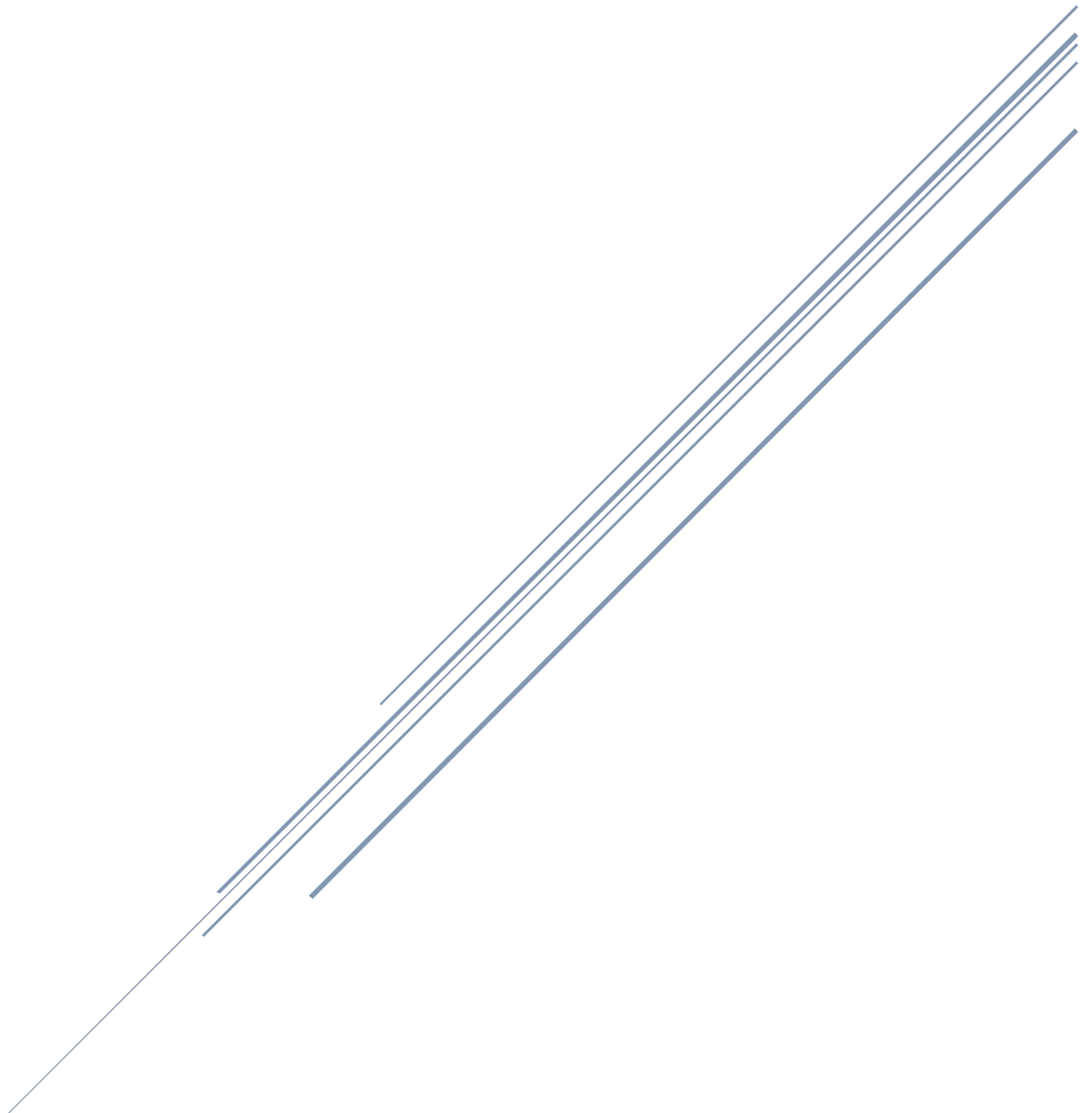


UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Faculty Credentials & Qualifications Manual



Introduction

The University of Southern Mississippi Faculty Credentials and Qualifications Policy Manual is to guide faculty, school directors, college credentialing officers (CCO), and the Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness (APIE) regarding the qualification of all Instructors of Record (IOR) at The University of Southern Mississippi (USM). All IOR are required to meet or exceed the guidelines established by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Faculty Credentials Guidelines (see: <http://sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/faculty%20credentials.pdf>). USM adheres to Standard 6.2.a (*Faculty qualifications*) that states: “For each of its educational programs, the institution justifies and documents the qualifications of its faculty members.”

