

PROFESSIONAL DRESS

Why Dress Professionally? Your appearance and attire are an important part of making a positive first impression with employers at career fairs, job interviews, and networking events. First impressions are crucial because they will set the mood for the rest of your roleplay in DECA competition and will allow you to make lasting relationships with other business professionals. This handout will help you make the best impression in DECA and in your future endeavors.

When Should I Dress Professionally? Dress codes within organizations vary greatly. It is important to research the organizations you are targeting to ensure you know what is acceptable dress within that organization. If you are uncertain, simply call the receptionist to ask about the company dress code. For job interviews, we recommend always dressing nicer than what is typical on a daily basis within the organization. When starting a new job, ask for clear information on the organization dress code and err on the conservative side of that policy.

Business Professional - You have to dress Business Professional for many DECA events!

This is the most conservative type of business clothing commonly expected as daily dress in conservative businesses such as financial firms. Business professional dress is also typical for job interviews in organizations that dress in business casual style on a daily basis such as corporations and architecture firms.

Expectations for Women - Make sure everything matches!

- Business suit (pant/skirt and sports jacket) in black, dark grey or navy; fabric of both top and bottom should match. If you don't own a sports jacket, BHS DECA is able to supply you with one.
- Skirts length should be no more than 2 inches above the knee.
- Shirt in a solid color; shirt necklines should be near your collarbone to ensure they are not too revealing.
- Tights or pantihose are worn with closed toe, closed heel, and low-heel dress shoes.
- Hair and nails should be neat, clean and not distracting.
- Jewelry and makeup should be subtle.
- Avoid open toed shoes or sandals, wear basic pumps with a low heel, 1-2 inches high.



Expectations for Men- Make sure everything matches!

- Sports jacket/blazer in black, dark grey or navy. If you don't own one, BHS DECA is able to supply you with one.
- Wear dress pants in blacks, navy, dark grey or khaki.
- Button-down dress shirt and a tie, both in subdued colors. (If you don't know how to tie a necktie, simply look online for tutorials.) A striped tie on a striped shirt is not preferable.
 - The lighter the dress shirt, the more professional it is
- Always wear an undershirt under your dress shirt.
- Always wear a belt and knee-high socks. Belt, socks and shoes should all match (black or brown).
- Hair and facial hair should be clean, and neat. Shorter styles are common.



Additional Tips

Smells

- Do not wear an excess amount of perfume or cologne to a professional event.
- Never smoke before an event and if you or someone that you live with smokes, store your interview clothes in another location. Many people have a negative bias against smokers.
- Be sure to wear deodorant to an interview or event as you will likely be nervous and perspire more than usual.

Accessories

- Be certain your phone is turned completely off once you arrive to a professional event.
- Make sure any watches or jewelry are not distracting or noisy.
- Bring a professional looking folder or portfolio to interviews for your resumes, a note pad and pen.
- If you carry a purse or laptop bag, set it on the floor under the table during an interview. Choose a conservative style that will compliment your professional look.
- Make sure your shoes are comfortable and that you can easily walk in them, or bring an extra pair of shoes.

Other Considerations

- Ensure all clothing fits well and is neither too tight nor too baggy.
- Some employers may have a negative reaction to tattoos or piercings. Consider covering tattoos or removing piercings prior to interviews or events until you know more about the organization's culture.