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Careers, Internships & Employment

What should I wear to a Job Interview?

Congratulations, on getting a job interview! Whether you are going for an interview for a summer job or a graduate role, it's important to dress appropriately. Here are some things you may wish to consider before you attend the interview.



Think about the job you have applied for

Is it a professional graduate role or a part time job working on a building site while you are studying at university? Will you be working in an office or will you be out in the field taking water samples? Whether you need to wear a suit or smart casual clothing will depend on the position you are undertaking.

First impressions count

The employer will assess you on the basis of your personal presentation, as well as what you say in the interview. Your appearance will provide the employer with clues on your attitude towards life and work. Someone who has turned up to the interview looking smart and tidy is more likely to be someone who takes pride in their work.

Look at the company website or publicity material

If you aren't sure what to wear to the interview, the photos on the company website may help you to understand the organisation's dress code.

Be appropriate in your dress style

Dress up

You will make a good impression to the employer if you dress one level up from the job you have applied for. This will demonstrate to the employer that you want the job and that you are taking the interview seriously.

For females, this may mean a plain shirt and skirt or trousers or a suit. Avoid low cut tops, very short skirts and loud colours and patterns.



For males, this may mean dress trousers and a collared plain shirt or a suit if you have one. A tie is likely to be appropriate.

Smart and simple

Employers understand that university students live on low incomes and so they won't expect you to turn up in an expensive suit. Make sure what you have to wear is clean and has been ironed. Remember to clean your shoes. Simple, inexpensive clothing and shoes in plain colours can look just as professional as an expensive suit.

Artistic or creative job

If you have applied for a creative or artistic job, it is usually acceptable to express your creativity through your dress and personal appearance, although check this out with the organisation interviewing you.

Hair

If you are overdue for a haircut, make sure you have one ahead of time. It is best to do your hair in a style that is professional. If you have long hair which falls over your face, think about tying your hair up.

Jewellery and makeup

If you choose to wear jewellery and makeup, choose a style that will match your clothing, is unobtrusive and looks professional. If you have any piercing on your face consider taking the studs out for the interview.

Personal hygiene

Having a shower, brushing your teeth and having clean fingernails are simple but effective ways that say to an employer that you take pride in your appearance. Avoid any strong overpowering perfumes or aftershaves. It is also best to avoid smoking just before the interview.

Think ahead

Get out your clothes a week before the interview and try them on to make sure they still fit. If they need cleaning or fixing or you need to buy an item of clothing you will have time to do this.

Ask for a second opinion

If you are concerned about what to wear, come in and see us or phone the human resources staff of the company you are interviewing with about the company dress code. Friends and parents who have been for job interviews can also be helpful in providing some feedback on what you are wearing.

Low cost clothing

Think about investing some time and money in finding one outfit that you feel comfortable in and can wear to interviews.

Places to source low cost clothing include:

- Farmers
- Glassons
- DressMart, Hornby
- Second hand clothing shops. As there are many second hand clothing stores in Christchurch, you can look these up online in the Yellow Pages www.yellow.co.nz. It may be best to phone and ask whether these stores do stock clothing that would be appropriate for a job interview in advance.
- TradeMe

Ties

If you need to wear a tie and don't know how to tie one here are some useful websites which provide step by step instructions:

- www.tie-a-tie.net
- www.tieknot.com

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