

SMU Look Contributor Guidelines

About SMU Look

Hey there! We're SMU Look, your go-to for everything cool happening in Dallas. We're an award-winning media brand run by students (yes, we're just as busy and caffeinated as you are), and we put out a gorgeous print magazine twice a year, keep our website fresh with new content, and throw some pretty amazing events that bring the SMU community together.

We cover all the good stuff—fashion, lifestyle, food, culture, health, and travel—but always with that authentic student perspective. We're not trying to be *Vogue* (though we're not mad about the comparison). We're here to tell the stories that matter to us: the emerging Dallas designers in our DMs, the hole-in-the-wall restaurants we discover between classes, informed ideas on how to keep our bodies and minds in shape, and weekend adventures that don't require a trust fund.

What We're Looking For

Here's the thing—we want stories that make people stop scrolling. We're looking for that perfect mix of "I need to know this" and "I need to share this." Our readers are smart, style-conscious students and young professionals who care about more than just what's trending on TikTok (though we're not opposed to a good TikTok trend either).

We're always down for:

Fashion & Style

- Emerging Dallas designers and fashion entrepreneurs
- Student fashion spotlights and street style features
- Sustainable and affordable fashion for college students
- Fashion weeks, pop-ups, and local fashion events
- Style guides for campus life and Dallas living

Lifestyle & Culture

- Dallas neighborhood guides and hidden gems
- Campus culture and student life features
- Local art, music, and cultural events
- Social issues affecting young people
- Technology and social media trends

Food & Dining

- Dallas restaurant reviews and food trends

- Student-friendly dining spots
- Food culture and cooking for college life
- Local food entrepreneurs and chefs

Health & Wellness

- Mental health resources and discussions
- Fitness trends and accessible wellness practices
- Beauty and skincare for students on a budget
- Work-life balance for busy students

Travel & Adventure

- Weekend trips from Dallas
- Study abroad experiences
- Local adventures and day trips
- Travel tips for college students

Types of Content We Publish

Features (1,500-3,000 words)

In-depth profiles, trend pieces, and service stories that dig deep into topics our readers care about.

Personal Essays (800-1,500 words)

First-person narratives that offer unique perspectives on fashion, relationships, identity, and campus life.

Service Articles (600-1,200 words)

Practical guides, how-to's, and listicles that provide actionable advice for our readers.

Reviews & Roundups (400-800 words)

Restaurant reviews, product roundups, event coverage, and cultural criticism.

Quick Hits (200-500 words)

News briefs, trend alerts, and timely updates about fashion and lifestyle topics.

How to Pitch

For Students New to SMU Look

First off, we love fresh faces and new voices! You don't need a journalism degree or a portfolio that would make Anna Wintour take off her sunglasses and engage. All you need is curiosity, a good story idea, and the willingness to learn as you go.

Here's how to jump in:

1. Read our recent issues and website content to understand our voice and style
2. Follow us on social media to see what topics we're currently covering
3. Start with a small piece like a review or trend piece to build your portfolio
4. Attend our events and meetings to connect with our editorial team

For Journalism Students

If you're already in the j-school game, we've got plenty of ways for you to flex those skills and build your portfolio. We're basically your real-world newsroom, but with better music and more fun.

Staff Positions:

- Staff writers
- Contributing editors
- Social media coordinators
- Event coordinators
- Photography and styling assistants

Content Opportunities:

- Feature articles
- Reviews and roundups
- Event coverage
- Photography assignments

Pitch Requirements

Email Subject Line: "Pitch: [Your Article Title]"

Include in Your Pitch:

1. **The Concept:** A compelling headline and 2-3 sentence summary of your story
2. **The Angle:** Why this story matters now and why our readers should care
3. **Your Approach:** How you plan to report and structure the piece
4. **Your Credentials:** Brief bio including relevant experience, major, and why you're the right person for this story
5. **Timeline:** When you can deliver the piece

Sample Pitch Structure:

Subject: Pitch: How SMU Students Are Revolutionizing Sustainable Fashion

Hi SMU Look Team,

I'd like to pitch a feature story about three SMU students who have launched sustainable fashion initiatives on campus, from clothing swaps to upcycling workshops.

As sustainability becomes increasingly important to Gen Z consumers, these students are proving that eco-friendly fashion doesn't have to break the bank or sacrifice style. This story would showcase practical solutions our readers can implement while highlighting the entrepreneurial spirit at SMU.

I plan to interview the three student entrepreneurs, attend one of their workshops, and include actionable tips for sustainable fashion on a college budget. As a sophomore majoring in Environmental Science with a passion for fashion, I've been following these initiatives closely and have established relationships with the sources.

I can deliver 1,500 words with photos by [date].

Best,

[Your name]

What Makes a Strong Pitch

We Love Stories That:

- Have a clear SMU or Dallas connection
- Offer fresh perspectives on familiar topics
- Include diverse voices and experiences
- Provide practical value to readers
- Showcase emerging trends or overlooked communities
- Balance style with substance

We're Less Interested In:

- Generic trend pieces without local relevance
- Stories that have been covered extensively elsewhere
- Pitches without a clear angle or takeaway
- Content that doesn't align with our brand values
- Pitches that are too broad or unfocused

Submission Guidelines

Written Content

- Submit articles in Microsoft Word or Google Docs
- Use AP Style for consistency
- Include photo suggestions or availability
- Fact-check all claims and include sources

Photography

- High-resolution images (minimum 300 DPI)
- Natural lighting preferred
- Include photo credits and permissions
- Consider our aesthetic: bright, aspirational, authentic

Deadlines

- Print magazine: Varies by issue (typically 6-8 weeks before publication)
- Website: 1-2 weeks for most pieces
- Breaking news/events: 24-48 hours

Getting Involved Beyond Writing

Join Our Team

- Attend our general meetings (check our social media for dates)
- Apply for staff positions at the beginning of each semester
- Volunteer at our events and photo shoots
- Follow @smulook on Instagram and engage with our content

Event Opportunities

- Magazine launch parties
- Fashion shows and styling workshops
- Networking events with Dallas fashion professionals
- Pop-up shops and collaborative events

Final Notes

Look, SMU Look isn't just another campus publication that ends up in recycling bins. We're building something real here—a creative community where your voice actually matters and your stories find their people.

Whether you've been writing since you could hold a crayon or you just have something interesting to say about that viral Dallas food trend, we want to work with you. We're all figuring this out together, learning from each other, and creating content that doesn't talk down to our generation but speaks directly to who we are.

The best part? You don't have to do this alone. Our editorial team is here to help your ideas come to life, whether that means brainstorming angles, connecting you with sources, or just being your hype person when imposter syndrome hits.

So what are you waiting for? Slide into our DMs (professionally, of course), come to a meeting, or just send us that story idea that's been bouncing around your head. We're here for it, and we're here for you.

SMU Look is published by students in the Journalism and Fashion Media programs at Southern Methodist University. All content is written and produced by students.