

Dedman College Department Instagram Guide

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR DEPARTMENT ACCOUNTS

Purpose of Department Instagram Accounts

Department Instagram accounts should give students and prospective students an authentic look at the people, experiences and opportunities that make up the department. The goal is not simply to promote events or duplicate website content, but to show what it is like to learn, research and participate in the department.

PRIMARY	Current students and prospective students
SECONDARY	Alumni, faculty and staff, campus partners and the broader academic community

What to Post

Aim for a mix of content that tells the department's story:

- **Students:** Student experiences, internships, research, organizations, awards and accomplishments
- **Faculty:** Research, publications, expertise, awards and classroom experiences
- **Academics:** Interesting courses, hands-on learning, fieldwork and research opportunities
- **Careers & Alumni:** Alumni outcomes, career paths, internships and professional opportunities
- **Department Life:** Behind-the-scenes moments, traditions, gatherings and everyday activity
- **Events:** Speakers, lectures and other opportunities that are especially relevant to students

Recommended Cadence

Start with 1–2 quality feed posts or Reels per week. Stories can be used more frequently for reminders, reposts and informal or timely content.

You do not need to post every day. A consistent, active account is more valuable than posting frequently simply to fill the feed.

Feed vs. Reel vs. Story

- **Feed posts** — Content with a longer shelf life: student/faculty features, announcements, photos and major department news.
- **Reels** — Short-form video, especially content showing people, places or experiences: classroom activities, student takeovers, faculty Q&As, event recaps or “day in the life” content.
- **Stories** — Timely and informal content: event reminders, reposts, quick updates and behind-the-scenes moments.

Before You Post

Ask three questions:

1. Is this useful, interesting or relevant to our audience?
2. Does it represent the department, Dedman College and SMU professionally?
3. Is there a reason someone would want to see this on Instagram?

If the content is primarily informational and doesn't have a strong visual or social component, the department website, newsletter or email may be a better channel.

Getting Started & Account Best Practices

Who Should We Follow?

Start by building a network that reflects the department's academic and campus community.

- **SMU accounts** — Follow Dedman College, SMU and relevant schools, departments, centers, institutes and campus partners.

- **Your department community** — Follow affiliated student organizations and appropriate public/professional accounts belonging to faculty, programs and organizations connected with the department.
- **Professional organizations** — Follow reputable associations and organizations related to your discipline.
- **Local and regional organizations** — Follow organizations that regularly intersect with your department's teaching, research or student opportunities.
- **Peer institutions** — Follow a small number of departments at peer universities. These accounts can be useful for identifying content ideas and seeing how other academic departments communicate with students.

Don't mass-follow accounts simply to gain followers. The accounts your department follows should have a logical connection to its academic mission or community.

Posting Checklist

Before publishing:

- Use a clear, high-quality photo or video
- Identify people featured when appropriate
- Tag relevant SMU accounts, organizations or individuals
- Add captions to videos
- Consider accessibility and add alt text to images
- Check names, titles, dates and locations
- Proofread the caption
- Use only relevant hashtags rather than long lists of generic hashtags
- Make sure links direct users to an official or appropriate source
- Confirm that you have appropriate permission to use photos/content

Engaging as a Department

Remember that you are speaking as an SMU academic department, not from a personal account.

It's appropriate to like, comment on and share content from students, faculty, alumni and campus partners when it relates to the department.

Avoid engaging in arguments, political debates or controversial conversations from the department account. Questions involving sensitive issues, media inquiries or institutional matters should be referred to the appropriate college or University office.

Economics Instagram vs. Dedman College Instagram

Department accounts should focus on the day-to-day story of their academic community. Dedman College channels amplify stories with broader significance across the College or University.

Good for the department: A faculty member publishes new research, students visit the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, an Economics class hosts a guest speaker or the department holds a student event.

Send to Dedman MarCom for potential amplification: Major faculty awards, significant research discoveries, prominent media coverage, major student/alumni accomplishments, significant gifts or partnerships, and stories with University-wide or external interest.

Departments are encouraged to tag Dedman College or send strong photos, videos and story ideas to the College marketing and communications team. This allows us to amplify great department content rather than duplicate it.

The goal: Department accounts tell the stories closest to their communities; Dedman College helps the strongest of those stories reach a larger audience.