

Business Attire

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Importance of Appropriate Attire

First impressions are often lasting impressions, so it is essential to always dress appropriately for in person or virtual interviews, recruiting events, or any situation where you may be formally or informally evaluated. During interviews or networking situations, inappropriate attire can be distracting to employers, and most individuals want to be judged based on their skills, accomplishments, and their ability to respond intelligently to interview questions, not their attire. Although important, your attire and grooming should only take a supporting role in an interview. Dressing appropriately for an interview signals to the recruiter that you care about the interview and that you understand the employer and their industry. It is safest to adhere to the Business Professional dress guidelines, detailed in this guide, for any interview unless you have been given other instructions from the employer.

Types of Business Attire

Business Professional: In situations where you will be formally evaluated, such as in person or virtual interviews, dressing in business professional is typically the best option. For students, business professional dress is a conservative suit with the jacket and bottom pieces matching in both fabric and color. Business professional is required for the McCombs Career Expo and on-campus interviews. See the detailed descriptions later in this guide.

Business Casual: For less formal events, like information sessions, students may choose to wear business casual. However, do not be fooled; business casual is a safe, less-structured, middle-of-the-road interpretation of day-to-day business attire. At this level, jackets and blazers are optional, but preferred. Be sure that arms are covered with a cardigan, pullover sweater, or long sleeve shirt. See the detailed descriptions later in this guide.

Casual: At some point you may have the opportunity to attend some type of casual extracurricular activity with an employer, such as a baseball game. This event may seal the deal for you, so making the right impression is extremely important. Dress appropriately for the weather and activity, but as always, remember modesty. This look has only two pieces (top with a skirt or slacks), yet must still look presentable in the office. Asking the recruiter is always a good safeguard against dressing too formally or too casually.

Examples of common business attire situations:

Business Professional

Interviews
Office Visits
Career Fairs

Business Casual

Networking Receptions (usually)
Information Sessions
Etiquette Dinners

Note: Events listed in RecruitMcCombs will typically have attire requirements listed. No matter what the recruiter wears for your interview, the appropriate attire for you as a student being interviewed is typically business professional. That being said, there are some industries (e.g., technology, fashion) that may have different attire expectations, and we suggest meeting with a Career Coach to determine what is most appropriate for your interview or recruiting event.

Business Professional At A Glance



- Dress pant, skirt, or dress suit in black, charcoal, or navy
- Dress shirt or blouse in white or conservative color
- Solid or simple pattern tie
- Dress shoes in dark colors
- Dress belt in dark color
- Dark colored socks matching suit
- Remove pocket and vent stitches

Business Casual At A Glance



- Dress pant or skirt in black, charcoal, gray, brown, or khaki
- Dress shirt or blouse in conservative color and pattern
- Dress shoes in dark colors
- Dress belt in dark color
- Dark colored socks matching dress pant or skirt

Business Professional

Jackets, Pants/Skirts

Fabric	Wool, lightweight wool blend solid-colored, matching, two-piece suit (jacket with pants or jacket with skirt); skirts should fall at or just above the knee; three piece suits with vests are not recommended
Colors	Solid color black, dark gray, navy blue
Buttons	Matching fabric-covered or dark resin

Shirts, Tops, Blouses, Shoes

Fabric	Cotton, silk, silk blends, cotton/poly blends
Sleeves	Long sleeved, collared dress shirts with suit jackets; camisoles or blouses under suit jackets; avoid sleeveless ensembles
Colors	White, cream, light blue, conservative colors for dress shirts; blouses or camisoles should also be in conservative colors and/or patterns

Accessories

Shoes	Polished shoes with matching socks or closed toed shoes with a low heel or flats; match shoes color to suit color (black or navy shoes with black or navy suit; navy or black shoes with grey suit); avoid open-toed shoes, sandals, athletic shoes, and boots
Ties	Select a conservatively colored, high-quality, non-distracting tie

Business Casual

Jackets, Pants/Skirts

Fabric	Cotton blend, cotton, wool, high sheen silk
Colors	Black, dark gray, earth tones, or darker colors like navy blue, maroon, etc.
Buttons	Metal gilt (e.g., silver), white, or clear plastic

Shirts, Tops, Blouses

Fabric	Cashmere sweaters, textured cotton blends, medium-lightweight sweaters
Sleeves	Long dress shirts; long or short sleeved blouses or sweaters; avoid sleeveless ensembles
Colors	Pastels, earth tones, cream, black, darker shades of any color; avoid neon colors or flashy prints

Accessories

Shoes	Opt for leather dress shoes in black, brown, or navy; avoid open-toed shoes, sandals, athletic shoes, and boots
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Building Your Business Wardrobe

Suits can vary greatly in price. You do not need to purchase an expensive suit to look professional. There are many reasonably priced options available to help you build a recruiting wardrobe.

