

DRESS CODE GUIDELINES

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

In this tipsheet, you will learn strategies for choosing how to dress to impress in different environments. When trying to make a positive impression, your outfit can make a big difference. What you choose to wear depends on the context of where you will be meeting people and the workplace culture.

General Dress Code Tips

PREPARE AHEAD OF TIME

- Choose your outfit before the day of the event. Choose an outfit that helps you to feel professional and comfortable.
- Try out new or borrowed clothing before the big day. You want your clothes to feel comfortable and fit you well.
- Ensure clothes are clean and wrinkle free, and shoes are clean and polished before the day of the event.

MATCH YOURSELF AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Dress in colours that make you feel good. You will project yourself more confidently.
- Dress for the work environment. Try to find out ahead of time if it is Business Formal, Business Casual or Casual.
- If you are uncertain of the work environment, always err on the side of more formal. Some people suggest that you should dress 10-20% better the first time you meet than you would dress if working there on a daily basis.

KEEP THE FOCUS ON YOU

- Practice good hygiene (clean body, hair, teeth, good breath) to ensure
- Don't wear fragrances (perfume/cologne) as others may be sensitive and this can cause health issues (headaches, asthma etc) in others
- Keep accessories (hair, make-up, jewelry etc) to a minimum. Excessive accessories can take the focus away from what you are saying. You want your professional look to support your conversations, not overpower or distract from them.

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 FORMAL

- Business dress is usually comprised of a matched suit. The suit can be either a skirt suit or a pantsuit. Wear what feels most comfortable for you.
- Wear a collared shirt or blouse. Shirts tend to be white or plain in colour. Ties should be conservative in pattern.
- Darker colours tend to look more formal, however, you should wear colours that suit you.
- Business formal is the most commonly expected way to dress for a job interview, although this expectation can vary depending on the context.

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?

Check out our [Interview](#) or [Career Fair](#) tipsheets and [workshops](#) for more information on how to make a good impression. Career Services offers [Drop-in Career Advising](#) to answer quick questions related to all aspects of your career planning and job search - Monday to Thursday from 1:30pm to 3:30pm.

Check out our [Career Information Area](#) for lots of resources with further information.