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Professional Attire

Whether you are seeking a job or internship, interviewing for graduate school, or starting your first internship or professional job, making a great first-impression is critical. The first thing an employer, supervisor, or co-worker sees when they greet you is your appearance and attire. Although dressing appropriately will not get you the job, internship or promotion alone, it can set you apart from the competition in both a positive and negative way. Therefore, you must always make every effort to wear proper attire or as the cliché goes... “dress for success”!

PROPER INTERVIEW ATTIRE

How you present yourself will set the tone of the interview. If you show up looking too casual, the employer will assume that you are not taking the interview seriously. If you arrive over dressed, the employer will assume that you did not bother to do your research on the organization’s culture. It is very important to put some time into selecting what you will wear to an interview. What you choose to wear should fit the culture of the organization at which you plan to interview and make you feel confident. Spend some time researching the culture of the organization to determine the typical dress code. When in doubt, dress conservatively in business professional attire. A suit is the best choice.

Business Professional Tips For Women

- Wear a conservative suit in a solid dark color (skirt or pants are acceptable). The suit skirt should not hit higher than two inches above the knee and must fit properly without tightly clinging to the body.
- Choose a blouse to compliment the suit. Avoid bright colors and patterns if interviewing at a more traditional organization. Be sure the neckline is professional and modest.
- Always wear hose if wearing a skirt. Be sure you have extra pairs on hand.
- Limit the amount of jewelry you wear. Avoid large pieces that draw too much attention.
- Don't wear any perfume. Some individuals are very sensitive or even allergic to fragrances.
- Hair should be pulled back and away from the face so not to cause any distraction. Simple styles are best.
- Select a closed toe shoe in either a black, navy, or neutral color. Both flats and heels are acceptable. The heel should be a medium height (2 – 2 ½ inches). Be sure you can walk in whatever shoes you choose.

Business Professional Tips For Men

- Wear a conservative single-breasted suit in a solid color with a two, three, or four button jacket.
- Choose a darker color to carry more authority (charcoal, navy, dark gray, black).
- Select a 100% wool suit if possible. The fabric wears better than other material and looks more professional and traditional.
- Have your suit altered to fit you properly.
- Avoid colored shirts unless you know the organization’s culture well. A white, long-sleeved, cotton shirt is best. Be sure the collar is stiff but comfortable, the cuffs extend ¼ inch below the suit jacket sleeve, and the shirt has been ironed.
- Select a silk tie that complements and adds some color to your suit. Avoid loud colors and patterns. The width of the tie should be similar to the width of the suit jacket’s lapels. When tied, the bottom of the tie should touch your belt.
- Wear polished and well-maintained dress shoes in black, brown, or cordovan (dark burgundy). Pair the shoes with tall dress socks in a color that compliments the suit. Select a leather belt that matches your shoes and offsets the color of the suit (e.g. brown/tan/beige suit = brown or cordovan belt and shoes; black/navy/gray suit = black belt and shoes).
- Avoid cologne, be sure to shave and apply deodorant, and get a fresh haircut.

Business Casual Attire

Although some offices maintain business professional attire every day, many organizations operate on a business casual dress code. It is extremely important that you clarify what the dress code is before beginning a new position. It is easiest to think of business casual as a step down from business professional. It does not require a full suit, but many of the same business professional attire rules still apply.

Business Casual For Women

- Business dresses, skirts, or pants in wool, linen, or cotton blend materials (fit and length remain prime concerns)
- Blouses and sweaters (with sleeves) with modest necklines
- Blouse, blazer, and pair of pants in coordinating colors

Business Casual For Men

- Slacks in wool, linen, or cotton blends. Tan, black, gray, charcoal, navy, brown, and black are all acceptable colors.
- Dress shirts in solid colors or subtle patterns, sweaters, and sport coats are all appropriate.