USM adheres to CR 1.1 as outlined in The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement which states: “The institution operates with integrity in all matters.” (see: <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/integrity.pdf>). The evaluation of faculty credentials and qualifications requires strict adherence to CR 1.1 for the institution to provide a quality educational experience for all students.

The University of Southern Mississippi Faculty Credentials and Qualifications Manual augments the Instructor of Record Policy (August 2015), and supersedes the Instructor of Record Policy (August 2015) regarding all areas of faculty credentials and qualifications. The Instructor of Record Policy can be found at: <https://www.usm.edu/provost/instructor-record-policy>.

Responsibilities

Faculty Responsibility: A faculty member or faculty candidate has the responsibility to represent their credentials and qualifications accurately. The faculty member or faculty candidate is responsible for providing official copies of all academic transcripts, providing official copies of any licensures or certificates germane to their faculty responsibilities, and providing any supplemental information that may be required to qualify for a particular teaching assignment. Faculty members and faculty candidates are responsible for covering the costs associated with providing any required documentation.

School Level Responsibility: The primary responsibility for ensuring faculty are qualified to teach their course assignments rests at the school level. The school level is the most knowledgeable concerning the courses taught to support the various disciplines within the school. The Office of the Provost expects school faculty and personnel involved in the faculty hiring process to be aware of the requirements for faculty qualifications as they consider potential candidates. The Office of the Provost expects that school directors critically evaluate potential candidates’ official qualifications and credentials. Responsibility to ensure that faculty credentials and qualifications are compliant with requirements set by discipline-specific accrediting bodies is at the school level. The Office of the Provost encourages school directors to seek approval for all courses that a faculty member is qualified to teach at the time of appointment/hiring.

College Level Responsibility: The College Credentialing Officer (CCO) is responsible for reviewing the credentials and qualifications of all faculty members and faculty candidates within the college. The CCO verifies that the credentials and qualifications are appropriate to the teaching assignment of the faculty member or faculty candidate. The CCO is responsible for reviewing qualifications and credentials for all

faculty candidates that are to be invited for an on-campus interview. The CCO must verify the appropriateness of the qualifications and credentials of all faculty candidates before the school director notifies the candidate of their desire to bring her/him to campus for an on-site interview. The CCO must hold a terminal degree in their academic field and must hold or have held faculty status at USM as defined in the Faculty Handbook.

Office of the Provost Level Responsibility and Approval: The Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness (APIE) is responsible for the final evaluation of all USM faculty qualifications and credentials. The APIE maintains the spreadsheet of acceptable terminal degrees and majors for each discipline. The APIE ensures the inclusion of faculty qualifications in the Instructor/Advisor Table within SOAR. The APIE is responsible for the regular review of the credentials and qualifications process and the maintenance of this manual.

Required Documentation

All faculty qualifications are to be determined using appropriate documentation. Degrees and credits earned are to be verified from official copies of academic transcripts or other authentic sources (e.g. translations of foreign transcripts from reputable translation services, diplomas, etc.). In addition to all coursework, transcripts must indicate the degree, the major, and the date the degree was conferred. Certifications and licensures necessary for the qualification of the faculty must be presented and must be active. Expired certifications and licensures cannot be used as evidence in the faculty qualification process. Work experience used in the qualification process must be documented in either the form of a letter from a supervisor or other documentation showing the breadth of experience and accomplishment. The supervisor's letter must include a description of job skills germane to the teaching assignment, the time frame in which the work was conducted, and a narrative on the ability of the individual to train/educate individuals in the workplace. Other documentation showing the breadth of experience and accomplishment must address the same things that are expected of a supervisor's letter. The faculty member may submit awards and portfolios as evidence of accomplishment and recognition in the field. A CV/resumé cannot be used as evidence of qualification or work experience for faculty qualification purposes.

