Dress Code Guidelines

Wondering what to wear to an interview or company information session?

When trying to make a positive impression, your outfit can make a big difference. What you want to wear depends on the context of where you will meeting people, and the workplace culture.

General Business Fashion Advice

- Wear new or borrowed clothing before the big day. You want your clothes to feel comfortable and look as if they fit you.
- Clothes should be clean and pressed. Shoes should be polished and nails cleaned. Your appearance should not distract from what you have to say.
- Wear colours that you feel good in. You will project yourself more confidently!
- Dress to fit the work environment. You want to look as if you are representing the organization to the public. Some people suggest that you should perhaps dress 10-20% better than you would dress if working there on a daily basis.
- Avoid wearing fragrance (perfume or cologne) as many people are sensitive to it.

3 Categories of Business Dress

There are three general categories of workplace dress. They include: Business, Business Casual and Casual. Please note that the information posted here consists of general guidelines only.
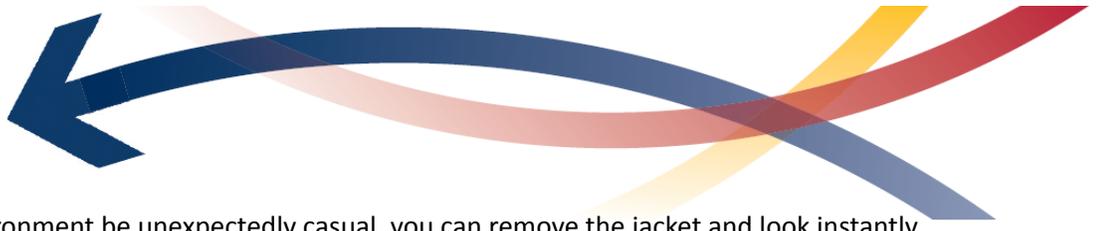
Business

- Business dress is usually comprised of a matched suit. The suit can be either a skirt suit or a pant suit. Wear what feels most comfortable for you.
- Wear a shirt or blouse with a collar on it. Shirts tend to be plain in colour or white. Ties should be fairly conservative in pattern.
- Darker colours tend to look more formal, however, you should wear colours that suit you and that you feel good in.
- This would be the most commonly expected style for a job interview, although it can vary depending on the context.

> **Not sure what to wear?**
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> As a general rule, when you are not sure, you should err on the side of dressing more conservatively than your audience.

Business casual

- Business casual is a broad category. At the top end (Corporate Business Casual), you might wear a suit, however it need not be matched (for example, you could wear a navy jacket with grey dress pants or skirt).
- A more casual level of this category includes: shirt (with no jacket; tie optional) and dress skirt or pants. You could also wear a sweater with dress pants/skirt.
- You may want to wear the upper end of Business Casual. This allows you to look professional, yet

should the work environment be unexpectedly casual, you can remove the jacket and look instantly dressed-down.

• Unless otherwise specified, Business Casual is the dress code for company information sessions. Many company information sessions at Queen's are hosted by corporate companies, so Corporate Business Casual may be most appropriate. Check the company website for information if you are unsure.

Casual

• Casual dress for the workplace includes casual pants and skirts, shirts (with or without a collar).
• T-shirts without logos or sayings are appropriate.
• If the workplace dress is normally casual, you should wear Business Casual to an interview.

Want to learn more?

For more advice on fashion and etiquette check out Emily Post's website at:

http://www.emilypost.com/everyday-manners/your-personal-image/69-attire-guide-beach-casual-to-white-tie

To learn more about interview or career fair preparation check out our related tipsheets and workshops.