

Interview Tips

Dress to impress!

While fashion trends on the street change, many principles of dressing for interviews have stayed the same. Keep these points in mind when preparing for an interview. You want to present a professional image to the employer and nonverbally communicate that you want the position more than other candidates. These tips will help you dress for success.

Males

- Dark suits (black or navy) in natural fabrics (wool or cotton) are safe bets
- Wear polished dress shoes (solid heels, complete soles and no scuff marks)
- Socks should complement your pant color and have strong elastic so they stay up
- Ties should be conservative and limited to small patterns or solid colors
- Pockets should be free from bulging wallets, tobacco products, or jingling coins
- Remove earrings and other piercings; cover up visible tattoos
- Facial hair and nails should be clean and cut short

Females

- Wear neutral colors (black, navy, and gray are still best)
- Consider the suit as the primary mode of dress for most interviews
- Skirt lengths that are not revealing (no higher than 2 inches above knee); tops should not be low cut or too tight
- Makeup should be minimal and hair neatly styled and away from your face
- Avoid flashy, excessive jewelry, remove body piercings, and cover visible tattoos
- Wear polished pumps or dress flats
- Non-textured, neutral hose or socks that complement your attire
- Clear or conservative nail polish on an appropriate nail length
- Keep purse size small and hands-free

Appearance is an important part of your first impression. You do not have to spend a thousand dollars for a suit. A well-groomed appearance goes a long way. Like it or not, some employers will form an opinion about you before you even speak!

For more assistance with interviewing, visit CPCC Career Services.

What can I expect?

The interview can be the hardest part of the job search process. It is your opportunity to show a company that the skills and experience that motivated them to grant you an interview come from a talented, enthusiastic person who would be a great addition to the staff. Most interviews can be divided into three phases.

Phase 1: Making Contact

Before serious discussion about the job and your qualifications begins, most interviewers like to spend a few minutes in casual conversation. This can be about the weather, some major event that happened over the weekend or something about your background that attracted their attention. This is an opportunity to make a special connection with the interviewer, which will help you stand out.

Phase 2: Establishing Qualifications and Opportunities

The two-way conversation about your qualifications and the job are the nuts and bolts of the interview. The best strategy is to elaborate on your résumé, highlighting your preparation and experiences most relevant to that position. What do you have that is of special interest to the employer?

Your mood should be positive. Comment favorably on your education, past employers and your ambitions for the future. Your work ethic is also being evaluated. Make sure that everything that you speak about relates to the job.

Finally, come prepared with several good questions to ask—questions that reflect your research and the specific knowledge about the company.

Phase 3: Closing the Interview, Determining the Next Step

As the interview draws to a close, if you are interested, ask for the job and inquire about the next step. Does the interviewer need any more information from you? Are there additional interviews? Thank the interviewer for his or her time and interest. End with a firm handshake and follow up with a thank you note within 24 hours.

Ask about our in-person and online practice interview sessions.