

DRESS FOR SUCCESS: PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEW ATTIRE

IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL DRESS

First impressions DO COUNT when we employers are evaluating someone, particularly for a professional position. Professional dress is an important component of that first impression. People make assumptions about professional credibility and potential performance based upon appearance during a first meeting, and it is difficult to overcome a first impression, regardless of your knowledge and expertise.

As an interview candidate, you have your foot in the door, but so do all the other candidates. An interview can distinguish between qualified candidates and the “perfect match.” Professional dress is part of that match.

INTERVIEW ATTIRE

Professional dress is not just about clothes, but an overall professional appearance. You want an employer to be impressed with your look; however, your clothes should not upstage you in an interview. All attention should be on your interview presentation, not on your clothing and accessories. The following are dress requirements needed for job interview attire, as well as suggestions on how to achieve an overall professional look.

CLOTHES SHOULD BE:

- Solid, dark or neutral colors
- Light colors can be worn underneath
- No stripes or bright prints/colors
- Suit jacket and pants/skirt should be matching colors
- Skirts and dresses should be knee length when standing
- Ties can have a small print or color-- overall appearance should be conservative.
- Tailored/well-fitting, in good condition, wrinkle and lint free

SHOES & BELTS SHOULD BE:

- Closed-toe heel or dress shoe
- Neat and clean
- Belts should match the color of your shoes and attire

OVERALL

While nearly every industry calls for formal interview attire it is also important to be aware of the norms of your profession. In creative fields such as advertising and the arts, for example, while a suit is always a safe bet, you may have some more leeway in selecting a bright colored top. However, when in doubt, ALWAYS err towards formal and conservative dress. It is better to be overdressed than underdressed.

Hair/Makeup

Keep hair nice and neat. There is no specific hairstyle recommended, only that your hair is clean and well groomed. Wear natural looking makeup that will flatter and complement, not overpower, your outfit. Beards and other facial hair should be neatly trimmed. Also, be aware that some industries and organizations may frown on long hair or facial hair.

Nails

Nails should be clean and manicured. If polish is worn, make sure that it is a natural, conservative color and not chipping off.

Perfume/Cologne

Do not wear perfume or cologne as many people have strong, adverse or even allergic reactions to it.

Jewelry

Wear only a conservative amount of jewelry. Also, wear jewelry that flatters but doesn't overpower. For example, a pair of stud earrings versus chandelier earrings or a gold or silver band versus a large turquoise ring would be appropriate choices.

Tattoos/Piercings

If you have any type of tattoos or body piercing, consider how it will be perceived during a first impression. Align to company culture or standards.

Purse/Professional Bag

While you would never bring in your backpack, it is fine to bring in a professional looking purse or bag to an interview to carry necessary items. Only bring in a purse or a bag, not both. Keep cell phones turned off and out of sight.

PROFESSIONAL ITEMS CAN INCLUDE:

- A tablet or some type of notebook to take notes or jot down information
- Many students like using a padfolio notebook that includes a notepad, penholder, file pocket and business card holder.
- A good pen or pencil
 - Multiple copies of your resume and list of your references
 - Portfolio. This can be a formal portfolio or samples of your work that you can share with the interviewer.

PERSONAL ITEMS CAN INCLUDE:

- Wallet & Car Keys
- Tissue
- Breath mints