Appropriate Terminal Degrees and Majors

It is generally accepted that doctoral degrees with a major in the teaching discipline are sufficient for qualification to teach courses in the discipline at all levels. However, this does not mean that an IOR holding a doctoral degree is qualified to teach *each* course at *each* level of the curriculum. For some disciplines, the doctoral degree is rare or non-existent. Examples include some disciplines in the arts where it is more common for faculty to hold the MFA or MA degree with a major in the teaching discipline. In these situations, the MFA or MA would be considered as the terminal degree in the teaching discipline. There are situations where a teaching discipline can be properly served by a range of appropriate degrees and majors. For example, education disciplines may consider both the Ph.D. and the Ed.D. as terminal degrees.

The APIE maintains a spreadsheet containing information on acceptable terminal degrees and majors for each teaching discipline at USM. The spreadsheet allows each teaching discipline (defined by course prefix) to include the various terminal degrees and majors that would qualify an IOR to teach courses

within the discipline. The school directors provide the entries for the spreadsheet which are approved by the CCO and the APIE. The APIE will provide an opportunity for school directors to review the spreadsheet for accuracy on an annual basis.

Guidelines for Faculty Credentials and Qualifications

Standard Qualifications: The guidelines below outline the general considerations that are taken into account when qualifying an IOR to teach courses at USM. The standard qualifications process relies primarily on the terminal or highest degree obtained in the teaching field. However, other supporting information may be required for certain teaching assignments. For example, a faculty member teaching a course in SCUBA diving would need a SCUBA certification regardless of the terminal degree. The following guidelines are to be considered when determining the appropriateness of faculty qualifications. Please note that the Standard Qualifications guidelines do not include the prior teaching of similar courses at other institutions as a justification for qualification.

1. Faculty teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level require a doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline, or a master's degree with a minimum of 18-hours of graduate-level coursework in the teaching discipline. The 18-hour minimum excludes thesis and dissertation hours, independent studies courses, and colloquium courses.
2. Faculty teaching baccalaureate courses require a doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline. Alternatively, faculty may hold a doctorate or master's degree outside the teaching discipline with a minimum of 18-hours of graduate level coursework in the teaching discipline. The 18-hour minimum excludes thesis and dissertation hours, independent studies courses, and colloquium courses.
3. Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate courses require a doctorate or terminal degree in the teaching discipline or closely related discipline. Generally, IOR cannot teach graduate-level courses above the level of their highest degree.
4. Graduate teaching assistants teaching undergraduate level courses require a master's degree in the teaching discipline or a baccalaureate degree with a minimum of 18-hours of graduate-level coursework earned in the teaching discipline. The 18-hour minimum excludes thesis and dissertation hours, independent studies courses, and colloquium courses. Graduate teaching assistants must receive direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular and documented in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations. See the Instructor of Record Policy (August 2015) for additional reporting requirements.

Alternative Qualifications: Circumstances arise where the most appropriate individual to teach a course may not be qualified according to the guidelines outlined in the Standard Qualifications section above. Alternative qualification relies primarily on documented significant experiences, recognitions, certifications, and exceptional accomplishments. A CV/resumé is not sufficient evidence for alternative qualifications. Qualifying an IOR to teach courses based on alternative qualifications requires linking appropriate experiences, certifications, and exceptional accomplishments directly to the course objectives and student learning outcomes. The following guidelines outline the general considerations that are taken into account to qualify an IOR by alternative qualifications.

