



# UNIVERSITY OF MONTEVALLO Career Development Center

## INTERVIEW ATTIRE



**“If you look professional, well-dressed, or dressed according to the occasion, you’ll come across as someone who is capable of doing a job, professional enough to understand what is necessary for success, and has a good personality as well.” - NEIL PATEL**

### PERSONAL APPEARANCE

The image you present during the interview process is of great importance. Your image consists of qualifications, appearance, language, behavior, and overall interaction quality. Most often, the first impression (and sometimes lasting impression) perceived by interviewer is derived from personal appearance. It is critical for your success as a serious candidate that you present yourself in the best possible way.

### HOW TO DRESS

All candidates are expected to project a professional and positive image by wearing appropriate attire to a job interview. How you dress for the interview will depend largely on the culture and environment of the position for which you are interviewing. Typically it is recommended to wear attire one step above what you might expect to wear day-to-day on the job.

Candidates may choose varying degrees of interview attire that could still be considered appropriate. Consider what a teacher candidate might wear compared to what an accountant candidate might wear. Interview attire for a summer camp counselor position would be more casual than that for an internship in a law office.

Overall, best practice dictates all interview candidates choose professional, clean, simple clothing and avoid looks that are flashy, sporty, cute, or trendy. First impressions matter, and lasting impressions should be about a candidate’s qualifications rather than clothing choices.



### SUITABLE ATTIRE

All candidates should choose a simple, conservative business-appropriate outfit for their next job interview. Best colors include grey, navy, and taupe. Those choosing feminine attire should be mindful of neckline and length. Generally speaking, anything too low or too short is considered inappropriate for an interview setting. Those choosing masculine attire should be aware of fit. Anything too large may appear disheveled, and too snug may appear ill-fitting.

When it comes to color, fabric, and pattern, typically a more reserved look is appropriate for an interview setting. While it is acceptable to express your personality through your clothing choices, candidates should avoid anything that may distract the interviewer’s attention from your thoughts, words, and actions during an interview.



## ACCESSORIES

When choosing accessories to wear as part of your interview attire, the standard “less is more” is best practice. Jewelry should be understated, simple, and classic. Costume jewelry should be avoided, and anything flashy, dangly, noisy, or clunky would be considered out of place as well.

Avoid overly casual or overly formal shoe options (no flip-flops or prom heels) Neutral colored low pumps or flats, and lace-up dress shoes are all acceptable. Dress socks in a coordinating color have long been best practice. Whether to wear pantyhose with skirts or dresses is a personal preference.

Ties (and neckware in general) should provide a splash of contrasting color. Patterns should be even, linear, and asymmetrical. Avoid artsy or novel prints.



## GROOMING & HYGIENE

More than anything, individuals should always be fresh and clean for an interview. Any scent, makeup, or polish should be light so it does not distract or irritate the senses of the interviewer. All hair (including facial hair) should be styled in a way that presents personality and professionalism. Traditional guidance would be to be discreet with tattoos and ear/facial/body piercings. However this decision should be made with careful consideration to personal style and how it aligns with the environment with which you are interviewing.



Fashion choices such as hats and scarves should be avoided. Accessories to carry should be minimal and compact. A leather folder, portfolio, or small clutch purse is enough. All leather accessories should match (belt, shoes, bag). Travel light, and if you must bring something to drink it should be limited to a bottle of water only.

Above all, accessories should enhance your professional image, and never overwhelm it. Candidates should present the best professional version of themselves, without presenting a false front.



## LOOK IMPRESSIVE — BE IMPRESSIVE

When considering interview attire, many choose to go with the tried and true “power look” consisting of stark contrasts, and a single, bold color splash. Even more impressive than your look is your attitude, especially your confidence. Part of feeling confident, and looking confident, is presenting a well-polished, professional individual who is dressed for the part.

