

# Dress For Success

Dressing professionally for job interviews shows respect and emphasizes your interest in the position for which you have applied. Generally speaking, interview attire should be conservative in nature, clean and in good repair, and should align with the professional standards in the field for which you are interviewing.

## General Guidelines

- Invest in a suit, as most students will need one for interviews. If you are on a budget, scout online sales and check out stores like TJ Maxx, Marshalls and local department stores.
- Plan your outfit and try it on before your interview. You will want it to fit well and be comfortable. Alterations are available at many department stores or dry cleaners, if needed.
- Wrinkles can kill even the best looking ensemble. Take time to iron shirts, suits and/or dresses.
- Be mindful that interview clothing is often very conservative and traditional. Consider how others might view your grooming, piercings, tattoos, skirt length, heel height, etc. and adjust your look if needed.
- Accessories, cosmetics and fragrances should complement your ensemble, not overpower it.
- If your tradition requires it, religious dress is appropriate for interviews. Some garments may be excluded from the day-to-day work environment if they pose a health or safety concern.
- If you are not sure what to wear, ask a career advisor!



## Formal Business Dress (expected at employment interviews, unless otherwise directed)

### Men

**Suit:** Choose a matching pair of pants and a jacket in a dark color like navy, grey or black. It should fit comfortably.

**Shirt:** White or light-colored, collared, long-sleeved shirts are standard. Your shirt should always be ironed.

**Shoes:** Dark-colored leather shoes in a classic style are standard. Shoes should be clean and well-polished.

**Socks:** Dark-colored and long enough that you can cross your legs without showing skin.

**Ties & Accessories:** Choose a simple tie pattern - not too flashy or informal - in a color that coordinates with your suit. Belts should complement your shoes and have a simple buckle. Portfolios should be leather and plain. A watch and other minimal jewelry, such as a wedding band, can be appropriate.

**Women** (Women's fashion offers more flexibility than men's styles, but should reflect the culture of the organization.)

**Suit:** Skirt/pants suits or a jacket and matching dress can be appropriate choices. Choose cool or dark colors, in a solid or simple pattern. Skirts should be no shorter than just above the knee. Neutral-colored nylons, without patterns, should always be worn with a skirt suit or dress. Jackets should button without pulling.

**Shirt:** Long-sleeved blouses in a wide range of colors are appropriate. Avoid low-cut styles and tight button up shirts.

**Shoes:** Select dark or neutral-colored dress shoes, low enough to walk in comfortably. Avoid open-toed or sling-back styles.

**For Transgender Individuals:** Choose to follow professional dress standard recommendations above or androgynous professional dress, which trends toward masculine attire.

**Business Casual** (expected at employer information sessions, employer-sponsored receptions or dinners, and alumni receptions and events)

**Rule of thumb:** Dress one notch down from formal business attire. This will differ across industries.

# Colgate University

Center for Career Services

[colgate.edu/careerservices](http://colgate.edu/careerservices)



[ccs@colgate.edu](mailto:ccs@colgate.edu) 228-7380

