



# What to Wear?! Business Casual vs Business Professional

Whether you're interviewing, attending a career fair, meeting with a recruiter, or about to start a new job, it's important to know what is appropriate to wear for the occasion.

Wearing the wrong thing can create a bad first impression and cause you to lose an opportunity before you even say a word. If you're lost on what you should wear, follow these simple guidelines.

## When to Wear Business Professional

A first impression is a lot harder to overcome than to create. Studies show that first impressions are solidified within seconds of seeing someone. You don't even have to interact with someone for them to make snap judgements about you. That's why it's always best to wear business professional attire for a

job interview, recruiter meeting or client meeting.

Even if the organization you're interviewing with isn't business professional in the office, it's always good to put your best foot forward. Similarly, even if you are attending a client meeting and know the client is going to be dressed casually, you should still dress professionally: you're not only trying to sell them a product or service, you're also selling yourself.

## Business Professional for Men

- Dark colored (navy, black or dark grey) two-piece suit
- Button-up, pressed, solid-colored dress shirt (blue or white are always safe choices)
- Solid-colored tie
- No earrings or visible tattoos
- Dress shoes (make sure your dress shoes and belt colors match)

## Business Professional for Women

- Suit/pants suit or appropriate-length dress or skirt with jacket
- Close-toed shoes
- Natural-looking makeup
- No bulky jewelry
- Hosiery
- No visible tattoos

## When to Wear Business Casual

As younger organizations usher in more relaxed office dress codes, the term "business casual" has become more ambiguous. Many organizations consider nice jeans and a button-up shirt business casual, while others consider business casual attire as a slight variation of professional dress.

Whether you're going to your first day on the job or attending a career fair, be on the safe side and always

follow these best-practices:

**Business Casual for Men:**

- Slacks or Khakis
- Button-up dress shirt
- Dress shoes
- Tie (optional)
- Short-sleeved polo shirt (avoid logos)

Use caution: short sleeved shirts may not be appropriate at every organization. Dress in a button-up, long-sleeved dress shirt your first day and take notice of what your new coworkers wear to get an idea on what's accepted.

Also, it is completely appropriate to ask your hiring manager or HR about their organization's definition of business casual before your first

day. Similarly, if attending a career fair, check their website to clarify suggested attire for the event.

**Business Casual for Women:**

- Dress pants or appropriate-length skirt
- Nice blouse or sweater
- Conservative footwear
- Simple or conservative jewelry

Women have more options than men when it comes to business casual attire. When in doubt, lean toward more conservative looks.

Use the aforementioned suggestions as guidelines, not hard and fast rules. Every organization is different. What may be appropriate in one office may not be appropriate in the next. Don't be afraid to ask!

But when it comes to job interviews and other first-impressions, always dress professionally.

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