

Professional Dress for the Interview and Beyond

Know how to dress appropriately for an interview, event, and your internship or job. Within the first 10 seconds, an interviewer or host has developed a first impression of you. Those who come across as polished and pulled together are more likely to have a favorable outcome than those who are seen as putting in less effort.

Business Professional – preferred for interviews in most industries

- Full suit, dress pants, or skirt suit
- Clean, appropriately-cut button-up shirt
- Conservative tie
- Clean, polished, closed-toe shoes and matching socks or stockings
- Neat and groomed hair on head and face
- Accessories kept to a minimum
- Conservative makeup and little or no cologne or perfume
- Briefcase or portfolio to keep papers organized.

Tip: For interviews, research the industry and organization ahead of time and find out what workers wear to the office. Always dress at or one step above the everyday norm.

Business Casual – a step down from the full business suit; neat and appropriate

- Neatly pressed pants or skirt
- Colors should be solid: navy, gray, brown, khaki, or black
- Belt for pants
- Button down or Polo golf shirts tucked in
- Sweaters or cardigans in well-kept condition
- Matching socks or stockings
- Leather shoes, low-heeled shoes, boots, or dress sandals
- Neat and groomed hair on head and face

What to Avoid

- Tight or baggy clothing, T-shirts, sweatshirts, jeans, short skirts, shorts, flip-flops or sneakers
- Un-tucked shirt or short suit jacket with a longer shirt
- Wrinkles, holes, or stains
- Wearing an iPod, sunglasses, or backpack in a waiting area or during the experience
- Sleeveless shirts, halter tops, see-through shirts, low-cut skirts, and fishnet stockings

Tip: You want the evaluator to pay most attention to what you are saying. Anything that could draw attention away from the conversation could have a negative impact on the outcome. When in doubt, ask the host/sponsor about attire for the function you will be attending. It is never improper to politely inquire about appropriate attire.

Schedule a Practice Interview at the Center of Career Development for feedback and evaluation of your interviewing techniques, answers, and attire.