



# DRESS FOR SUCCESS

You never get a second chance to make a first impression. That's why it's important to put careful thought into how you dress for job interviews and meetings with business contacts.

It's all part of your personal brand. It's the package you present—your qualifications, your preparation and, yes, your style—when you meet someone who can help advance your career. You know you're a person with great potential. Follow these simple guidelines to make sure you look the part!



## General Guidelines

Dress codes in the workplace have relaxed considerably in recent years, which can make it tougher, not easier, to decide what to wear. While it's definitely better to over-dress than under-dress, looking too formal for an interview can suggest that you're not a good fit for the culture. That said, here are some general guidelines:

- Clothes should be in good condition, fit correctly, and be clean and lint free
- Wear dress shoes that are comfortable and clean
- Hair should be well groomed
- Fragrance—a light touch is better
- Bring essentials only—a professional bag, briefcase or portfolio
- Cellphone off!

## How to Research Employer Dress Codes

If you have an interview or it's your first day and you're unsure what to wear, here are a couple of ways to get an idea of what staff wears on an everyday basis.

- ✓ **Check out their social media accounts**  
Many employers post images of employees at work or at business functions. Look for everyday-type images (not dressy corporate events) to get a sense of the culture. Be sure to look for staff in functions similar to yours, as some teams' dress codes vary.
- ✓ **Call the hiring manager or HR department**  
You can ask explicit questions about an employer's dress code. Questions like: "How formal is the dress code?" or "Do most interviewees wear a suit?"

## ● *Business Professional*

Many large companies, especially in legal services and certain business fields such as finance, still require “business professional” attire. That means:

- Suit jacket and pants/skirt of matching colors
- Solid, dark or neutral colors
- Dress shirt or blouse underneath
- No bold stripes or bright prints/colors
- Ties are appropriate
- Dress shoes

## ● *Business Casual*

More and more companies operate with more relaxed standards of dress. If you determine beforehand that “business casual” is the dress code, here are a few hints to help understand what that means:

- Clean, pressed dress shirt or blouse
- Nice pants/slacks
- Skirts and dresses should be knee length or longer
- Shoes—clean and in good condition

## ● *Casual*

There are certain industries and job functions that promote a casual dress environment. Some tech start-up spaces and many creative industries feature workplaces with liberal (or non-existent) dress codes. In these environments, it’s a good idea to ask questions so you don’t break an unwritten rule, like no flip flops!

## GET FREE INTERVIEW ATTIRE FROM THE DEPAUL CAREER CLOSET!

Stocked with a variety of gently worn business professional clothing, students can choose and keep items from the Career Closet each academic year for free.

Schedule an appointment at DePaul’s Lincoln Park or Loop Career Closet by calling 773-325-7431. Walk-ins are also welcome!



*Regardless of the office culture and dress code, you should feel like yourself. This might involve wearing a statement necklace with a conservative tailored suit or wearing bespoke vintage wingtips that make you feel like a million bucks! Being confident about how you look will go a long way in an interview or on your first day!*