



Professional Dress

Dressing properly for interviews and career fairs is essential. Even if you would not be required to wear a suit in your new job, it is the expected attire for job interviews and career fairs.

Be sure to try on your interview outfit prior to career-related events to make sure it fits correctly. Grooming, nontraditional interview attire, and a poor handshake are the top three physical attributes that influence employers' opinions of candidates (NACE Spotlight, 23(8), 2001).

What to Wear for Men

- **Suit:** Neutral colors, such as navy blue, gray, black, tan, and olive green are always acceptable. However, most solid-colored suits that fit well and have a cut and color that don't make you stand out will work.
- **Shirt:** Make sure the shirt is well ironed, long sleeved, has a collar, and compliments the color of your suit. The shirt should be a solid color - think about what color looks best on you.
- **Tie:** A simple stripe or repeating pattern is less distracting. You want the employer to notice you and not your clothes.
- **Shoes:** Footwear should be leather, matched to your clothing, polished, and a dressy tie shoe (black shoes for a navy blue suit, black suit, or a gray suit; brown shoes for a tan or olive green suit). Socks should be a solid color that matches your pants or shoes in color.
- **Hair:** Should be well groomed. If your hair is long and has a tendency to cover your face, pull it back.
- **Jewelry and Cologne:** Keep jewelry simple and to a minimum: if you have a nose, tongue, eyebrow or any other rings worn in facial piercing, take them out to avoid distracting the interviewer. Use cologne in moderation.
- **Nails** should be trimmed and clean.

What to Avoid:

- Polo shirts and t-shirts
- Bright colored ties or "story ties"
- White socks
- Noisy/too much jewelry

What to Wear for Women

- **Suit:** Long-sleeved jacket with a straight or pleated skirt. Color should be neutral, such as navy blue, gray, tan, or black. Patterns are only acceptable if they are extremely subtle. Skirt should be knee length or longer. A suit consisting of a jacket and a skirt is



considered more professional than a pant suit or a dress. Some professional fields, such as accounting and finance, expect the most professional level of attire for an interview.

- Blouse: White or pastel shades are preferred, try to stay away from material that is shiny or sparkly. Cotton or matte silks are always a good choice. A nice touch is often a collar pin or a simple gold necklace. A colorful scarf that compliments your outfit is acceptable, but it should not be too bright.
- Shoes: First - no bare legs! Stockings or panty hose, usually in a skin tone or a complimenting color, are a must. The best shoes are simple pumps with no more than a one or two-inch heel. Shoes should be leather, in black or a complimentary color that works with your suit.
- Jewelry and Perfume: Simple post earrings or hoops work best. For an interview, wear no more than one earring per ear, one ring per hand, or one bracelet. A tasteful pin is fine. If you must wear perfume, keep it very light.
- Makeup: Keep it simple and conservative. Avoid use of bright eye shadow and nail polish
- Hair: Keep hair from covering your face - eye contact is important when meeting employers, as well as in the interview. Pull hair back if it normally covers your face but choose a hair style you are comfortable with. When using hairspray, don't over do it (especially if it is scented).

What to Avoid:

- Pantsuits - unless you find out from the interviewing organization that it is appropriate to wear a pant suit for the interview
- "Party outfits" (sequins, anything with beads, sparkles or glitter)
- Shiny or sparkly blouses
- Bright scarves
- Open-toed and strappy shoes or sandals, canvas shoes, and platform sole
- Tongue rings or rings worn in other facial piercings