1. Substantial work experience in a field germane to the teaching discipline may be used to qualify an IOR to teach courses. The work experience must be documented and must be of substantial duration. A general rule is that the work experience must be at least five years in duration (preferably more). A letter from the supervisor or other documentation showing the breadth of experience and accomplishment is required (see required documentation section for details).
2. Certifications and licensures related to the teaching discipline can be used to qualify an IOR to teach courses. The certifications and licensures must be presented and must be active during the period the IOR will teach the course. All certifications and licensures must be earned from state, national, or international level organizations. Qualification based on certifications and licensures should be accompanied by other considerations such as experience and academic credentials.
3. Substantial awards and recognitions in a field germane to the teaching discipline can be used to qualify an IOR to teach courses. A general rule is that the awards and recognitions must be prestigious and generally recognized as such in the field. It is preferred that the awards and recognitions come from national or international level organizations. For example, an individual winning a Pulitzer Prize from their articles published in *The New York Times* could be qualified to teach a course in writing even though the individual does not hold an advanced degree in the field. Evidence of the award or recognition must be presented during the qualification process.
4. Substantial research contributions in a field germane to the teaching discipline can be used to qualify an IOR to teach courses. The research contributions must be published in peer-reviewed scholarly journals or presented by invitation at scholarly venues recognized by the teaching discipline. Documentation verifying the research contributions must be presented during the qualification process. For example, a chemical engineer may be qualified to teach an organic chemistry course if they have published extensively in the area of organic chemistry as evidenced by publications in journals such as *The Journal of Organic Chemistry*. It should be noted that a track record of scholarly publication is expected. Generally, a single or a relatively small number of publications in the field do not merit qualification for an IOR to teach courses.

Courses Without an Academic Discipline and Activity Courses: USM has a variety of courses that do not have an associated academic discipline or serve as activity courses. Examples include UNV courses, HON courses, select KIN activity courses (e.g. Fitness Walking), and Luckyday Citizenship courses. These courses serve a vital role at the university and must be taught by IOR who are qualified to teach the content and have specific skill sets, experiences, or training germane to the desired student learning outcomes of the courses. IOR for these courses must be qualified to teach based on the Alternative Qualifications guidelines outlined above regardless of whether or not the IOR holds a terminal degree in any field.

Study Abroad Courses: USM has a variety of courses that carry a “CA” designation after the course number. All of these courses are study abroad versions of the courses that are taught on one or more of

the USM campus locations. The content of a “CA” designated course is identical to the course not bearing the “CA” designation. For example, an ENG 102CA has the same course content and objectives as the ENG 102 course. Therefore, all faculty who have been qualified and credentialed to teach a course that has an equivalent “CA” designated course will automatically be qualified to teach the “CA” designated course.

The Qualifications Process

An IOR is qualified to teach specific courses based on their credentials as established through either the Standard Qualifications guidelines or the Alternative Qualifications guidelines outlined above. An IOR with an appropriate terminal degree in the teaching discipline is generally considered qualified to teach courses at each level of the curriculum. However, this does not mean that an IOR with a terminal degree in the teaching discipline is qualified to teach *each* course at *each* level in the curriculum. For example, a faculty member with a Ph.D. in Chemistry whose dissertation research and coursework focused on organic chemistry would be qualified to teach courses at all levels of the curriculum but would not necessarily be qualified to teach courses in Physical Chemistry.

USM Faculty Qualifications Form: The USM Faculty Qualifications Form is a required document of all full-time and part-time instructors of record. The form mimics the SACSCOC Faculty Roster that USM submits to SACSCOC as part of the reaffirmation process for our regional accreditation. The form requires signatures from the school director, the CCO, and the APIE (see below for workflow). Under no circumstance can the school director nor the CCO verify/approve their own qualifications form. If a school director or CCO needs to have their qualifications updated, then they would need to have the dean of the college (their direct supervisor) verify and sign on their behalf. The form contains four columns that are utilized to qualify an IOR for the courses listed. These four columns are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

1	2	3	4
INSTRUCTOR NAME (F, P, TA)	COURSES Current/Anticipated Including Term, Course Number & Title, Credit Hours (D, UT, G)	ACADEMIC DEGREES & COURSEWORK Including Institution & major. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List degrees as provided on transcripts. Provide a total number of graduate hours by institution relevant to courses assigned. List specific graduate coursework, if needed. 	OTHER QUALIFICATIONS (documented) & COMMENTS, if needed Relevant to Courses Taught

Col. 1 - F, P, TA: Full-time or Part-time or Teaching Assistant serving as instructor of record Column 2 - D, UT, G: Developmental, Undergraduate Transferable, Graduate

Figure 1: USM Faculty Qualifications Form (columns 1-4)

Column 1 is for the name of the IOR and the classification of the IOR. Avoid the use of “unofficial” names such as nicknames or abbreviations. The name is to match the name as it will appear in SOAR/SOARHR. Indicate the IOR classification as (F) for full-time (i.e. 100% FTE), (P) for part-time (i.e. <100% FTE), or (TA) for a graduate teaching assistant. NOTE: Include the EMPLID of the IOR for existing IOR.

