

PRESENTED BY: OUT@KELLEY



QUEER PROFESSIONAL HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Queer students have individualized needs that can require different methods of navigating the professional world, which this handbook aims to help with. This is meant to serve as a supplement to the Kelley Undergraduate Career Services (UCS) handbook, providing more relevant details for queer, transgender, and gender nonconforming students.

While this aims to serve as a more general inclusive professional resource, it is important to state that this is not a comprehensive guide to professionalism as it relates to queer identity. Queerness can encompass diverse experiences, and how individuals adopt these guidelines may vary from person to person. Additionally, this resource may cover only some intersections of identities that you may hold. The Kelley Office of Diversity Initiatives (KODI) anti-racism guide and UCS are great resources to consult and can serve as a more comprehensive guide for identities both inside and outside of the LGBTQ+ community.

While this handbook has some limitations, we hope that it will serve as a starting point to better equip LGBTQ+ students to navigate the workplace setting in terms of attire, interviews, recruiting, and company culture. If you need additional resources or support, the LGBTQ+ Culture Center, Undergraduate Career Services, and online resources like the HRC are available and listed at the end of this handbook.





GENERAL TIPS

1.

Research the industry you are interested in to see what attire is the "norm."

- More formal industries like finance and law typically wear more muted colors and understated patterns
- In creative industries like advertising, fashion, etc., there is more freedom to express yourself through bold colors and patterns

2.

Before your interview, do some research on the company. Look for photos if possible, to get a sense of what employees typically dress like and how formal the company's attire is.

3.

Jewelry is a great way to add a personal touch, but in formal settings, go for something understated.

Professional attire doesn't always have to be expensive. Some affordable options include:

4.

- Buying secondhand online on websites like eBay, Poshmark, or Depop, or in person at stores like Goodwill or Plato's Closet
- Borrow clothes from a friend if you only need them for a short period of time
- Look into local resources like the LGBTQ+ Culture Center's Gender Affirming Closet or My Sister's Closet

TYPES OF ATTIRE

THE THREE MAIN TYPES OF ATTIRE ARE BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL, BUSINESS CASUAL, AND SMART CASUAL.

- **BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL** ATTIRE IS WORN AT COMPANIES WITH STRICTER DRESS CODES. SOME INDUSTRIES WHERE THIS IS COMMON ARE **FINANCE, GOVERNMENT, AND LAW**. IT IS ALSO COMMONLY WORN DURING INTERVIEWS.
- **BUSINESS CASUAL** ATTIRE IS WORN IN MANY OFFICES. THIS DRESS IS PREVALENT IN **EDUCATION, MEDIA AND MARKETING** COMPANIES, AND **NONPROFITS**. IT IS ALSO WORN DURING INTERVIEWS WITH MORE CASUAL COMPANIES.
- **SMART CASUAL** ATTIRE IS COMMON IN INFORMAL AND FLEXIBLE OFFICES. FOR EXAMPLE, **TECH AND STARTUP** COMPANIES OFTEN HAVE A SMART CASUAL DRESS CODE.

WE RECOMMEND OPTING FOR BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL ATTIRE DURING INTERVIEWS UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.



BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL

- DARK SUITS WHERE THE JACKET MATCHES PANTS OR SKIRT
- BLOUSES OR BUTTON-DOWN SHIRTS TUCKED IN
- TIES, BELTS, AND MINIMAL JEWELRY
- CLOSED-TOE DRESS SHOES, FLATS, LOAFERS, AND HEELS

BUSINESS CASUAL

- SLACKS, KHAKIS, TROUSERS, OR SKIRTS
- BLOUSES, COLLARED OR BUTTON-DOWN SHIRTS, SWEATERS, OR CARDIGANS
- MODEST DRESSES
- SPORT COATS OR BLAZERS
- TIE OPTIONAL
- FLATS, LOAFERS, BOOTS, AND HEELS



SMART CASUAL

- DARK JEANS, SLACKS, KHAKIS, TROUSERS, OR SKIRTS
- BLOUSES, COLLARED OR BUTTON-DOWN SHIRTS, CASUAL SWEATERS, OR UNTUCKED SHIRTS
- DRESSES
- JEWELRY, BELTS, AND SCARVES
- FLATS, LOAFERS, BOOTS, HEELS, AND CLEAN SNEAKERS

GENDER EXPRESSION IN A PROFESSIONAL SETTING

WHILE THERE ARE SOME GUIDELINES ON HOW TO DRESS IN A PROFESSIONAL SETTING, THERE ARE WAYS TO ALTER TRADITIONAL PROFESSIONAL DRESS THROUGH TAILORING OR SAFELY BINDING IF DESIRED.

BINDER SAFETY

When wearing a binder in any setting, it is crucial to prioritize safety. In a professional atmosphere, try to make your binder comfortable to help make you feel more comfortable and confident.

Consider consulting your doctor if you plan to use a binder regularly. For more information on binders, consult the resources listed in the additional resources section, which includes a comprehensive list of brands of binders and more detailed safety information.

- Only use a specially designed garment for binding and not tape or bandages, which can restrict breathing and cause harm
- Wear the correct size binder. going too small can risk bodily harm and does not necessarily make the binder more effective
- Listen to your body; if the binding starts to hurting, remove it. As a rule of thumb, never bind for more than 8 hours and take breaks as needed throughout the day



CLOTHING FIT AND TAILORING

The way your clothing fits your body is also an important aspect to consider while choosing an outfit for a professional setting. Picking a fit of clothing that makes you comfortable while still remaining professional can help make dressing professionally less of a hassle.

