



Career Center

University Career Center

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DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Dress for the Job You Want...Not the Job You Have.

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You never have a second chance to make a first impression. Whether you're doing a mock or real interview, looking for an internship at a career fair, or visiting a company's information table, you want to make a strong first impression. You might be a student now, but you want to be a professional in your field. When you begin the interview process and ultimately land a full-time job, your wardrobe will need to reflect your new level of professionalism.

When searching for a full-time job or professional internship, invest in one or two comfortable, attractive suits you can wear to all your interviews. Once you secure a job, slowly add clothes to your wardrobe that reflect your office's business environment. You can save money by shopping the off-season sales and buying shirts, slacks, skirts, and jackets that you can mix and match. Check stores like Macy's, Kohl's, Ann Taylor, Talbots, and Jos. H. Banks.

Men

- Business suit in a conservative color such as black, navy, gray, or brown. Avoid busy patterns or bright colors. A light pin stripe is acceptable.
- Tie with a conservative pattern and color to match the suit.
- White shirt with sleeves that extend one-quarter inch beyond the suit jacket.
- Dress socks in a color that complements the suit (not white athletic socks!)
- Leather lace up shoes, recently shined, in a color that complements the suit.
- Shave or trim beard for a neat appearance.
- Limit jewelry to a watch and wedding or class ring.
- Remove/hide noticeable piercings that may cause interviewer to judge you unfairly.
- Alternative to the suit: At the very least, wear a long sleeve, button down shirt with a conservative tie.

Women

- Pants or skirt suits. Skirt-hem should be no shorter than the knee and no longer than just below the knee.
- Best suit colors are gray, medium to dark blue, or black. Patterns must be subtle and conservative.
- Choose a classic suit that fits well. Too short and too tight is not acceptable.
- Always wear skin colored hose. Knee-highs are great for pants suits.
- Classic closed toed pumps with a mid-height heel and little or no decoration.
- Limit jewelry to a watch, wedding or class ring, small earrings, and pearl necklace.
- Hairstyles should be classic and not distracting to the interviewer. Wear make-up but style should be light or neutral.
- Carry a purse or a brief case but not both.
- A professional wardrobe requires that you spend the extra money on supportive bras, camisoles, and slips.
- Alternative to the suit: Black or other dark color pants or skirt with a sweater seat or coordinating jacket.

All Genders

- Shower and wash hair the morning of the interview. Hair should be neatly trimmed. Clean and trim nails.
- If it jingles, flashes, or dangles, don't wear it!
- Remove piercings that may cause an interviewer to judge you unfairly.
- Avoid strong colognes and perfumes. Attire should be clean and pressed.
- Don't underestimate the importance of proper undergarments. Undershirts for guys are a must. Women should wear a camisole and slips when wearing light colored or flimsier weight materials.

Professional Attire vs. Business Casual

Professional Attire/Business Dress: Business suit for men and women, almost always appropriate for an interview or other career related events. It's always better to be over dressed than underdressed.

Business Casual: A dress, skirt, or pants with blouse or sweater set for women; a jacket can complete outfit. Button down shirt and dress slacks for men - Sport coat and/or tie can complete the outfit.

Casual Business/Snappy Casual: Best for a casual work environment or a casual work event. For men, khakis or other similarly styled pants, collared shirt or sweater, loafers. For women, a dress or skirt and blouse and/or sweater, short heels or flats. Dark wash jeans that sit at the natural waist may be appropriate in some casual work environments.

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Polyvore: www.polyvore.com – search for “work,” “business casual,” “business,” and “professional” within sets.

What Not to Wear: <http://tlc.discovery.com/videos/what-not-to-wear-style-tips/>

Global Image Group: <http://www.globalimagegrp.com/>



Business suits are your best bet at a career fair or a job interview.

Women have many choices, and it can be hard to find a matching suit that fits the way you would like. The conservative and classic outfit above could work for a job interview if you did not have a traditional business suit. The jacket pulls the outfit together and still provides a professional look.



Business casual options for men. If jeans are permitted in your work environment, choose a dark rinse denim.



For a casual work environment where jeans are acceptable. A dark rinse is always best.



Once you have the job, this outfit could work at a job or internship.