



Dress for Success: Business Casual

The definition of business casual varies widely, but for students looking to make the right first impression with networking contacts and employers, it's much narrower.

Business casual clothing should be worn at employer information sessions, networking receptions, informational interviews, and career fairs, unless you are actively seeking a job or internship, in which case formal business attire may be more appropriate for all. If you are not sure what wardrobe an event requires, check with your network, faculty member, or Career Services or, if in doubt, dress one step up.

Remember that your clothing does not need to be expensive or new, but it must be clean, wrinkle-free, and fit properly, neither tight nor baggy. Guidelines for accessories and grooming are the same as for formal business attire.

Business Casual - Men



Business Casual - Women



Pants: Dress slacks, dark pants or Khakis or Dockers-like slacks are best.

Shirt: Pressed long-sleeved, buttoned shirt in light or modest colors are best bets. Pressed polo or golf shirts may be appropriate, depending on the event.

Jacket: Jackets are generally not necessary for business casual, but you are welcome to wear one if you want to stand out, or be safe if you are not sure if an event is formal business or business casual.

Ties: Ties are typically optional for business casual, but if you are in doubt, wear one. You can always remove your tie if you arrive at an event and no one else is wearing one.

Shoes and socks: Leather shoes with dark, mid-calf length socks. Clean work boots may be acceptable for on-campus events; ditto with athletic shoes if you are an athlete coming directly from practice.

Pants/skirt: A skirt, dress slacks, or dark pant - all of which should be well-fitting (not too tight or flowing) and neatly pressed, are all options. Skirts should be knee length and have no revealing slits.

Blouse/sweater/dress jacket: Tailored shirts or blouses, knit sweaters, sweater sets, and dress jackets are appropriate choices. Again, necklines should be modest and colors and patterns more muted.

Shoes and stockings: Shoes should be modest in heel size and appropriate to the weather and event. Sandals may be acceptable if not too chunky or too dressy. Stockings may be optional, depending on the length of your skirt, season (bare legs in winter is generally a no-go), event, and field you are targeting (for conservative industries, it is always advisable to wear stockings).