

Guidance on Business Attire

NC STATE

Poole College of Management

Career Center

First Impressions Matter...

Make A Great One.

Types of Business Attire

Business Professional

Appropriate for interviews, career fairs, career treks, and some company presentations and corporate events.

Business Casual

Often used in less formal events, such as company information sessions. Interpretations of business casual can vary widely, but for students seeking employment, business casual should align with the more conservative end of the spectrum.

Business Professional

Jackets, Trousers, Skirts

Wool, lightweight wool blend suits (solid or light pinstripe)

Skirts knee length

Navy blue, dark gray preferable; black OK for skirt suits and dresses

Jacket and bottom pieces should match in both fabric and color

Tops, Shirts

100% cotton, cotton/poly blends, silk/silk blends (for blouses) with appropriate undergarments; neutral patterns, use color conservatively

With ties, use white or light blue shirts, conservative in color and pattern

All buttons buttoned with high-quality tie in conservative color/pattern; no low necklines for dresses/blouses (one button unbuttoned is OK)

Long sleeve preferable



Business Casual

Jackets, Trousers, Skirts

Cotton blend, heavyweight wools; cotton, linen or high-shine silk OK for blouses

Pants/dresses in earth-tones, tan, grey, blue, black

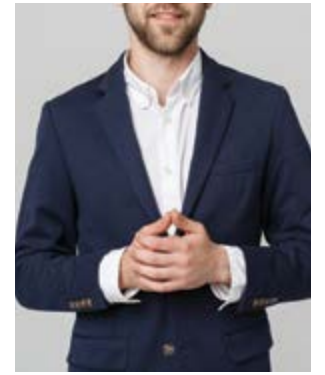
Tops, Shirts

Medium weight sweaters, cotton or cotton blends

Top button unbuttoned with jacket; tie if no jacket

Long sleeve (or short sleeve, if a dress); shoulders should be covered

Earth-tones, ivory, black, dark shades



What Not to Wear

Shirts

Short-sleeve, Trendy dress shirts, Untucked shirts, Flannel, V-necks, Tank tops, Muscle/Athletic tees, Revealing necklines, Excessive ruffles, Spaghetti straps, Camisole-styles without a jacket, Halter tops, Strapless tops, Backless or sleeveless styles



Suit/Pants/Skirts

Too short or too long. Plaids/loud patterns, 3-piece suits, Sloppy or oversized, Khakis/Dockers, Too tight “skinny” dress pants, Any shorts or capri pants, Minis, Skirts above the knee



Materials

See-through anything, Denim or spandex, 100% linen or any easy to wrinkle material, Worn out materials, Satin, Sequins, Rhinestones, Feathers



Colors

Harsh, Bright, Faded, Metallics/excessive shine, Gimmicky styles, Garish prints, Outdated fads, Patterned or dark hose or tights



Shoes

Worn out shoes, Brightly colored shoes, Athletic shoes, Boots, Dock shoes, Platform, Stilettos, Strappy sandals, Heels taller than 3 inches, Sparkly shoes, Open-toed shoes



Rules for Accessories

	DO	DON'T
Jewelry	Minimal	Gaudy, statement pieces, costume jewelry
Earrings	Minimal	Dangling, large or multiple
Necklaces	Minimal	Crafts, costume jewelry
Bracelets	Minimal	Dangling, bangles, noisy
Scarves	Hand-rolled edging, silk, poly blends	Garish prints
Belts	Match shoes in color and material, simple buckle	Novelty, western, large and bulky buckles
Bags	Small, conservative handbag or business tote bag, black or brown polished leather bag	Satin or straw, fringed, loud prints, bright colors, large sack style, backpacks
Socks	Dark colors best, lightweight, matching your pants, long enough so skin doesn't show when you cross your leg	Sport socks, thick, heavy, white, bright colors or busy patterned hosiery
Shoes	High sheen leather, black, navy or brown, thin soles, classic heel no higher than 3", matching color to belt	Chunky, stilettos, spike heels, open-toe, canvas, athletic, sandals, boots
Ties	Silk, conservative color/pattern (limited to three colors)	Bow ties, loud print/colors, gimmicky “cute”

General Tips

Hair: Clean and neatly styled, no wet hair, no bright/excessive colors or hairstyles (if you are interviewing in more conservative industries you may need to go for a shorter haircut)

Facial Hair: Clean shaven (especially for conservative industries like banking or consulting) or trimmed very neat

Shoes: Polished and in good condition

Details: Remember to remove tags, suit tacking stitches, loose threads, lint, and have clothes well pressed; the stitched tag label on the outside of suits should be removed; do not button the bottom button on your suit jacket

Nails: Clean, trimmed, neatly manicured, no extreme colors or lengths

Cologne/Perfume: Use very little or not at all, clothes should be odor free (no smoke or food smell)

Breath: Fresh! Keep mints nearby, but no gum chewing!

Tattoos: Cover all tattoos

Backpacks: Do not take a backpack to an interview

Padfolio: Opt for a padfolio to hold interviewing documents (resume, references, notes, etc.) versus a briefcase; padfolio should be a dark leather or synthetic material

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