Column 2 is for the specific courses for which qualification of the IOR is sought. Statements such as “all XYZ prefix courses” will not be accepted. The term information is the best estimate of the terms that the IOR will initially teach the courses and is most relevant for new hires. Indicate each course as (D) for developmental courses (e.g. 099 courses), (UT) for undergraduate transferable, or (G) for graduate courses. IOR are not generally qualified to teach courses above the level of their degree.

Column 3 is for the list of academic credentials held by the IOR. List the credential most relevant to the specific courses in Column 2 first. For example, if an IOR holds both an MFA and a Ph.D. degree in separate disciplines then list the degree germane to the courses in Column 2 first. Exclude colloquium courses,

thesis and dissertation hours, and independent study courses for the total number of graduate hours. You may also list specific graduate or undergraduate coursework as needed to make the argument for qualification. Column 3 is generally the last column needed for a standard qualification as the credential listed would be an appropriate terminal degree in the teaching discipline for the courses listed in Column 2.

Column 4 is where other qualifications, licensures, and certifications are listed. Only list other qualifications, licensures, and certifications if they are germane to the specific courses listed in Column 2. Column 4 can also be used to comment on the qualifications of the IOR concerning the courses listed in Column 2. Comments are necessary for all IOR seeking qualification through the Alternative Qualifications guidelines. Note: All facts listed in Column 4 must be accompanied by supporting evidence. For example, if a qualification is sought based on work experience, the evidence of work experience in the form of a supervisor's letter or other documentation must be presented with the qualifications form, and a brief narrative linking the experience with the course objectives and student outcomes must be in Column 4.

Figure 2 illustrates an example of acceptable entries into columns 1-4 of the USM Faculty Qualifications Form.

1	2	3	4
INSTRUCTOR NAME (F, P, TA)	COURSES Current/Anticipated Including Term, Course Number & Title, Credit Hours (D, UT, G)	ACADEMIC DEGREES & COURSEWORK Including Institution & major. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List degrees as provided on transcripts. Provide a total number of graduate hours by institution relevant to courses assigned. List specific graduate coursework, if needed. 	OTHER QUALIFICATIONS (documented) & COMMENTS, if needed Relevant to Courses Taught
Chem A. Tomic (F) EMPLID w123456	Fall 2018 CHE 255: Organic Chemistry 1, 3 hrs. (UT) CHE 652: Organic Synthesis, 3 hrs. (G) Spring 2019 CHE 106: General Chemistry 1, 3 hrs. (UT) BSC 399: MCAT Preparation, 2 hrs. (UT)	Ph.D. Chemistry (1999). The University of Oklahoma. 52 hrs. BS Chemistry (1995). The University of Arkansas. 130 hrs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BIO 123: Zoology (3 hrs) BIO 123L: Zoology Lab (1 hr) BIO 333: Evolutionary Biology (3 hrs) CHEM 501: Biochemistry 1 (3 hrs) CHEM 499: Biochemical Techniques (2 hrs) 	Dr. Tomic will teach the chemistry and biochemistry portions of BSC 399. The undergraduate coursework in biology and biochemistry provides the necessary background to teach the biochemical topics relevant to the MCAT exam that BSC 399 prepares students to take. Dr. Tomic has established an independent research career in the area of medicinal chemistry and has published extensively in reputable journals on topics relevant to the material covered in the biochemistry components of BSC 399. See the attached publications list.

Col. 1 - F, P, TA: Full-time or Part-time or Teaching Assistant serving as instructor of record Column 2 - D, UT, G: Developmental, Undergraduate Transferable, Graduate

Figure 2: Example entries for columns 1-4. **Note:** Undergraduate coursework toward the BS is listed as it is being used to make an alternative qualifications argument for BSC 399.

