



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Career Services

Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management

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Interview Attire

First impressions are crucial in an interview situation. Your attire, your hairstyle -everything that a recruiter knows about you before you say hello –are all part of that important first impression. Put together an appropriate interview look that is versatile enough to be worn through multiple interviews and multiple seasons and allows the interviewer to focus on your knowledge, skills and abilities rather than your fashion sense.

The Suit

A good quality, multi-seasonal, *conservative business suit* is ideal for most interview situations. Shop until you find a suit that looks good, fits well, and is as good a quality suit as you can afford.

- *Men* – Suit jacket, slacks, dress shirt and tie in neutral colors (black or navy).
- *Women* – Suit jacket, slacks or skirt, dress shirt or blouse in neutral color and cut. (Avoid salespeople who encourage you to select from the latest styles-the latest style goes out of style very quickly)

How many suits will you need for your interviews? Probably just one. You can vary the look of a suit with a different tie, jewelry, or shirt/blouse.

Shoes, Socks/Stockings

A nice shine on those shoes will be noticed.

- *Men* – wing tips or brogues (shoes with laces) in a neutral color (black, brown, or navy) project a much more professional look than slip-ons. Always wear dark dress socks that cover your legs when you sit down.
- *Women* – plain or moderately adorned low-heeled pumps (ideally 1 ½ -2 inches) in a neutral color (black, brown, or navy) are your best choice. No sling-backs or open toes. Your legs should be leg colored. Various colored or patterned stockings are inappropriate.

Accessories

- Anything that jingles, glitters, or otherwise attracts more attention than you do (i.e, facial piercings, ankle bracelets, and over-sized earrings) is undesirable.
- If you choose to wear a non-traditional accessory you should know that some recruiters will feel that non-traditional or non-conservative accessories may not fit their company's image.
- If you carry a portfolio, briefcase, or purse, it must look as tidy and professional as the rest of your outfit. It should ideally be in a neutral color and match your suit. Do not worry about taking your backpack into an interview. Recruiters know that in your real life you are a student and you carry books.

Hair

- You don't have to choose an ultra-conservative style that just isn't you – but you do need to help the recruiter focus on what you're saying rather than your hair style, cut or color.
- Hair should be combed/brushed, clean and pulled back if longer in length.
- Facial hair should be trimmed and well groomed.

Other things to consider (hygiene, fragrance, makeup)

- Attend to your personal hygiene – your breath should be fresh, you should not have offensive body odor, and your clothes should not smell of cigarette smoke or spicy foods.
- Fragrance - Many people are allergic to or offended by strong scents. Heavy fragrances of any kind (perfume, cologne, hair lotions) may prompt your recruiter to cut your interview short.
- Fingernails - clean, tidy, neutral in color and design.
- Eyeglasses – clean.
- Makeup - simple, conservative, natural, professional.

To access all Career Service's handouts, visit:www.niu.edu/careerservices/jobsearch/handouts.shtml #C8 06-12