



Interview Attire

First impressions are crucial in an interview situation. The clothes you wear, your hairstyle, everything that a recruiter knows about you before you say hello – all are part of that important first impression.

If you haven't bought a suit yet and aren't sure what to look for, get a knowledgeable friend or salesperson to help you choose a good quality, multi-seasonal, **conservative business suit**. Avoid salespeople who encourage you to select from "the latest styles." The latest style goes out of style very quickly. You want a garment that says "smart," not "trendy."

How many suits will you need for your interviews? Probably just one. Recruiters don't expect you to have a large career wardrobe, just an appropriate one, so don't feel at a disadvantage if you have to wear the same suit to more than one interview with the same employer. Unless your suit is highly distinctive, they aren't going to remember anyway. You can vary the look of a suit with a tie, jewelry, or a change of shirt or blouse (always spotless and wrinkle-free),.

Buy as good a suit as you can afford. Good quality can stand up to repeated wear and dry cleanings much longer than a poorly made garment. Shop until you find a suit that looks good, fits well, is made well, and that you won't get incredibly bored with if you have to wear it every day for a week when you're interviewing. Interviewing is a sitting-down activity, so be sure to sit in front of a mirror before you make your purchase. If the jacket gapes out or pinches or the skirt or pants are too short, keep shopping. Of course, there's more to "suiting up" for an interview than just wearing a suit:

Hair – You don't have to choose an ultra-conservative style that just isn't you – but you do need to help the recruiter focus on you and what you're saying rather than your "college style" haircut. Your hairstyle needs to "travel" well. Before most interviews, whether on or off campus, you'll be lucky if you have time to comb your hair much less attempt a major restoration. Women – leave those pretty hair bows at home; they just don't work with a suit. If you need a barrette for a pulled-back style, choose a simple design in metal or tortoise-shell.

Shoes – A nice shine on those shoes will be noticed. Men – wing tips or brogues (shoes with laces) project a much more professional look than slip-ons. Women – plain or moderately adorned low-heeled pumps are your best choice. No sling-backs or open toes. Save those for evening or social events.

Socks/Stockings – Gentlemen – always wear dark dress socks that cover your legs when you sit down. Ladies – a color that is very different from your own skin color is usually a mistake. Your legs should be "leg colored." Do not try to match your stockings to your suit (sometimes attempted with navy blue, but never successfully). White stockings aren't quite as bad as white socks on the guys; they're just a mistake

Accessories – Nothing that jingles, glitters, or otherwise attracts more attention than you do (e.g., pinky rings, ankle bracelets, and over-sized earrings). Should a man wear an earring? Perhaps. But if he does, he should know that some recruiters will feel that, like bolo ties, an earring may not fit the company image. Should a woman wear her engagement ring? Of course. Unless that shiny new diamond makes you feel a little self-conscious or you don't want your impending wedding to be an issue in the recruiter's mind. If you carry a portfolio, briefcase, or purse, it must look as tidy and professional as the rest of your outfit. If you have your book bag with you, leave it with the receptionist so you don't have to lug it into your interview. Don't worry about taking your book bag into an interview - recruiters know that in your real life you're a student and you carry books. Set it on the floor beside you and forget about it.

Fragrance – Many people are allergic to or offended by strong scents. Hair styling lotions are often heavily scented as well. Heavy fragrances may prompt your recruiter to cut your interview short.

Other Things To Think About. Makeup - simple, conservative, natural, professional. Fingernails - clean, tidy, "unremarkable." Eyeglasses – clean. And attend to your personal hygiene – your breath should be fresh, you should not have offensive body odor, and your clothes should not smell of cigarette smoke or spicy foods.