

How to Answer the “What is your desired salary range?” Interview Question

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Nov 25, 2013 1:05:00 PM

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Grantham University
November 25, 2013



Interviewing is an art. We've [tackled tricky interview questions](#) before but, for those [pursuing an online degree program](#), one of the toughest questions comes in the form of dollars and cents. What is your desired salary range? The majority of candidates' apprehension to this question is rooted in fear of undercutting their earning potential or pricing themselves out of a great opportunity.

It might come in the form of a question on a cover letter, a box on an online application or during a face-to-face interview. Regardless of where it happens, one thing is for certain: It will come up during the process. As tempting as it is to leave it blank or dodge the question, confidently answering this game-changing question well could mean the difference between a green light or a red.

So what's the right answer? How do you come up with the winning figure? Here are three tips to help you deliver a solid response.

1. Invest in doing background research

Most of the time, this question is used as a screening tactic. The key here is to never lie and never grab a bogus number out of the sky. Think about your desired scale from three angles: what you do, where you live and how much experience you have. On each of Grantham's 38 online degree program pages, there is a tab with average salary information for various positions related to that college degree. Additionally, you should consider your geographic location. Average salaries on websites such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics determine the national average. Spend some time Googling similar roles in your area to determine how those figures compare to the national average. Lastly, you should factor in your experience to the equation.

2. Be able to justify your answer

Lisa Quast, [contributor with Forbes Magazine](#), feels that this can be handled in a few different ways. She suggests phrasing it with something to the effect of, "Based on my research, similar positions in this geography and industry are currently paying between \$x and \$y. Is this also the range for which you've budgeted for this position?" Or, you could share the salary range you desire, such as, "Based on the job requirements we discussed and my knowledge, skills and experience, I would expect the salary range of the position to be between \$x and \$y."

If you are coming down the pipeline toward earning your online degree, be sure to mention that in the process as well. While it might not factor into your present negotiations, it could leave the door open for future opportunities once you achieve that milestone.

3. Know what it means when you give your range

Remember who you are dealing with in an interview – a human resource professional. When you give a range of \$45,000-55,000 and are secretly hoping for \$50K, the recruiter will take note of the \$45,000 mark. Only provide figures that you would actually accept. Keep in mind, too, that there is often a chance for negotiations depending on what you bring to the table. Additionally, there may be aspects of the job that would entice you to start with less based on the type of work you'll be doing, the prestige of the company or the people that you'll potentially be working with in your tenure.

No matter how you approach the question, the important thing is that you provide a thoughtful, prepared, justifiable answer that confidently represents who you are and the value that you can provide to the organization.

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