What Should I Wear?

Dress for the world outside of college is quite different from the campus scene. This is not to say that you need to go out and buy a whole new wardrobe. Go for quality over quantity. One or two well-chosen business suits will serve you all the way to the first day on the job and beyond. No one will fault you for wearing the same sharp outfit each time you interview. If you want some variety and are working with a limited budget, you might consider varying your shirt/blouse/tie/accessories as a simple way to change your look without breaking your wallet.

If you’re not sure about what to wear, don’t be afraid to ask.

Here are some guidelines to keep in mind:

**Personal Hygiene:**

- Choose a well-groomed hairstyle. MEN: Facial hair should be neatly trimmed or removed.
- Clean and trim your fingernails. WOMEN: Choose natural or light-colored nail polish, if desired.
- Don’t wear cologne or perfume. Recruiters may have an allergy!
- No body piercing should be visible beyond conservative ear piercing for women.
- Wear minimal jewelry – take care not to wear jewelry that dangles or jingles, or oversized pieces that would be distracting to the interviewer.
- Brush your teeth and carry small mints for fresh breath. But there should be no gum, candy, or other objects in your mouth once you arrive.
- Take a shower the day of your interview.
- Empty your pockets so there are no bulges or tinkling coins.

Ask to use the rest room when you arrive at the company for a final check of your appearance -- to make sure your tie is straight, your hair is combed, there’s nothing stuck in your teeth.

**Men**

- White or light blue long-sleeved button-down dress shirt
- A conservative tie that coordinates with the color of your suit and shirt
- Nicely polished dress shoes with dark socks. Belt should match shoes.
- Carry a brief case or portfolio; don’t carry a backpack.
Business Dress:
- Conservative dark or navy two-piece business suit

Business Casual Dress:
- Conservative sports coat in a dark color (no prints or plaids)
- Pressed khakis are appropriate
- Long-sleeved shirts are more professional than short-sleeves – even in business casual settings.

Women
- Blouses should be white or another light color.
- Shoes should be low-heeled and match the color of your suit; be sure they’re well maintained and polished. Be sure they’re comfortable. Sandals and open-toed shoes are not appropriate.
- Hosiery should be flawless (no runs – take an extra pair in case you get a snag) and conservative in color (matching your skin tone is always best).
- Make-up should be minimal, with lipstick and nail polish in conservative tones.
- Opt for a briefcase rather than a purse. No backpacks.

Business Dress:
- Conservative dark navy or gray wool-blend suit – skirt or pants. Beige or brown are also acceptable. Pants suits are acceptable in many industries, but it’s best to drive to the company (early morning or around 5 p.m.) several days before your interview to observe people’s attire. Or, check the company’s website for some clues about how conservative the culture and environment might be.
- A blazer with blouse and skirt is a possible second choice to a suit. Skirt length should be a little below the knee and never shorter than above the knee.

Business Casual Dress:
- A blazer with blouse and pants.
- A sweater set with dress pants may also be appropriate. For women, khaki pants are generally too casual. It’s best to wear black, navy, grey, or brown.

Adapted from:
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