

Affordable Professional Attire for Interns

Building your professional wardrobe does not have to be expensive. With preparation, planning, and a few tricks, you can begin curating an affordable professional wardrobe for your internship at the House.

Plan Before You Shop for Attire

If you decide you need more professional attire, assess what you need and make a plan:

- Ask your Intern Coordinator about your office's dress code. Determine what impact recess has on the office dress code and plan to bring or buy enough clothes to accommodate the House calendar.
- Set a budget and stick to it.
- Know your measurements. Fit is not only important for how you look but also for how you feel at your internship.
- Purchase any items in advance to minimize the financial impact of buying everything you may need all at once.

Build a Professional Capsule Wardrobe

A capsule wardrobe is a set number of clothes that you can mix and match to create many outfits. Keep your professional wardrobe affordable and avoid over-purchasing by adding only coordinating items. Focus less on being fashion-forward and more on classic pieces that you can wear again and again.

- Consider focusing on items that are solid, neutral colors or that have a narrowed color palette. Neutral pieces allow you to make several different outfit combinations.
- Choose one to three accent colors that will coordinate with each other and with your color palette.
- Save money in the long run by only purchasing items that you feel confident in and that you love wearing. If you are unsure about an item, don't waste your money on it.

Staple Items for Your Internship

Now that you have narrowed your focus, begin to incorporate these staple items into your wardrobe:

- A well-fitted blazer or jacket and a nice sweater
- Slacks or knee-length skirts or dresses
- Blouses or button-down shirts and ties
- Heels, dress shoes, loafers, or oxfords
- A belt to match shoes

Retail Shopping Quick Tips

- ✓ Browse clearance racks when looking for new items.
- ✓ Research mark-down schedules for your favorite retailers; many will mark down items on a specific day of the week.
- ✓ Consider signing up for promotional emails to receive a discount on your first purchase from a retailer. Many retailers also offer a student discount.
- ✓ Before considering applying for any retailer credit card, carefully review the card's terms and conditions to ensure that it makes sense for you.
- ✓ Many retailers have outlet or factory stores with further reduced attire.



Additional Solutions

1. There are many second-hand shopping options, which may be more sustainable and help lower costs.
2. Thrift shops, consignment stores, and online resellers may be helpful when looking for affordable workwear.
3. Garage sales and estate sales may also have options to help further build your professional wardrobe.
4. If you have items in your closet that are too large or too small, consider taking them to an affordable tailor to see if adjustments may make the garment work for you.
5. Consider using clothing rental services, which can be a cost-effective way to rotate items into your closet.
6. Avoid items that require frequent dry cleaning and may incur an increased cost.

