

OUR TOP TEN ✓ DRESS CODE TIPS

You only get one chance to make a first impression in a job interview so it's vital that your dress code is representing you in the best possible light, filling you with confidence and increasing your chances of success. Our latest top tips will help make sure you get it right every time.

TOP TIP #1: THE RIGHT INDUSTRY

It can be important to dress appropriately for the industry and even culture of the company in question. While most interviews will require formal attire, some companies may prefer a slightly less formal appearance. We will always advise on the required dress code but here are some extra research tips to ensure you get it right on the day.

- What are the general conventions of the industry?
- Do they have images on a 'meet the team' page or social media pages which show their dress code?
- Do their LinkedIn profiles indicate their dress code?
- If the above can't be found, what about their competitors in the same industry?

TOP TIP #2: ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION

While it is important to dress appropriately for the industry, most interviews will require formal attire. If there is any doubt at all about whether to dress formally or less so, it is advisable to always err on the side of caution and wear a formal suit or equivalent. Dressing formally for a more relaxed office environment will still show a commitment to wish to present yourself as professional. Dressing informally for a formal office environment will rarely be able to be seen in a good light. In addition, while staff LinkedIn pages and other resources may indicate a less formal environment, employers may still wish to see a formal approach at the interview stage of the hiring process.

TOP TIP #3: STAYING SMART

Follow the pointers below to make sure your formal appearance creates the right first impression.

- For women, a classic trouser suit or skirt suit in neutral colours are always safe options.
- Formal work dresses can also be used in understated and smart colours such as black, grey or blue.
- Men should wear a business suit in black, grey or blue.
- Ties should be uncluttered and with restrained colour.
- Mens shoes should be brown or black and polished.
- Avoid wearing black shoes with a brown suit or brown shoes with a black suit.
- Having your belt match your shoes is also effective.
- For women's shoes, make sure the heel isn't too high.

TOP TIP #4: DON'T OVER ACCESSORISE

A select range of carefully chosen items can be a suitable addition to your interview attire but it's best to make sure you're not wearing too many accessories.

- Keep the number of accessory items to a minimum.
- Avoid anything that could be a distraction, either to yourself or your interviewer. Anything too flashy or large should be left at home. This also particularly applies to items that might interfere and get in the way with making notes, taking part in written tasks or other assessments such as large bracelets or wristwatches.

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TOP TIP #5: THE IMPORTANCE OF GROOMING

Don't tarnish your first impressions with your interviewer by falling short of good grooming standards. Remember these key points:

- Make sure fingernails are cut and clean
- Ensure you have good hygiene and fresh breath.
- Hair should be tidy, well kept and clean.
- Beards should be neatly trimmed.
- Don't use too much perfume or aftershave. Your interviewer shouldn't notice any smells at all, good or bad. If your perfume or aftershave is particularly strong or noticeable, then it might be best to avoid.



TOP TIP #7: DRESS FOR THE WEATHER

While the weather in the UK can be unpredictable, it's best to make sure you're as prepared as possible.

- Don't plan on wearing a heavy, thick suit or formal outfit for hot summer weather.
- Similarly, try not to wear a thin, summer outfit for interviews due in cold, winter months.
- Your coat, jacket or gloves may not be part of your suit or outfit but it should be treated as such. If so, make sure you have an overcoat and any other necessary items that are smart and will work with your overall outfit.



TOP TIP #9: BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Your interviewer will be looking for the complete package, someone that looks confident and professional from head to toe. Keep the following points in mind to make sure your appearance is consistent and professional:

- Minimise the number of different colours in your outfit.
- Invest in a smart carry folder or bag. This can also be helpful for filing requested items of paperwork.
- Make sure any extra items of clothing such as coats, hats, gloves, scarves, umbrellas etc are smart and in-keeping with your outfit.



TOP TIP #6: PREPARE YOUR OUTFIT IN ADVANCE

It's often advised to travel the route to your interview beforehand to discover any potential issues. Similarly, it's best to wear your planned outfit in advance to find any issues. When trying on your outfit beforehand, identify any of the following issues:

- Are the clothes ill-fitting or restrictive?
- Are you uncomfortably hot or cold in the outfit?
- Is any part of the outfit in danger of breaking, ripping or coming loose?
- Is it comfortable to talk clearly and sit up straight?
- Does it crease or wrinkle too easily?



TOP TIP #8: PACK SPARES

If it only takes one spill of coffee before your interview to ruin your overall appearance. Make sure you plan for any mishaps by bringing some essential spares if possible.

- If you're driving to your interview then leave some spare items in your car and don't park too far away. This ensures you have an easy back-up plan.
- A spare shirt or tie can also be useful if you find your outfit has become very creased on your journey.
- Arriving in plenty of time can also sometimes help as there may be shops nearby.



TOP TIP #10: YOUR ATTIRE IS JUST ONE PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

While it is essential to get your outfit right, it's also important that you don't spend so much time focussing on your clothes that it distracts your efforts from studying the company and preparing for the interview itself. Once you have an outfit that presents you in the best possible way, is comfortable and fills you with confidence then it's time to make sure the majority of your time is spent preparing for the interview itself.