Dress for Success

**MEN**

*Suit:* Professional slacks and a jacket
*Note:* Jacket should be buttoned when standing or walking. When wearing a jacket with three buttons, center button should be buttoned. When wearing a jacket with two buttons, top one should be buttoned.

*Pressed Shirt:* Long-Sleeved white shirts test best in business settings. Always wear an undershirt, and never wear a short-sleeved shirt under a suit—even during summer.
*Note:* Shirt cuffs should extend 1/2 inch below jacket sleeve.

*Tie:* Choose an updated silk tie, keeping in mind the importance of width.
*Note:* the tip of the tie should barely touch the top of your belt buckle. Also, the pattern should be small, subtle, and repetitive.

*Dress Shoes:* Wear shoes to match your belt, but be sure to never wear casual shoes like Hush Puppies, penny loafers, or sneakers.

*Leather Belt:* A black or burgundy belt to match your shoes should always be worn if your pants have belt loops.

*Socks:* All socks should reach to your mid-calf. A “flash of skin” due to short socks is never professional.

*Professional watch:* Never wear a watch with a plastic band; a metal or leather band is best.

*Close shave or well-groomed facial hair*

*Cologne:* A small amount goes a long way.

*Clean nails*

**WOMEN**

*Professional skirt suit or pant-suit:* Navy, grey, taupe, and black are all conservative suit colors to invest in when building a career wardrobe.
*Note:* mini-skirts may be in style, but not in the workplace. Calf-length skirts are always more appropriate.

*Pressed blouse*

*Closed-toe and closed-heel shoes:* The classic leather pump is ideal in black, navy, or taupe. Also, heels should measure no more than 1-1/2 or 2 inches in height.
*Note:* Many individuals look at the condition of other people’s shoes to determine whether they pay attention to detail. Shoes should always be polished and clean.

*Hosiery:* Stockings add a necessary finished look. Go with a skin-toned color or a dark color if your suit is the same dark color.
*Note:* Be sure to take an extra pair of hosiery with you in case you accidentally run the pair you have on.

*Light Jewelry:* Wear no more than one ring on each hand, and wear simple yet elegant earrings (preferably no dangling earrings).
*Note:* Simplicity is the key. If you think you might be wearing too much jewelry, it is probably a good idea to eliminate a piece.

*Light Make-up:* The goal is to look natural

*Neat, clean Hair:* Shoulder-length or shorter hair tests best in business. If your hair is longer than shoulder length, wear it pulled up or back in a style that will give you a chic look.
*Note:* Avoid girly hair bows
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Whether you realize it or not, how you look plays an important part in how others perceive you. Make sure that the first impression you create at an interview is a positive, professional one.

The most obvious way to create a professional profile is to keep in mind that interview situations demand that you select conservative clothing. The image you portray should suggest that you want to fit in — not that you want to stand out. A job interview is never the best time to be concerned with making an individual statement. Instead, base your attire on the company’s culture as well as your possible responsibilities.

Show your interviewer that you understand and accept his or her expectations about dress.

In addition to being conservative, your dress should also be more formal than what is normally worn at the organization. A good idea is to mimic the dress of those individuals who either have the position you desire or those who are quickly climbing the ladder within the corporation. For instance, if the senior vice president wears suits rather than sport coats, start wearing suits. If the most powerful woman in the company always wears skirts instead of slacks, decide to wear a skirt suit to your interview. If only some men wear ties to work, err on the side of conservative by wearing a tie. Even on a casual dress day, you should present your most formal and professional self.

Not only is it important to put on the right clothing, but you must also make sure that this clothing is neat and presentable. Watch out for stains and wrinkles! Give yourself enough time before the interview to have your suit or outfit neatly laundered and pressed.

The Career Center has a Career Closet available to students and alumni — stop by the first floor of Strom Thurmond Center to check out our selections.