

Dress for Success

When preparing what to wear for an interview, remember that what is safest is best. You do not want your physical appearance to distract the recruiter from getting to know you as a candidate. Note that while we do recommend a suit, if you do not have a suit and cannot get one for any reason, business casual is the next best option (see below).

Below are some general conventions. Remember that business-style dress is very traditional. If you do not feel comfortable following these conventions, just know that there may be risks associated. You get to make your own choices!

General Tips for Masculine and Feminine

Well-groomed hairstyle

Clean, trimmed fingernails

Feminine: If you wear nail polish, use clear or conservative color

Minimal, if any, cologne or perfume

Empty pockets - no bulges or jingling coins

Minimal jewelry – not too distracting

No gum, candy or cigarettes

Shoulder Bag or portfolio case

No visible body piercing (nose rings, eyebrow rings)

Business Professional Dress:

Masculine	Feminine
Two piece suit (navy blue, black or grey is best)	Knee-length skirt or pant suit with a jacket with a conservative blouse / professional looking dress ok
Necktie should be silk with a conservative pattern	Shoes with conservative heels
Dark polished shoes	Conservative hosiery/tights. Leggings are not pants
Dark socks (black is best)	Minimal use of makeup (it should not be too noticeable)
If you have a beard make sure it is neat and trimmed	One set of earrings only
No earrings (if you normally wear one, take it out)	No low-cut blouses or too-many buttons undone – showing cleavage is not appropriate

Business Casual Dress:

Masculine	Feminine
Unwrinkled cotton trousers with a belt	Ironed dress pants or knee length skirt / simple knee-length or longer dress is also appropriate (in plain colored, not patterned materials, with no velvet or shimmery fabrics)
Ironed long-sleeved shirt or nice polo shirt	Tailored blouse or tailored sweater or sweater set
Leather shoes (no athletic shoes or flip-flops)	Conservative hosiery/tights. Leggings are not pants
No white socks	Dress shoes (2 inch heel or less) – no athletic shoes or sandals that sound like flip-flops when you walk
If you have a beard make sure it is neat and trimmed	Minimal use of makeup (it should not be too noticeable)
	One set of earrings only
	No low-cut blouses or too-many buttons undone – showing cleavage is not appropriate

Websites to aid your preparation:

Examples of professional & business casual: <http://pinterest.com/uwmadisonlscs>

When Job-Hunting Dress for Success: www.quintcareers.com/dress_for_success.html

About.com Dressing for Success: <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewsnetworking/a/dressforsuccess.htm>

Remember, you can always get wardrobe advice from a Career Advisor or someone in your field of interest.

Here are some quick ironing tips. While using an actual iron and ironing board is best (and if you don't have both, now is probably a good time to invest!), in a pinch, you can try putting your clean, dry clothes in a clothes dryer for a few minutes (make sure you use a dryer sheet and have some static guard spray handy), or using steam (hang your clothes in the bathroom while you take a long, steamy shower).