

Professional Attire Tips

Err on the conservative side.

If your interview attire speaks louder than you, you won't be heard. The louder your clothes are, the less attention the employer will pay to your capabilities.

Wear a neat haircut... "extreme" may be good for TV but not for your interview. Practice good hygiene: shave, brush teeth, and wear deodorant.

Make sure all clothing is clean, neatly pressed, and coordinated.

Keep cologne, perfume, after-shave, etc., to a minimum; apply at least two hours before interview. The best approach is not to wear any.

Style your hair neatly. If you have long hair pull it back or style it to keep it out of your face.

Carry a briefcase or portfolio with copies of your resume. Women can avoid carrying a purse this way.

Interview Image

DO wear a suit.

DO wear neat and conservative hair.

DO give a firm handshake at the beginning and end of the interview.

DO have clean and trimmed fingernails.

DO maintain steady eye contact with the interviewer(s).

DO thank the interviewer(s) for their time.

DON'T wear big jewelry or hair ornaments.

DON'T exhibit nervous body behavior, like fidgeting.

DON'T wear heavy perfume/cologne.

DON'T wear facial piercings or show body art (tattoos).

Interview Image Checklist

- Clean and trim your fingernails
- No facial piercings
- Hair neat and styled conservatively
- Wear a suit or tailored pant suit
- Conservative jewelry and makeup
- Minimal or no perfume or cologne
- Give a firm handshake
- Conservative tie
- Coordinating outfit (including belt, shoes, tie)
- Proper skirt length (around knee length)
- Avoid costume jewelry
- Maintain eye contact
- Don't fidget
- Thank the recruiter for their time
- Ask the recruiter for a business card
- Most importantly:

DRESS FOR THE INTERVIEW, NOT THE JOB

UNCW Dress for Success Website:

www.uncw.edu/stuaff/career/student/dressforsuccess.htm



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First Impressions

First impressions take approximately seven seconds to make. A bad impression may take a lifetime to overcome. The first impression you make on a recruiter or potential supervisor is crucial to your professional image. Despite variables in workplace attire, most employers prefer applicants who dress more conservatively.

There are rarely hard and fast rules, and the lines between corporate and casual are constantly shifting. Basically, there are three main modes of business dress.

THE THREE DRESS CODES TO SUCCESS AND HOW TO CRACK THEM

The Corporate Dress Code- Generally expected to wear a suit. Wear appropriate undergarments that may include: white t-shirt, camisole, slip, men should wear appropriate socks over-the-calf and women should wear hosiery.

The Business Appropriate Dress Code- Generally this is a world halfway between corporate and casual. A suit is not obligatory, but the idea is to choose clothes that convey polish and decorum.

The Business Casual Dress Code- The motto of business casual is: no jacket required. A casual dress code does not mean sloppy. The more lax the look, the more important for clothes to be pressed and immaculately presentable. No tank tops, concert t-shirts. Nothing too short, too tight, too sheer, or too low-cut should ever be considered as part of the business casual dress code. A sense of propriety must be maintained at all times.

Business casual is often acceptable for employer information sessions, but not for career fairs.

Men's Interview Attire

THE SUIT:

The sleeves should taper, gradually ending just over the wrist so the shirt cuff extends about 1/2 inch beyond the jacket sleeve.

The pant leg bottom in the front should touch the front of the shoe and angle towards the back of the shoe to fall just above the heel. Pant cuff or no cuff is a personal choice.

Choose dark colors, such as navy blue, gray or coffee beige (brown is usually unacceptable and black is too formal). Suit should be solid color or subtle pinstripes.

The fabric should be worsted wool or gabardine, a firm hard-finish durable fabric (i.e. lightweight wool or rayon).

Suit is always first choice, but if unavailable, a navy blue jacket or blazer (with black or navy buttons) and gray or beige pants are acceptable.

THE DRESS SHIRT

The button down collar offers a more casual look than the more formal business style of a point collar. Choose a good fit, neatly pressed. Best colors include white, pale blue, tan or yellow.

Always wear an undershirt. Avoid the V-neck style, as the neckline may show.

THE TIE

Your tie should be darker than your shirt, and should not extend below the belt. Purchase several ties that compliment the suit to give your wardrobe versatility. Wear 100 percent silk (or look like it) in solid colors or small patterns.

THE SHOES

Best choice is a conservative style with laces; the best shoe colors are black, brown or cordovan/burgundy, and should match your belt.

Wear with a new shine and dark socks over the calf.

Women's Interview Attire

THE SUIT

Choose conservative colors, such as black, gray, navy, tan or brown, in a flattering cut.

The fabric should be a gabardine, a firm hard-finish durable fabric-light weight wool or rayon, or similar fabric.

Suit should be solid color or subtle pinstripes.

A business dress, worn with a jacket or a tailored pantsuit is acceptable.

Avoid wearing trendy lapels or buttons.

Make sure the skirt length is just at knee length, either right above or right below the knee.

THE BLOUSE

Wear a neutral color such as white or beige; avoid bright colors and large prints.

Do not wear a low-cut blouse.

MAKEUP & JEWELRY

Avoid bright colors and excessive amounts.

Light shades of lip coloring and nail polish are recommended.

Jewelry should be small and conservative.

Avoid costume jewelry; stick with silver gold or pearls.

Earrings should be small studs or clip-ons. Adorn only one hole per ear.

THE SHOES AND HOSIERY

Do not wear open toe or open heel shoes or heels higher than two inches. Your shoe color should coordinate with your ensemble and remain in the neutral zone, such as navy, black, or taupe.

Wear hosiery that is close to your skin color.