

# DRESS FOR SUCCESS: A Guide to Professional Attire

**So what do we mean by professional attire?** When you're going to an interview or meeting employers at a career fair, professional attire will make the best first impression. Typically, it will include a blazer, dress shoes, and professional pants or skirt. Consider it a step-up from khakis and a polo and several steps up from what we normally wear to class.

## Clothing Resources on the MGA Campus – The Professional Closet

If you're in a crunch to find a professional outfit, check out the Professional Closet in Sanford 112 in Cochran or Student Life Center, Suite 261 in Macon. Most pieces are \$5 or less. Visit The Professional Closet during regular university hours. Scheduling an appointment via Handshake ensures that someone will be there to assist you.

## Additional Clothing Resources

Goodwill and other thrift stores are great resources for supplementing your professional wardrobe. Check stores like Macy's, Belk, Kohl's, Ann Taylor, Burlington, Talbots, Men's Wearhouse, and Jos. A. Bank.

## Men (Masculine Expression)

- Business suit in a conservative color such as black, navy, gray, or brown. Avoid busy patterns or bright colors. A light pin stripe is acceptable.
- Tie with a conservative pattern and color to match the suit.
- White shirt with sleeves that extend one-quarter inch beyond the suit jacket.
- Dress socks in a color that complements the suit (not white athletic socks!)
- Leather lace up shoes, recently shined, in a color that complements the suit.
- Shave or trim beard for a neat appearance.
- Limit jewelry to a watch and wedding or class ring.
- Alternative to the suit: A long sleeve, button down shirt with a conservative tie, dress pants, dress shoes, and matching belt.



## Women (Feminine Expression)

- Pants or skirt suits. Skirt-hem should be no shorter than the knee and no longer than just below the knee.
- Best suit colors are gray, medium to dark blue, or black. Patterns must be subtle and conservative.
- Choose a classic suit that fits well. Too short and too tight is not acceptable.
- Always wear skin colored hose. Knee-highs are great for pants suits.
- Classic closed toed pumps with a mid-height heel and little or no decoration.
- Limit jewelry to a watch, wedding or class ring, small earrings, and pearl necklace (5 pieces max).
- Hairstyles should be classic and not distracting. Wear make-up but style should be light or neutral.
- Carry a purse or a briefcase but not both.
- Alternative to the suit: Black or other dark color pants or skirt with a nice, structured sweater set or coordinating jacket.



## General Neutral Considerations

- Dress professionally in business professional attire that makes you feel comfortable and best reflects your gender identity and expression.
- Focus on being conservative and professional with color and attire choices.

## Everyone

- Shower and wash hair the morning of the interview. Hair and nails should be clean and neatly trimmed. Attire should be clean and pressed.
- If it jingles, flashes, or dangles, don't wear it!
- Piercings and tattoos could be a distraction, so cover them if you can.
- Avoid strong colognes and perfumes.
- Don't underestimate the importance of proper undergarments. Men/masculine expression should wear an undershirt. Women/feminine expression should wear a camisole or slip when wearing light colored or flimsier weight materials.



**The Deal on Business Casual.** Once we get the job, business casual may be our normal attire. Typically, this means, conservative dresses, skirts, nice pants (khakis are ok, jeans typically are not), sweater, blouse or button-down shirt (no t-shirts). Sport coats and blazers can pull an outfit together but a tie is optional.

**What about Casual Fridays?** This isn't a given at every organization. Clarify before you wear jeans and your favorite MGA t-shirt, which paired with a blazer could make a great casual Friday look for the office.