

Dressing for the Interview

The wardrobe you have here at the University of Houston may be very different from what you will need at your place of employment. Venturing into the workplace may be cause for a drastic change in your wardrobe. No matter what your style, it is best to dress on the conservative side when interviewing for a new job; however, each company will have its own guidelines. It is important to know your future or potential employer before you meet them. How liberal or conservative is the dress code? A suit is the best way to go for both men and women. Contact Human Resources to inquire about appropriate dress. Make sure whatever you wear you feel confident.

SOME BASIC GUIDELINES:

MEN

Clothes: A two-piece suit will suffice in most instances. Solid colors and tightly woven fabrics are safer than bold prints or patterns. Bright ties bring focus to the face, but a simple pattern is the best for an interview.

Shoes: Wear polished shoes with dark socks high enough so no skin is visible when you sit down and cross your legs.

Hair: Should be clean, neat, and recently trimmed. Shave off beards or trim other facial hair; this includes nose and ear. Pull back longer hair or dreadlocks.

Jewelry: Probably only one pierced ear is acceptable, depending on the job and the field. Piercings other than the ears are not recommended for the interview. If you are going to wear a watch, wear a dress watch.

Tattoos: Should be covered.

Smells: Go light on aftershave/ cologne/ aromatic oils. You want them to listen to your words, not think about how you smell. Be freshly showered and use deodorant.

WOMEN

Clothes: A suit with a knee-length skirt or dress pants and a tailored blouse is most appropriate. Consider dark navy and gray. Although even the most conservative organization allows more feminine looks these days, accessories should be kept simple. Basic pumps, modest jewelry, and a minimal amount of make-up are acceptable.

Hair: Clean, neat, and recently trimmed. If you fiddle with your hair or it gets in your way, pull it back off your face. Natural looking colors are more widely accepted. If you have dreadlocks, pull them back.

Jewelry: In most cases, wear small, unobtrusive jewelry. One set of earrings, a necklace, watch, etc. is recommended, unless you are going to a "creative" job. No noisy bracelets, bangles, etc. Piercings other than ears are not recommended for the interview.

Tattoos: Should be covered.

Smells: Go light on perfume/ cologne/ aromatic oils, or do not wear any at all. Be freshly showered and use deodorant.

Staying Within a Budget:

For recent graduates entering professional life, additions to wardrobes or complete overhauls, are likely needed; however, limited funds can be an obstacle. It may be best to try to mix and match separate pieces (i.e., different skirts with different jackets). The most important piece in any wardrobe is a jacket that is versatile and can work with a number of other pieces. A navy or black blazer for men can work well with a few different pants. Although this kind of ensemble would be just as expensive as a single suit, it does offer more versatility. Also, having your clothes dry cleaned and pressed can make worn pieces look very sharp.

SHOPPING

- If you're thrift shopping, look for good name brands, designers, etc.
- Feel the fabric by squeezing it in your hand. If it stays wrinkled, you don't want it as it will crease with every movement, and you will look like you forgot to iron.

FASHION DON'TS

- Never wear blue denim jeans or shorts, unless the vast majority of others do.
- Don't dress provocatively.
- Casual doesn't mean sloppy! Your clothes should be free of stains and holes.
- Workout wear belongs at the gym.