tell him/her that you greatly appreciate 
  the offer, but that you have decided to accept another position. A follow-up thank you note is 
  also a good idea. Your goal is to maintain as positive a relationship as possible with this 
  employer through this process.

• Inform your co-op coordinator of your decision, if you have not done so previously.

DO NOT:

• Fail to return phone calls to any employers, either before or after accepting an offer.

• Tell the employer that you are waiting to hear back from other employers before accepting their 
  job offer. (It is not necessary, advantageous, or polite to let the employer know that they are not 
  your first choice.)

• Discuss your reasons for declining an employer’s job offer in any detail. A simple, benign 
  explanation is best: “Though it was hard to choose, I decided that another position might be a 
  better fit for me at this point.”

Courtesy of Pam Goodale, Co-op Northeastern University
Adapted by Lisa Worsh, Northeastern University