Tips for buying a suit:

- If you are on a budget, a black suit might be ideal since it is easier to break up into separates when you are going for a business casual look
- Since you will likely just be buying one suit while in college, we recommend avoiding pinstripes since it may be more difficult to accessorize and wear as separates
- Skirt suits – When trying on the suit, sit down in the dressing room to make sure it is not too short once you are seated. Make sure the slits in the skirt are not too high as well
- Watch for sales. Suits often go on sale around holidays
- Use coupons. You can sign up for emails from many stores and get coupons straight to your email box, and some department stores will post their coupons on their website or in their weekly ads

Tips for wearing and maintaining your suit:

- Don't forget to remove tags, suit tacking, loose threads, lint, etc. Tacking is thread sewn in an "X" on the back of the jacket (on the slit) or on the slit of the skirt. The stitched tag label on the suit sleeve should also be removed
- When having your suit cleaned, be sure to get all pieces cleaned at the same time so they wear evenly

Stores that typically carry business professional and/or business casual attire:

- **Department Stores or Malls:** Macy's, Dillard's, Kohl's, Express, Banana Republic, Ann Taylor, LOFT, H&M
- **Factory Outlets:** Banana Republic, Ann Taylor, LOFT, New York & Company, Nordstrom Rack, Perry Ellis, Kenneth Cole, Van Heusen, Saks Off 5th (be sure to shop around as outlets are not always cheaper)
- **Specialty Clothing Stores:** Men's Warehouse, K&G Fashion Superstore
- **Discount Stores:** Marshall's, TJ Maxx, Ross, Burlington Coat Factory, Target
- **Resale or Consignment Shops:** GW boutique (Goodwill higher end items), Second Looks, Second Time Around
- **Online:** Overstock.com, Amazon, Ebay, etc. (be careful with the fit, read the reviews, check return policies, and know you might need to get items tailored)

Recommendations:

- Wrinkle and lint free clothing
- Opt for a padfolio to hold interviewing documents (resume, reference notes, etc.); we recommend leather or synthetic material padfolios in black, navy, or dark brown
- Polished, professional shoes that are easy for you to walk in
- Jewelry and makeup in moderation
- Minimize the use of cologne or perfume
- Avoid short or tight-fitting clothing
- Avoid low cut, sheer, and sleeveless blouses
- Avoid distracting patterns and colors
- Avoid open-toe or high-heel shoes or sandals
- Remove suit sleeve stitched tag label, pocket and vent stitching

General Grooming Tips

- **Hair:** Clean and neatly styled, no wet hair; if you are interviewing in more conservative industries a fresh haircut is suggested. No chest hair visible at chest line (trim, if necessary).
- **Facial Hair:** Clean shaven or trimmed very short and neat.
- **Nails:** Clean, trimmed, neatly manicured. No extreme colors, length, or patterns of any kind.
- **Cosmetics:** Makeup should be conservative; aim for a natural, polished look.
- **Perfume/Cologne:** Use very little or not at all, clothes should be odor-free (no smoke smell!).
- **Tattoos:** Cover tattoos if possible.
- **Piercings:** Remove all facial and body piercings; Optional: one earring per ear.
- **Backpacks:** Do not take a backpack to an on-site interview.
- **Purse:** A small, conservative handbag or business tote bag is acceptable.

Instructions for Tying a Tie

Select a conservatively colored, high-quality, non-distracting tie made of 100% pure silk.

How to Tie a Windsor Knot

- 1) Start with the wide end of the tie on the right and the small end on the left. The tip of the small end should rest slightly above your belly-button (this will vary depending on your height and the length & thickness of your tie). Only move the active (wide) end.
- 2) Wide end over the small end to the left.
- 3) Under the small end and to the right.
- 4) Up to the center, towards neck loop.
- 5) Through the neck loop and to the left.
- 6) Across the front, over to the right.
- 7) Up into the neck loop from underneath.
- 8) Down through the loop you've just created in the front.
- 9) Tighten the knot by pulling down on the wide end. Slide the knot up & adjust.



FOUR-IN-HAND



HALF-WINDSOR



WINDSOR

Source and additional videos and pictures can be found at: www.ties.com/how-to-tie-a-tie.

Attire for Virtual Events

We recommend you dress for any virtual recruiting event in the same professional attire as you would if the event were taking place in person. Although a virtual event may seem more casual, please remember that you are being evaluated and your attire is part of the overall impression you are making as you interact with alumni, recruiters, and employers.

Tips:

- Some employers may request that students turn on video during an information session or other recruiting events. There may also be an opportunity for 1-to-1 video chat during virtual recruiting events. You don't want to be caught off guard in overly casual clothing. Dress as you would if the recruiting event were being held in person.
- When possible we recommend that you dress professionally from head to toe when interviewing on video or over the phone. Most individuals feel more confident and behave more professionally when they are dressed professionally. You also don't run the risk of being seen in your gym shorts should you unexpectedly have to stand up.
- If you are attending a virtual events between classes on campus and are not able bring a full suit to business casual attire, we recommend you have a blazer or suit jacket that can be easily transported to elevate your wardrobe.
- Attire for virtual events should always be listed in RecruitMcCombs, but contact your Career Coach if you have any questions.

For additional information on preparing for virtual interviews please see the *Virtual Interview Tips* resource on the [Resources](#) page of the Career Management website.

UT Outpost: Career Closet on Campus

The UT Outpost houses a Career Closet which provides free clothing for work, interviews, and internships, as well as a Food Pantry. UT Outpost resources are free to any enrolled UT student.

For current hours and more information visit: deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/utoutpost.php

I greatly appreciate the resource that the McCombs School of Business has created, the reason it is downloaded on my site is that the link kept changing and I didn't want to lose the resource myself (I refer people to it all the time). I am in no way trying to take credit for their work, only take advantage of something that a friend shared with me years ago.

For my purposes, and the people I most commonly refer it to, I often add that in our case more color and expressive pieces are acceptable, and I personally encourage the use of personal style in some professional settings. The advice here is a great starting point with very practical advice for students, but I don't want to totally discourage people like myself who enjoy wearing brighter colors.