

DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

SULS students often consult with Career Development staff members for our input regarding proper attire for interviewing with legal employers. The power of a positive first impression cannot be underestimated; your attire is an important component of your overall presence. Students who are appropriately dressed for an interview are likely to make a more favorable impression on an employer. These students may exude more confidence, which is critical to winning an interview. Conversely, putting your best foot forward may be more difficult if you feel self-conscious about your appearance. The following guidelines may help you choose an appropriate wardrobe for your interviews.

Review the Firm/Employer Resume: The Career Development Office requests employer literature from all law firms interviewing on campus. These brochures, often referred to as firm resumes, may include photographs of associates and partners representing the firm. Study these photographs carefully. What do the attorneys in the pictures look like? In most instances, they will appear clean cut and conservatively dressed. As you will be attempting to persuade the employer to hire you, you must provide the impression of being a good fit. When you interview, present yourself as if you were an associate at that firm. If the firm resume presents a conservative profile, dress accordingly. Alternately, for a less conservative law firm, you may wish to wear less conservative business attire.

In addition to reviewing firm resumes, check each firm's website where additional photographs may be found.

Assess your Interviewing Attire:

Suits: A two-piece suit in a conservative color is perhaps the best attire for all students interviewing with legal employers.

Men's suits must be well-tailored and be of a conservative, dark color (charcoal, dark blue) and may have an understated pattern (pinstripe). Dress shirts must be well-pressed. In most instances, ties should reflect the conservative flavor of the firm. Generally, an understated yet strong pattern is best (stripes or a geometric pattern). Dress shoes, such as wing tips, are the most appropriate footwear.

Women's suits must also be well-tailored and conservative in cut and color. A two piece suit, which includes a jacket and pants, or jacket and skirt, is most appropriate. Skirts should be cut no more than two inches above the knee. It is best to avoid skirts with high cut slits, as this may make sitting down awkward. Conservative colors and understated patterns (houndstooth, pinstripes) work best. Blouses and shells must also reflect a conservative flavor. Shoes should be conservative and comfortable. A 1-2 inch heel is best. Neither high heels nor flats are appropriate.

Accessories: For men, the only appropriate accessories for an interview are a watch, school ring or wedding band. Women may also wear a watch, school ring, or engagement/wedding ring(s) but keep additional jewelry to a minimum. Appropriate earrings might include small hoops or studs. Too much jewelry is distracting and unprofessional looking.

Appearance: A clean-cut look is always best for students participating in employment interviews. Men's hair should be neatly cut and styled. Sideburns are inappropriate. Men should be clean-shaven and well manicured.

Women's hair should be worn in a neat and conservative style. Longer hair should be pulled back and away from the face in a conservative clip or twist. Makeup should be applied for a professional appearance. Nail polish is not recommended (clear polish is acceptable).

Cologne/Perfume: A MINIMAL amount of cologne or perfume may be applied a few hours before the interview. Your fragrance should not be distracting or overwhelming.

These are just a few suggestions. Feel free to discuss any related concerns you may have with a member of the Career Development Staff.