

Dressing for Success



UMassAmherst

Your Professional Appearance

What you wear is a reflection of you, and sets the tone for how you will be perceived in business and professional settings.

Your attire should communicate you are a confident professional who:

- Respects yourself and your employer
- Fits the company culture
- Understands employer expectations
- Represents your company
- Exudes the confidence necessary to succeed in business

When in doubt, it is better to be overdressed than too casual, as it pays a compliment to your host

If you are unsure about the dress code or what is appropriate for a particular event, don't be afraid to ask!

Business Professional Guidelines

- Attire is clean, neat, classic and timeless
- Neutral-colored suits with matching skirts or trousers that are properly fitted and neatly pressed
- Skirts should be at least knee-length, and worn with stockings
- Small center-back slit in knee-length skirt is appropriate, high slits are not
- Dress shirt or tailored blouse in conservative color and pattern
- Avoid low-cut, cleavage-bearing tops
- Tie should just cover your belt buckle when worn
- Polished leather dress shoe that complements the color of your suit
- No open-toed, strappy, spike or stiletto heels
- Dark socks, mid-calf length that match pant color
- Dark, formal leather belt
- Hair (including facial) and nails are clean, neat and trimmed
- Minimal (or no) perfume or cologne
- Light briefcase, portfolio or padfolio

Jackets & Ties

The following links provide step-by-step instructions to tying your tie:

- www.totieatie.com
- www.tie-a-tie.net



When wearing a suit jacket while standing:

- Button only the top button (two-button jacket)
- Button only the top two buttons (three-button jacket)

When you are seated, all buttons can be undone



Business Casual Guidelines

Crisp, neat and appropriate for a chance meeting with the CEO!

- Conservative trouser or knee-length skirt in solid color, neatly pressed
- Sweater set or vest with button-down or tailored blouse
- Sport coat is optional; no tie necessary if wearing jacket
- Polo/golf shirt acceptable only if you know environment is outdoors and casual
- Avoid low-cut, cleavage-bearing tops
- Accessories should be simple
- Leather or fabric shoes, clean and in good condition; no athletic shoes
- No open-toed, strappy, spike or stiletto heels
- Leather belt with slacks
- Dress socks should complement pants and shoes
- Nails should be clean and trimmed
- Hair (including facial) is clean, neat and trimmed

Shop Smart!

- Buy clothing that can be used in multiple settings; classic and well-made items can be used for business professional and business casual situations.
- Choose neutral and classic items that can be worn with a variety of shirts, ties, and jackets
- Select high-quality and easy-to-maintain fabrics, which are not expensive to launder and travel well
- Having only one or two suits is fine; you can vary your look by wearing different shirts and ties
- Avoid purchasing trendy items that will go out of style easily and quickly; choose classic styles that are professional and timeless
- You don't need to shop for your business attire at name-brand, expensive stores; quality and professional items can easily be found at Target, Kohl's, Macy's, Men's Warehouse, and other department stores and outlets