Course Substitution Checklist

To earn a degree or minor, students are required to complete the coursework and other specifications listed in that degree/program plan published in the Bulletin for their catalog year. Substitutions are exceptions to the degree requirements and are very rare for non-transfer students who have been properly advised and are using well-administered degree plans. Substitutions should only be used in extraordinary circumstances or for students who completed coursework while at a previous institution or in a former major. Schools should adhere to the guidelines listed below regarding requests for undergraduate course substitutions. For additional details on each item below, including examples, please see https://www.usm.edu/success/substitution-checklist

General
1. □ Submit all substitutions as soon as possible; never wait until a student is ready to apply for graduation. Substitutions for transfer courses must be submitted no later than the end of the student’s second semester at USM.
2. □ Do not use substitutions in a manner that effectively circumvents Academic Council or accreditation standards.
3. □ Director and Dean approval signatures cannot be the same.

Justifications
4. □ Provide a justification for the substitution in the box that addresses both the level of equivalency between the two courses and a rationale for making an exception to the requirement.
   □ Equivalency: How is the content of the substitute and required courses similar/How do they cover the same relevant learning outcomes?
   □ Rationale: Why is the request being made? / Why did the student not take the course required by the degree plan?
5. □ Write the justification in a manner understandable to potential external reviewers. Avoid department-specific abbreviations. Do not assume the reviewer knows the degree plan for each catalog year.
6. □ Fit the entire justification in the space provided on the form and keep it brief and clear.
7. □ Pick a specific course for the substitution request rather than a range of courses.
8. □ For GEC substitutions, indicate whether the course fulfills the GEC/core curriculum requirements at the transfer institution. If it does, attach supporting documentation from the transfer institution; if it does not, note on the form that it does not.
9. □ Do not use course prefix as a justification for a substitution. Courses with the same prefix but a higher number typically do not indicate equivalency at a more advanced level.
10. □ Do not interchangeably use the phrases “course X meets the objectives of the requirement” and “course X meets the requirement.” These indicate different issues.
11. □ Take responsibility for misadvisement. Substitution requests based on misadvisement may be considered with evidence.
12. □ Avoid waivers. Waivers will only be approved in rare and extraordinary circumstances. A substitution indicates the required content or subject matter has been covered elsewhere; a waiver simply dismisses the requirement.

Documentation
13. □ Attach a current DPR.
14. □ Type both the USM transfer course number and transfer institution’s original course number on the request form.
15. □ Attach the USM Transfer Credit Evaluation (Equivalent Course Information) from SOAR if the course transferred in with the title “TFR [Program] Elective.”
16. □ Include the approved Permission to Transfer Credit form if a transfer course was taken after the student enrolled at USM.
17. □ Attach evidence (e.g., syllabi) to evaluate equivalency for transfer courses from institutions without an articulation agreement.
18. □ Highlight or underline the relevant information/sections/courses on all attachments, including DPR Course History.