Here are some general clothing fit tips to consider:

- Make sure the hems of pants or skirts do not drag on the ground; you can sew or even safety pin hems up yourself
- If you prefer baggier clothes, opt for loose and flowy, but not overly baggy tailoring
- Clothes labeled male or female may have different cuts & silhouettes: experiment with what clothes you feel most comfortable in.

INTERVIEW TIPS: RESEARCH

It is always important to research the company you're interviewing with, but when you're queer there is an added layer of research to make sure the company will be accepting of all your identities.

Important Things To Research:

- Company values and mission statement
- Employee resource groups for queer employees and any other identities you hold
- Reviews and posts from current or past employees on websites like Glassdoor and LinkedIn
- If it is well known, ask around your professional network to gauge public opinion about the company

All this being said, it's not difficult for a company to only put on an accepting front, so the most reliable way to get answers to your questions will be having transparent conversations with people who work at the company or in the industry. One way to find these people is to follow these steps through LinkedIn:

1. Click in the search bar and hit 'enter' without typing anything in
2. Click 'People' to see only people's profiles
3. Click 'Current Company' and click on the company you're interested in
4. You can add additional filters if you'd like (such as School)
5. Finally, click back into the search bar and search for keywords such as "queer", "LGBTQ+", "Out 4 Undergrad", or the name of the company's Pride ERG

You may have to try some if not all of these keywords to find people you could reach out to on LinkedIn. You may have heard in your business classes that Kelley graduates love helping other Kelley students, and this sentiment is definitely shared by many Queer professionals as well. Finally, don't be scared to ask meaningful, transparent, and difficult questions. You want to be sure a company will support you and your identities (and don't worry, there are plenty of companies that will)!

NETWORKING AS A QUEER PERSON

Mentioning your queer identity while networking with new people can be a daunting task, but being queer and being professional are not mutually exclusive. Here are some tips and ways to bring up these identities.

1.

Bring up an organization you're a part of (whether that's Out @ Kelley, Queer Student Union, or even if you attended a queer conference such as Out 4 Undergrad). This can be a low-stakes way to show you have a passion for queer excellence!

2.

Ask questions that speak to what's important to you! Examples of questions could be: "Does your office have a gender-neutral bathroom?" "I'm interested in joining the Queer ERG, what can you tell me about it?" Or even if you want to be more discreet, you can ask a question like: "What's your favorite event the Pride ERG has put on?"

3.

Simply mentioning your pronouns can do so much! An accepting professional will oftentimes thank you for sharing your pronouns, and even share their own if they're comfortable. Body language and facial expressions could make it known if the professional/interviewer you're speaking with isn't as accepting.



TAILORING YOUR RESUME

Similar to networking as a queer person, if you want to make sure a company knows about your identity and is accepting, there are a few ways to introduce yourself in your resume and cover letter.

- Once again, don't overlook the power of simply including your pronouns under your name!
- If you're involved with a queer organization, mention it! Even if you don't hold a leadership position, feel free to make it its own line by writing "Other Involvements:" or something similar.

Add an 'Interests and Skills' section and don't be scared to add interests such as: 'Queer Justice', 'Drag', or even 'Pride Rallies'. Just make sure you actually have an interest in the topic and you'd be able to talk about it!



COVER LETTERS

Companies are hoping to see you have a set of skills and personalities that mesh with the job. Telling a story is a great way to show the recruiter this. Think back to the experiences and stories you'd be willing to share.

Here are some ideas about what to share in a cover letter if you want to highlight your experiences as a queer person:

- Perhaps your coming out story had a lot to do with determination or perseverance.
- Maybe attending a queer conference displayed your professionalism and leadership skills.
- Even planning an event for other queer people in your community could have taught you problem-solving and collaboration.

More than anything, don't be afraid to reach out for help. There are many people at IU who want to make sure your experience in starting to navigate the professional world is as smooth as possible. See additional resources below!



CONCLUSION

Once again, while this is not a completely comprehensive guide, we hope that it helps queer students to navigate professional spaces without sacrificing self-expression or feeling the need to hide their identity.

Special thanks to Out@Kelley and Kelley Student Government for making this handbook possible in an effort to make Kelley a more inclusive professional space.

This handbook would not have been possible without the team involved, thank you to all of you.

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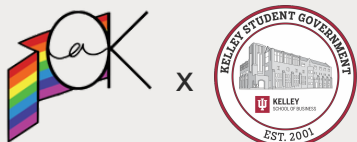
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RESOURCES AT IU

- LGBTQ+ Culture Center Gender Affirming Closet
 - Free clothes for transgender and gender non-conforming IU students
- My Sister's Closet
 - Free professional clothes for job interviews
- Undergraduate Career Services
 - For assistance with interviews and resumes
- Out@Kelley
 - For leadership opportunities and professional development
- Queer Student Union
- Walter Center for Career Achievement
- Career Development Center

BINDER SAFETY RESOURCES

- Terre Haute Pride Center Binder Safety Resources
- Trans Guys Chest Binding 101
- Your primary care doctor
 - If you are unsure if talking to your doctor is safe, look at outcarehealth.org to find LGBTQ+ affirming healthcare providers in your area

GENERAL RESOURCES

- Human Rights Campaign
- Coming Out at Work
- ProGayJobs.com
- Corporate Equality Index
- Out & Equal Workplace Advocates