

Employment

What are the conditions and scope of employment?

The term **employment** means service performed for wages under a contract of hire, written or oral, expressed or implied. You want to make sure that you sign a contract with definitions of terms of agreement. Some of the terms to which you might be asked to agree include: employment period, performance of duties, compensation, disability, competing businesses, confidentiality, amendments and termination. When discussing the scope of employment, you may want to ask the prospective employer:

- Do you have a description of the job and the expected duties to be performed under this job description?
- Will I be a part-time or full-time employee or subcontractor?
- Is there a productivity standard and, if so, what is it?
- Do you have a handbook that provides written policies/procedures and job description and separation terms?
- Is there a written compliance/complaint procedure?
- Can the position be changed without mutual agreement? Is there a procedure for requesting a change?

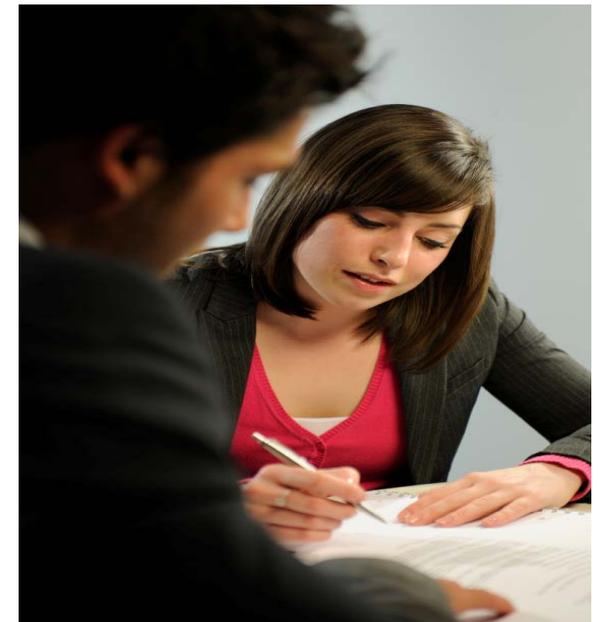
- Are multiple sites and travel involved? How is it reimbursed?
- Is there CF supervision available on site?
- Is there a non-compete clause? If so, what is the time frame?

Discipline related salary reports represent mean and median wages earned by all SLPs in any given survey period. They typically do not report on first time CF wage earners, nor individuals with less than four years experience.

For example, in the 2008 ASHA Schools Survey: *Annual Salary Report*, individuals with four to six years experience averaged annual academic salaries in elementary school settings of \$47, 547, but the highest average salary in combined school settings across the nation of \$65, 592, was only achieved with 19 to 24 years experience .

<http://www.asha.org/uploadedFiles/research/memberdata/Schoolso8Salaries.pdf>

The SLP Guide to Asking Prospective Employers Questions about Salary and Benefits



Pennsylvania State Advisory Council on Personnel Shortages (PSAC-PS) in Speech-Language Pathology

Salary and Benefits



What is meant by the term **salary** and what additional questions should I be prepared to ask a prospective employer?

Salary consists of the agreed-upon and regular compensation for employment that may be paid in any frequency. In common practice, one's salary is paid on a monthly or bi-weekly schedule and not on hourly, daily, weekly, or piece-work basis. When discussing salary with a prospective employer, you want to ask the following questions:

- What is the dollar figure? Is it guaranteed or can it be modified based upon need/hours worked?
- On what is it based? A 40 hour week, a 37.5 hour week? If less than 32 hours a week, do I still get benefits?
- For what employment period am I being compensated? 12 months? Nine months? Do you get a pay check biweekly, monthly?
- Can this be supplemented with overtime work (rate?) or other agency work?
- Are their contract limitations that require me to work exclusively for this employer? If so, what is the period of contracted limitation?

- What are the standard deductions (e.g., payroll taxes, SSI, state and local taxes, or mandatory retirement) versus elected deductions (e.g., health care, voluntary contributions to annuity/savings programs)?
- Are there union dues? Association fees?
- Are there opportunities for salary increases? Merit versus annual cost of living?

What is meant by the term **benefits** and what additional questions should I be prepared to ask a prospective employer?

Employee benefits consist of indirect and non-cash compensation paid to an employee. Some benefits are mandated by law, such as social security, unemployment compensation, and workers compensation. Others vary from employer to employer, such as health insurance, life insurance, medical plan, paid vacation, and pension. When discussing employee benefits with a prospective employer, you want to ask:

- What is the approximate value of the benefit package to salary?
- Do you offer dental and/or vision insurance, long term/short term disability, malpractice insurance, long term care insurance, life insurance, 401K or pension/retirement, profit sharing, stock options?

- Which are employer funded and/or employee contributed?
- Are benefits available to employee only or family?
- Are they portable upon termination?
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- What are the paid time off policies for vacation, sick, maternity, family leave, sabbatical, and holidays? Do unused days accumulate?
- If mandated, are annual employee physicals reimbursed?
- What kind of paid versus unpaid leave options are available?
- Do you support continuing education through paid time and fees?
- Do you assist with professional membership and licensure fees/dues?
- Do you provide tuition support/reimbursement for approved skill training/certification?
- Is there any kind of stipend/enhancement for bilingual language skills?
- Do you offer loan forgiveness?
- Is there a sign on bonus?
- Do you assist with relocation expenses?
- Do you have a mechanism by which I can get a loan through the company?
- Do you provide technical support? Access to updated diagnostic and therapy materials?
- Do you offer a routine annual stipend for evaluation and/or therapy materials?