

## **How To Dress For An Interview – On or Off Campus**

As a Yavapai College student, you might be looking for a part-time job that blends with your school and studying schedule. While an interview for a professional/career job will require a higher standard of dress – a clean, well-tailored, solid-dark-colored suit, etc. – an interview for a job in a more casual setting has its own attire do's and don'ts.

### **How Hard Is It To Get a Part-Time Job These Days?**

*From Morning Edition, September 5, 2008 · The U.S. unemployment rate leaped to 6.1 percent in August, the highest in nearly five years. The Labor Department released the numbers Friday, and they're worse than what many economists expected. The economy lost another 84,000 jobs in August, and more than 9 million Americans are out of work.*

Here at Yavapai College, our online “Job Finder” site (free access to students – just ask) posted 150 -200 jobs on and off campus last year. This year, there are 60 total. Playing the job hunting, resume-writing, and interviewing game *well* is now more important than ever before.

### **What Difference Does Attire Make?**

The first judgment an interviewer makes about you will be based on how you look and what you are wearing. That first impression is a crucial one. Appropriate attire supports your image as a person who takes the interview process seriously, and suggests that you may be a person who will take your job seriously. In some jobs, customer contact and one's image presented to the customer is critical. For these jobs, your attire will be judged more critically. Your professional attire should be well-fitting and neat, but not “speak” too loudly with color, fashion statements, or jewelry.

Once you shake hands and open your mouth, how you are dressed only plays a supporting role. Your conduct, interpersonal skills and ability to articulate your responses to questions then become the most important elements.

### **Basic Tips For Even The Most Informal Interviews**

Hair: Should be clean and neat.

Shoes: Clean, polished conservative shoes. Make sure heels are not worn down. Flip-flops, sneakers, spike heels or white socks are never a good idea.

Details: No missing buttons, lint or external tags. Remove tacking stitches from pockets of new clothes. No gum, candy, or cigarettes

Piercings: Know the organization and industry for which you are applying. If it is MTV, you may be fine with your tongue piercing, but if it is anywhere else, lose it.

Hands: Clean with trimmed (or manicured) fingernails.

Fit: Clothes should be clean, pressed, and fit properly. No key bulges or noisy coins in pockets.

Smell: Perfume or cologne should be used very sparingly – preferably not at all. No odors in clothes. Don't smell like smoke or last night's fish dinner. Bring a breath mint and use it before you enter the building. Don't smoke immediately prior to an interview, as the smell lingers and can turn people off.

Book bags: Leave it at home or, for an on-campus interview, leave it in the waiting area.

## **A Notch Up - Interview Attire Tips for Men and Women**

A conservative, two-piece business suit (solid dark blue or grey is best) is for more professional job interviews. While many work environments have shifted to business casual as the workday standard, business suits are still the interview standard. Don't assume that since an organization is casual that you can dress casually for an interview. Even if your interviewers are wearing jeans, you shouldn't be. When in doubt, it is almost always better to err on the side of conservatism. Still not sure how to dress for the interview? Call and ask Human Resources (not the hiring manager). Say, "I have an interview with \_\_\_ in the \_\_\_ department for a position as an \_\_\_\_\_. Please tell me what would be appropriate dress for this interview?"

A conservative, long-sleeved shirt or blouse (white or cream is best, pastel is next best) is always a winner. You may carry a light briefcase or portfolio case. But leave behind the visible body piercing (nose rings, eyebrow rings, etc.).

## **What Not to Bring to the Interview**

- Gum
- Cell phone or Ipod
- Coffee or soda
- If you have lots of piercings, leave some of your rings at home (one pair of earrings only, and for women only, is the safest rule)
- Exposed tattoos
- Too much skin – no cleavage, belly buttons or plumber's crack

## **Excellent Resources**

- 1) CollegeGrad.com
- 2) <http://www.howcast.com/videos/929-How-To-Dress-For-a-Job-Interview>