

Dress for Success

First impressions last forever. Remember that at your interview you want to look your absolute best. The clothing you wear to your interview should make you look like you fit in at your prospective employer. Your attire also indicates your interest in a job as well as your level of professionalism. Remember the interviewer is going to assume that this is the most professional you will ever look. Make sure you live up to his or her assumption. Some industries allow a more relaxed form of interview attire, while others are more formal. It is your responsibility to know the industry and dress accordingly. If in doubt, check with the employer, do some on-line research, or contact someone you know who works for this organization.

Professional/ Interview Dress

Suit: A conservative well-pressed (black, navy, gray, brown) pant or skirt suit is best. Make sure the suit is not too tight to sit down comfortably and not too loose. If you want to express yourself, simply add a colored shirt under the jacket, but avoid bright colored suits. For women - Many popular women's stores and magazines are selling fashionable suits that are fitted, include low cut blouses, shorter skirts, or lengthy heels; however, fashionable doesn't always equal appropriate for the traditional interview

Shirt: Your top should look neat, pressed, and clean whether a traditional button-down or a simple round neckline for women. Avoid shirts that can be interpreted as revealing or are better suited for a night-club.

Shoes: Shoe styles change frequently but regardless of style, avoid flashy shoes that draw attention away from your face and thus your answers! Make sure they are clean and presentable. Some women's shoes such as stilettos or platforms are not usually appropriate. Heels are not required, although popular.

Hosiery/ socks: Keep it simple! Patterns are unnecessary. Remember that pantyhose snag so keep an extra pair in your bag, briefcase, or vehicle.

Accessories/Grooming: Men

- Coordinate your socks with your suit and shoes. Always avoid white socks with your dark suit. Belts should also match your suit or shoes. If wearing a watch, make sure it is conservative. Remove necklaces and earrings for an interview.
- Portfolios should look professional and contain your extras, such as resumes, cover letters, and references. If you smoke leave those in your backpack or vehicle
- Keep your hair neat, this includes facial hair. Nails should be clean and short. Avoid strong cologne or aftershave and be sure to wear a non-fragrant deodorant.

Accessories/Grooming: Women

- When it comes to a bag or purse, small and simple is safe, and color should coordinate with your wardrobe.
- Avoid long earrings and bright lipstick, which will only detract from your answers. Keep your make-up simple. Clean your finger nails, iron your shirt, and polish your shoes.

Tips for Professional Dress On A Limited Budget

- Don't shop at the last minute, so to avoid spending excessive amounts because you "need something now".
- Purchase clothing that can be used in multiple settings, well made classic pieces can go from professional to business casual.
- Select neutral clothing such as a pair of black dress pants that can be worn with a suit jacket or a variety of different dress shirts and ties.
- Consider investing in season-less fabrics that drape and travel well. Wool is not as versatile as a blend of cotton and rayon.
- If a woman, purchase a 3 piece suit so you can alternate between a skirt and pants suit as desired.
- Create visual variety by interchanging different ties, belts, shoes, earrings, necklaces, or scarves.
- You can wear your "interview" suit more than once because you will likely only see that particular recruiter only once.

For information on other types of dress (ex. business casual), how to interpret dress codes, and pictures/examples please visit our website at www.careers.uiowa.edu