

Dress for the Interview

What to wear: For interviews, dress as if you are giving an important presentation at the company or attending a business meeting.

For a Fortune 500 or business interview: Dress **"Traditional"** - a "traditional" suit – see picture

For a small upbeat software company or start up where they dress informally: Dress **"Business Casual"** - see pictures below.

Men - Traditional

Suits – A traditional suit is preferred to a blazer. The color should either be a dark gray or blue in either a solid or invisible plaid or stripe with a pressed long-sleeved (even in summer!) white dress shirt.

Shirts – White shirts are always your first choice. Solid blue or pastel is an acceptable alternative. If you don't own either, go buy one. Get plain wrinkle-free cotton-polyester blend material. Plain collar. *Wrinkle-free is important.*

Grooming – no strong cologne or aftershave.

Socks – Black, neat and over-the-calf (when sitting you should see no ankle or shin). White athletic socks are a big "no-no."

Shoes – Clean and polished leather lace-up black shoes are best. Avoid shoes with a worn out heel or old. Shoes should be professional *and* comfortable for those long days.

Neckties –Conservative silk or polyester-silk blend ties are best. No large patterns or graphics. Be sure the tie coordinates with the suit, is solid or has small neat patterns. Be sure the knot is neat and centered on your neck. The bottom of the tie should just reach your belt. The half Windsor knot is best. <http://www.tie-a-tie.net/halfwindsor.html>

Belts – Wear a black belt, one inch wide, no large buckles.

Hair – Clean well-groomed and professional looking. Remember, the choice to cut your hair is yours, but the choice to hire you is the interviewer's. Be sure beards and mustaches are neat and trimmed – avoid the five O'clock shadow look popular with movie stars.

Accessories – No flashy cuff links, rings or gold chains. Wedding or college ring is fine. No earrings. Not even one small one. No visible body piercing.



Men – Business Casual

Slacks (wool-polyester blend), wrinkle-free long-sleeve shirt (white or blue or soft color), black socks, black shoes, black belt. Sport coat and tie are optional. A sport coat can be worn without a tie, or a tie without a sport coat. If the event/reception is very casual, no tie and no coat. Hint: you can always remove a tie and carry a sport coat over your arm, or set it aside if everyone else is casual.

Women – Traditional

(see photo above)

Suits – pants (or skirts in some industries) are fine in many firms. A solid navy, grey or black suit with a solid or light colored blouse is recommended for most occasions. Avoid brown, green or pastel suits. Business dresses are acceptable in fields that are less formal and less conservative. Avoid frilly collars and cuffs.

Shirts/blouses – A light colored buttoned wrinkle-free cotton-polyester blend blouse is ideal.

Makeup – Natural looking and conservative. Avoid bright colors. Use a neutral or clear nail polish on clean and manicured nails. No perfumes.

Hosiery – Light, natural color, plain style (no patterns).

Shoes – Should be conservative and complement the color & style of the interview suit. Low to medium heels are ideal – no high heels. Basic pumps, toes should be closed, no strappy shoes, and avoid multi-colored trim.

Hair – should be freshly cleaned and neatly styled. Long hair should be worn conservatively.

Accessories – One conservative, non-dangling earring per ear, one ring per hand. No dangling or distracting bracelets. Avoid purses of any size - carry a portfolio or briefcase instead. No visible body piercing beyond earrings.

Women – Business Casual

Slacks (wool-polyester blend), wrinkle-free blouse, light hosiery if wearing a skirt, low heel dark leather shoes. Suit coat or sport coat is optional. If the event/reception is very casual, no suit coat. Hint: you can always carry a nice coat over your arm, or set it aside if everyone else is very casual. These photos are on the side of informal business casual. It doesn't hurt to dress a little up vs. down, especially if you are new or uncertain what to wear. You can have a professional look even when it's business casual.

ALWAYS IRON YOUR CLOTHES BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

How to iron a shirt

http://www.ehow.com/video_4180_iron-shirt.html

Without an iron:

<http://www.wikihow.com/Remove-Wrinkles-from-Clothes-Without-an-Iron>



A Bad Example –

Don't dress like this for an interview, reception, or career fair. Show that you care, that you respect the interviewer, that you are serious enough to take the time to look professional. Research shows that a well-dressed applicant significantly increases their competitive advantage by looking good.



What to wear when:

On-campus interview: Traditional

Company on-site interview (2nd - 3rd round): Traditional unless company specifies otherwise

Attending a company's campus presentation before interviews: Business Casual

Reception on-campus - Business Casual with sport coat or tie

Career Fairs: minimum is Business Casual. If you want to interview for a job, Traditional

Company site visit. Business Casual with sport coat or tie

Alumni networking event: Business Casual

Informational Interview on campus or company site: Business Casual with coat or tie

Academic Interviews: sport coat and tie

What's it cost?

A new suit for college students can be purchased very reasonably. Buy the best suit you can afford. Check sales and good department stores such as Penny's or Macy's. On a budget? good used suits can work. Wrinkle-free shirts are around \$25. Tie, \$20. Shoes vary, but be sure they are professional *and* comfortable. You might be wearing them for many hours and facility tours. Some stores will sell a blazer with a traditional suit for a good price.

Sites with Tips for Dressing

SYMS – Dress to Achieve – Samples of different kinds of outfits - <http://www.symsdress.com/>

Washington State University – A comprehensive site on career attire –

<http://amdt.wsu.edu/research/dti/>