

Dressing for an Interview

What is considered appropriate and normal in one office may not be suitable in another. The range is wide in different fields, geographic regions and industries. We differentiate **two categories of attire in the workplace—business casual and professional**. For fields that do not fall in these categories, consult peers, professors, advisors, alumni and the internet before attending interviews or going to the organization for the first time.

When you attend an interview, the rule is to dress a little nicer than people dress on a daily basis at the organization. For example, if you are interviewing at a farm and people wear jeans and tennis shoes, leather shoes and khakis might be appropriate. If it's a bank where people wear slacks and button ups, one step up might be a suit.

Business Casual

- Often used for daily workplace wear
- More room for creativity and unique style
- Pants or capris
- Skirts or dresses that are at just above the knee or longer
- Darker, non-ripped jeans
- Tie or no tie
- Typically no tennis or lace-up shoes
- Typically no graphic tees
- Depending on the organization, visible tattoos and piecing may be acceptable.

Professional

- Can be for daily wear, but is often for special, significant days/events
- Simple, solid fabrics in darker colors
- Blazer, dress or suit coat is typically expected
- Ties are common with button-up shirts
- Close-toed shoes
- Typically, tattoos and piercings should not be visible if possible.

Keep in Mind

- You are **representing yourself and your aspirations** let your appearance reflect that. Pay attention to appropriate hygiene and clean clothes.
- **Employers make decisions based on limited data and first impressions;** so be intentional about the messages you convey and learn from each interaction. If you make a mistake in an interview, try something new next time.
- Always **be yourself!** There is plenty of room within both dress categories to stay true to yourself and show personal style with accessories, patterns and colors.
- Regardless of the type of interview, **dress in a way that makes you comfortable** and aligns with your identity.