DRESS FOR SUCCESS
A workshop on professional dress

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General Guidelines

- Select **apparel, fragrances, jewelry, hairstyle**, etc. that do not detract from your professional image.
- Make sure your **hair is clean, neat and professionally styled**.
- Visible **tattoos** should be covered to avoid distraction.
- Remove **facial and body piercings** other than single ear jewelry for interviews.
- **Apparel** should be clean and neatly pressed.
- Apparel should fit well and remain in place while sitting and/or walking.
- Choose professional apparel that you like for which you receive positive feedback from people who are knowledgeable about the industry standard or specific company policy.
- **Less is more.** Keep your look simple and successful until you become accustomed to the environment and learn about the company’s dress code.
Guidelines for Women’s Interview Attire

- Use natural-looking makeup and clear nail polish. This keeps the focus on the interview.

- Do not carry a purse with a briefcase. Choose one or the other.

- Wear flat shoes or low pumps in colors that avoid making your feet a focal point. Be sure that they are clean and polished.

- Add accessories to express your personality and accentuate your best features.

- Women in general wear too many accessories at the same time such as earrings, necklaces, and rings.

- Learn how to tie scarves
Guidelines for Women’s Interview Attire

- Select a skirted suit, pantsuit or conservatively tailored dress that draws the eye to your face.

- Skirts are traditionally knee-length but those slightly shorter or longer are also acceptable.

- Select blouses or sweaters that provide visual interest, but avoid transparent, tight fit, or have low necklines, revealing waistlines or details that detract from your face as a focal point.

- Always wear hose to interviews. Wear plain-style, non-patterned hosiery and select colors that flatter your coloring.

- Perfume should never be strong. A fragrance can cause an allergic reaction or offend the interviewer. When in doubt, do not wear perfume.
Guidelines for Men’s Interview Attire

- Wear a **matching suit** in navy, black or gray (pinstripe or solid) or wear a navy blazer and gray dress slacks.

- Wear **white or a light blue dress shirt** that contrasts with the jacket and/or tie.

- A (silk or silk-like) **tie** should coordinate with the jacket and pant but choose one that strongly contrasts with the color of your shirt; selecting subtle or simple patterns enhances credibility.

- **Socks** should be calf-length or above the calf. Choose natural-fiber blends that allow a flow of air and do not hold in perspiration and heat. Choose colors such as dark blue, black or gray.

- Wear conservative, clean, and polished **shoes**.

- Select lace-up (not slip-on) **dress shoes**. The color should be dark or blend with pant.
Guidelines for Men’s Interview Attire

- Select a **leather belt** that visually blends or matches your shoes.
- A **short hair cut** and no facial hair is expected.
- **Minimize jewelry.** Avoid a necklace. Wear no more than one ring per hand and a dress watch. Be sure all jewelry supports a focus on the face.
- A **full-length coat** can be worn over your suit; avoid casual coats.
- **Cologne** should never be strong. A fragrance can cause an allergic reaction or offend the interviewer. When in doubt, do not wear cologne.
- Your **briefcase** is part of visual effect; consider a simple portfolio as an effective substitute, and try to select a color that supports your visual effect.
Additional Interviewing Attire
Tips for Men

- **Suits**
  - Choose a **conservative** single-breasted, 2, 3, or 4-button jacket.
  - **100% wool** looks and wears better than any other material.
  - **Darker suits** (dark gray, charcoal, olive, navy) carry more authority, but avoid black (it’s too formal).
  - **Solid colors and pinstripes** are best, as long as the pinstripes are muted and narrow. Avoid flashy or showy fabrics.
  - Make sure your suit is **altered** to fit properly – sleeves should break just below your wrists.
  - Pants should be **pleated and cuffed**.
  - A working price range for a good suit is **$300-$500**.
  - **Stores** to consider for best value and price are Men’s Warehouse, Stein Mart, Macy’s, and Dillard’s.
Additional Interviewing Attire Tips for Women

- Suits:
  - Choose a conservative-style suit in a solid, basic color. Darker colors generally work best.
  - Buy the skirt that goes with the jacket, and if possible, buy pants and a printed skirt that matches the jacket as well.
  - Suit skirts should be no higher than 2” above the knees.
  - You don’t have to spend a ton of money to look professional. Good quality suits can be found at Macy’s, Dillard’s, Marshalls, Stein Mart and T.J. Maxx.
Women’s Dress Example 1
Women’s Dress Example 2
Women’s Dress Example 3
Women’s Dress Example 4
Women’s Dress Example 5
Women’s Dress Example 6
Women’s Dress Example 7
Women’s Dress Example 8
Men’s Dress Example 1
Men’s Dress Example 2
Men’s Dress Example 3
Men’s Dress Example 4
Men’s Dress Example 5
Men’s Dress Example 6
Dressing on a Tight Budget

- Don’t wait until you are pressed for time and have to make a hasty decision or a choice that is not in your budget.

- Invest in impressive, classic, well-made separates that can be combined for a 'professional' or 'casual Friday' look.

- Begin by selecting your best ‘neutral’ as a nucleus for a professional wardrobe.

- Purchase matching components. Having options such as wearing a skirt or pant with jacket or vest multiplies possible combinations.

- Use shirts/blouses/sweaters to create variety of visual effects.

- Select ties/scarves and jewelry that add to possible visual variety.

- Consider investing in season-less fabrics that drape and travel well, such as lightweight stretch wool, washable matte jersey or a blend of cotton and rayon.
Research

- Find out what the dress code is for the industry that you are interested in. When you research the company you will often get an idea of the dress code for employees. Ask career counselors, faculty, and professionals in your field of interest if you are unsure.

- The job seeker should dress for a position two levels higher than the one for which she/he is being interviewed.

- The level of formality you project shows that you understand the importance of the situation and respect the person you are meeting.

- Once you’ve been hired, it’s a good idea to ask your boss or the human resources department for a copy of the organization’s dress code policy.
References

- Professional Image Consultant (http://www.professionalimagedress.com/)
- Oracle Professional Dress for Success (http://www.dba-oracle.com/dress_code.htm)
- Professional Image Dress (http://www.business.appstate.edu/career/pro_dress.asp)
- Dress to impress: a guide (http://amdt.wsu.edu/research/dti/index.htm)

* Websites accessed on 8/11/14
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