Faculty Qualifications and the Hiring Process: Search committees for faculty are to follow the procedures as outlined in the hiring toolkit that is available on the Office of the Provost website. The search committee must keep faculty credentials and qualifications in mind as they evaluate candidates and determine which candidates to advance in the search process. A USM Faculty Qualifications Form must be completed and reviewed by the CCO before inviting a faculty candidate to campus for an interview. Forms are not forwarded to the APIE during the interview process, but the CCO may consult with the APIE should there be any questions regarding the appropriateness of the candidate's credentials and qualifications. The following steps must be completed during the search process to ensure that faculty candidates are qualified to perform their assigned teaching duties if hired.

- 1) Search committee decides on a pool of candidates to bring to campus for an interview (based on phone interview process).
- 2) Search committee chair, in consultation with the school director, prepares a USM Faculty Qualifications Form for each candidate that will be invited to campus. This form is to include ALL

courses within that school that the school director and search committee chair deem the candidate qualified to teach. The qualifications form should be accompanied by official copies of ALL transcripts from which the candidate has received degrees. Submitting official copies of transcripts with the qualifications form ensures that official transcripts are readily available when a hiring decision is made. High quality and legible copies of official transcripts can be used to make the qualification determination as long as candidates have placed requests to have official copies sent to USM.

- 3) The school director approves the qualifications form and forwards to the CCO for evaluation. The CCO will review the credentials and qualifications relevant to the anticipated courses to be taught. The CCO can return the form to the school director without approval if she/he is not convinced of the qualifications. The CCO may consult with the APIE regarding the appropriateness of a candidate's credentials and qualifications. Faculty candidates can be invited for an on-campus interview after the CCO reviews and approves the qualifications.
- 4) The qualifications form for the candidate of choice is forwarded to the Office of the Provost along with the other required hiring documents. The APIE will review the qualifications and make the final determination of the appropriateness of the credentials and qualifications. The qualifications form should be accompanied by official copies of ALL transcripts from which the candidate has received degrees. Submitting official copies of transcripts with the hiring documents ensures that official transcripts are on file with HR at the time of hiring. High quality and legible copies of official transcripts can be used to make the qualification determination as long as official copies are on file with HR 30 days after the contract start date.

Updating Faculty Qualifications: The USM Faculty Qualifications Form can be updated for an IOR at any time during the year. However, the IOR must be approved to teach the course before being scheduled to teach it. SOAR does not allow faculty who have not been qualified as IOR to be assigned courses. Reasons for revising the Faculty Qualifications Form include, but are not limited to, 1) the IOR has completed a terminal degree in their teaching discipline, 2) the IOR has earned a certification or licensure germane to specific courses, and 3) the Provost has approved a new course, and qualified instructors must be identified. The following steps are to be used in updating the qualification of an IOR.

- 1) The school director completes a new USM Faculty Qualifications Form for the IOR. The new form is to be accompanied by any new credentials such as transcripts, certifications, licensures, etc. that are relevant to the new courses listed in Column 2. The school director need not include transcripts or certifications that are on file for the IOR in either HR or Digital Measures (Activity Insight). The school director is only to include courses in Column 2 that are new for the IOR and do not appear in the Instructor/Advisor Table in SOAR for the IOR.
- 2) The school director approves and forwards the form and any supporting documentation to the CCO using established procedures.
- 3) The CCO evaluates the credentials for the IOR concerning the courses listed in Column 2. The CCO can return the form to the school director without approval if she/he is not convinced of the qualifications.
- 4) The CCO forwards the approved USM Faculty Qualifications Form to the APIE for final evaluation. The APIE can return the form to the CCO without approval if she/he is not convinced of the qualifications.

- 5) The APIE will forward the list of approved courses for the IOR to the Office of the Registrar for inclusion in the Instructor/Advisor Table in SOAR.

Interdisciplinary Faculty: USM encourages faculty to teach across disciplines, schools, and colleges as appropriate and justifiable. The qualifications process for faculty who teach across disciplines are as previously outlined (i.e., school director → CCO → APIE). However, the school director for which the course belongs is responsible for initiating the qualifications process for the faculty member regardless of the faculty members home discipline/school. The school director for the course submits the USM Faculty Qualifications Form to the CCO of their college for evaluation. Faculty seeking qualification to teach courses outside their home discipline/school must receive permission from their school director to teach outside of their discipline/school.