



College Students Get Lesson In Career Dress 101

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DURHAM, N.H. -- One of the surest ways of eliminating yourself as a contender for a job is to show too much skin, but for college students across the nation, knowing how to dress appropriately for a job interview may seem as mystifying as calculus.

"Television shows have affected how students think they should dress. *Sex And The City* didn't do us any favors," says Bethany Cooper, associate director of career support at the University of New Hampshire Advising and Career Center.

And those seeking careers in the more conservative professions of accounting and financial services have no time to waste – recruiting for May hires starts in September. To make sure students don't disqualify themselves as soon as they walk into a job fair, UNH officials coach students on career dress.

Cooper tells students, "you want your personality to show through, but not at the risk of distracting from your skills and accomplishments. Conservative attire is always safe, and once you have the job you can learn the culture of the organization and how best to express yourself."

Facial scruff, baggy pants and excess cologne are big no-no's for men. And after purchasing that new suit, Cooper says students need to remember to unstitch the pockets and remove the brand labels.

The career center has even created posters depicting job seekers dressed inappropriately and those with appropriate attire. "It seems so cheesy, but we've had to do it. Students get their cues on how to dress from mass media, and many really don't fully understand the reality of office attire," Cooper says.

Other tips on how to dress for an interview include:

- Don't smoke immediately prior to an interview, as the smell lingers and can turn people off.
- 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 should be in a suit.
- Flip-flops with a suit is never a good idea. For that matter, neither are sneakers, spike heels nor white socks.
- If you are invited to lunch or dinner for an interview, do not order an alcoholic drink. Even if you think it is social, your future employers are evaluating you the whole time.

Never take advantage of an open bar at a recruiting or information session – again, you are being evaluated by someone, somewhere.

- 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 an investment bank, lose it.

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