



# **UF CAREER CONNECTIONS CENTER**

## **Dress for Success Guide**



**CAREER CONNECTIONS CENTER**  
STUDENT LIFE | UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

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## DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

So, you've landed the interview, the internship, or the job! You're ready to impress your peers with your skills and experience, but how can you dress in a way that reflects your professionalism? Dressing professionally can help you make a great first impression, and what you wear can reflect to employers how seriously you take the job search process or your career. Professional attire typically consists of suits, slacks, skirts, jackets and blazers, ties, and dress shoes. While that may seem like a simple list of clothing options, style expectations can vary across industries and it can be overwhelming to know what attire is right for you. This guide will help you understand everything from professional to business casual styles so you can dress for success with confidence!

### BUSINESS CASUAL DRESS

What is business casual anyway? Similar to professional dress standards, the definition of business casual can vary from office to office. The key to business casual is to maintain a professional presence through your attire even if it is less formal than a suit. Common business casual styles include:

#### FEMININE STYLES

- Dress, skirt, or dress pants
- Fitted shirts or blouses
- Blazers or cardigans (they don't have to be the same color as your skirt or pants)
- Scarves
- Dress shoes (flats or heels) Dress sandals can be acceptable depending on your work environment, but no flip-flops, crocs, etc.

#### MASCULINE STYLES

- Pressed, collared, long-sleeved shirt or polo with or without tie
- Dress slacks or pants (with shirt tucked in)
- Dress shoes and dark socks
- NO JEANS!

\*Your workplace may have "casual Friday." A good tip is to dress more formally and conservatively for your first casual Friday and observe how your coworkers dress. If they all wear jeans on Fridays, then it may be acceptable for you to do so as well! When in doubt, review your company's dress code or ask your supervisor or coworkers what is acceptable and expected.



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## BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL DRESS

Typically, professional dress standards include more formal business attire. You should generally plan to dress professionally for your interview, work or internship presentations, or formal events, such as Career Showcase. Common professional styles can include the following:

### FEMININE STYLES

- Skirt or pant suit in neutral colors (gray, black, navy, brown, khaki) Brighter colors can be acceptable as long as the pants and jacket match
- Skirts and dresses should be knee length or longer
- Pressed, collared button down or dress shirt
- Dress shoes (flats or heels)
- A handbag or briefcase
- A portfolio

### MASCULINE STYLES

- Full suit with matching jacket and pants in neutral colors (gray, black, navy, brown, khaki)
- Pressed, collared button down shirt with a solid color or simple pattern
- Neutral color belt
- Dark color dress shoes and dress socks
- Tie or bowtie (you can choose something colorful or a pattern as long as it is appropriate and not distracting. The tie should reach the top of your belt)
- Portfolio or briefcase

\*It is acceptable to mix and match some of these styles as long as it meets professional dress standards in your workplace. It is important to look professional, but you should choose the professional attire that makes you feel most comfortable, confident, and like yourself!



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## WHAT C3 RESOURCES CAN HELP ME?

If you need professional or business casual clothing for an upcoming interview or event, stop by the Molm Family Gator Career Closet on the ground floor of the C3! You can come to the closet and obtain free professional attire to help you in your professional journey. You do not need to return the items you get from the closet. This service is available to all University of Florida students with a valid UF ID and UF alumni up to one year after graduation. When you visit the career closet you will find gender neutral and inclusive styles, to make the closet a welcoming environment to all UF students. Our trained staff are always open to provide individualized coaching on your clothing needs and style preferences upon request. You will need to check-in at the C3 front desk before visiting the closet, and no appointment is needed to visit the closet during Fall and Spring semesters, please visit the C3 website to get more information on our walk-in hours.

## CARING FOR YOUR CLOTHES

Now that you have a closet of professional and business casual attire, how can you best care for your clothes? Here are a few helpful tips:

### SUIT CARE TIPS

- **Rotation:** you can't wear the same suit every day if you want it to stay in good shape. Rotating your suit out and giving it some time to hang and air out for a day or two between use will help it keep its shape and stay fresh!
- **Hang it up:** Don't throw your suit in a pile of clothes! Always hang it up immediately after wearing so it keeps its shape.
- **Clothes brush:** This is a quick and easy way to clean off your suit and remove any lint, dust or debris!
- **Steamer:** Dry ironing damages suits! Pick up an inexpensive steamer (or bring your suit to the Career Closet!) and steam it to remove small stains, marks or wrinkles.
- **Dry Cleaning:** When your suit needs a wash, DO NOT try it at home; bring it to a dry cleaner. However, this should not be done too often or the suit will have a shorter life; only dry clean when necessary.

### GENERAL CARE TIPS

- **Check the label:** Look before you wash! Some fabrics are more fragile and sensitive than others; make sure you know what is or is not acceptable for the garment (hot vs. cold water, dryer safe, etc.)
- **Handwashing:** Some clothes cannot be put in a washer or dryer. Fragile garments can be handwashed in a tub of water or sink, using gentle soaps or fabric softener rather than laundry detergent or bleach.
- **Drying:** Certain garments should be hung up to air dry rather than put in a dryer!
- **Hang it up:** Like suits, it is important to hang certain garments between wearing so they keep their form, such as dresses, blazers slacks, and skirts.
- **Steaming vs. Ironing:** Know whether it is appropriate to steam or iron your garment; ironing may be too harsh!