# Graduate Course Substitutions Guidelines & Instructions

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Course Substitution Policy

Course Substitutions are requests to modify degree requirements. Course substitutions are rare and should only occur under exceptional circumstances. Students seeking modifications to degree requirements must submit an online course substitution form, initiated by the student with the help of a graduate program coordinator.

Course substitution is the process by which an alternate course may replace a required or proscribed course in a program of study, provided the substituted course meets the content, learning objectives, and/or spirit of the original course.

Only letter grade courses may be substituted for letter grade course requirements, and courses must be of equal credit hours.

Only courses in which the student earns or has earned a grade of B or better will be used as course substitutions.

Students may not replace a core required course in which they have earned an F, NC, NP, or U grade with a substituted course.

Source: 2022 – 2023 Graduate Catalog

Before Submitting a Course Substitution

Before a request is submitted, please review important details below.

- Confirm that course(s) to be substituted are listed (as required or optional) on the student’s degree plan/DegreeWorks.
- Confirm that course(s) that will substitute required course(s) are showing on the student’s academic record/DegreeWorks.
- The course substitution process should not be used to request approval of additional courses beyond degree requirements on the degree audit. Specifically, if a block/section on a degree audit has been fulfilled, substitutions will not be allowed.
- A course that is required or proscribed in a master’s program and in a graduate certificate and it is approved to be substituted, the course substitution will be applied to both programs.
- A course substitution may be closed without processing if:
  - Course information included on the request does not match the student’s record and/or degree plan/DegreeWorks.
  - Form does not clearly indicate the requirement to be waived on the student’s degree plan/DegreeWorks.
Instructions to Submit Course Substitution

A course substitution is a request to replace a required course in the degree plan using a course of similar content and learning outcomes. Course substitutions are approved by the Department Chair, College Dean of the Program, and Graduate College Dean. Follow the steps below to submit a course substitution.

**STEP 1.** Login to the Graduate Course Substitutions portal using your UTRGV credentials. Once you logged in, the new request form will be displayed.

**STEP 2.** Type the student’s ID in the Student ID field and click on Get Data. This action will auto-populate the student’s information fields such as first and last name, email address, classification, college, major, department, and catalog year. The Concentration/Specialization field must be completed by typing the information, if applicable. Once all information has been verified, click Next.

![Submit New Request](image)

**STEP 3.** Enter the course information that will replace the required course on the student’s degree plan as well as the required course to be replaced.

Course information that was previously taken or in progress includes course subject and number, title, year and term taken/in-progress, grade earned, if applicable, and credit hours.

Course information to be substituted requires course subject and number, title, and course type. On the course type field in the UTRGV Course to be Substituted. A justification for the substitution must be included and be limited to 500 characters. Once all the fields are accurately completed, click on Add Substitution.

You may add up to 3 course substitution requests in the same form. To do so, repeat this process.
STEP 4. Once the course substitution has been added, click **Next** to proceed to upload supporting documentation.
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STEP 5. You may upload supporting documents such as copy of course descriptions of all courses, course syllabus, student’s DegreeWorks, transcripts(s), and additional information regarding the justification.

Note: supporting documentation is required if transfer coursework is requested to replace UTRGV coursework.

Once documents are uploaded, click Next to verify approver(s) and complete submission.

STEP 6. In this step the department chair of the student’s program will be displaying and if approver is accurate, then click on Submit for Approval to submit course substitution request.
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Once the course substitution has been submitted, details of the request will be displayed in 3 different tabs: Student Information, Request & Workflow, and Supporting Documents.

- **Request Details**
  - Student Information
  - Request & Workflow
  - Supporting Documents

By viewing the request, you can see the form ID, student ID, student name, course information, and additional details.

### View and Search Course Substitution Requests

To view the requests pending to submit and those submitted, click on **My Requests** on the top menu bar. To view details of a request, click on **View**.

#### My Submitted Requests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Request Type</th>
<th>Student ID</th>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Catalog Year</th>
<th>Submission Status</th>
<th>Date Created</th>
<th>Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41309</td>
<td>Course Substitution</td>
<td>1234567</td>
<td>Jane Doe</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Biology (BIO)</td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>Submitted</td>
<td>6/13/2022</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41310</td>
<td>Course Substitution</td>
<td>1234567</td>
<td>Jane Doe</td>
<td>Biology (BIO)</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>Submitted</td>
<td>6/14/2022</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To search for a request, click on **Search Requests** on the top menu bar. A request can be searched by form ID, student ID, student last name, and/or student first name.

#### Search Requests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form ID or Student ID</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Search</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Course Information

During the Fall 2021 term, the student completed SOC 6901. The course is research-oriented, labor intensive, and intellectually demanding, and students are required to produce a rigorous research proposal accompanied by a formal presentation of their project, as such, the demands of the course are comparable with research practicum.
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Instructions to Process (Approve/Deny) Course Substitutions

Academic Department Chairs, College Deans, and Graduate College Dean are designated as approvers of course substitutions. Follow the steps below to process course substitutions.

**STEP 1.** Login to the **Graduate Course Substitutions** portal using your UTRGV credentials.

**STEP 2.** Once you logged in, the list of pending requests will be displayed. To view the details and process a request, click **Select**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Request Type</th>
<th>SID</th>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Catalog Year</th>
<th>Submitted By</th>
<th>Date Submitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34572</td>
<td>Course Substitution</td>
<td>01234567</td>
<td>Jane Doe</td>
<td>Primary Major</td>
<td>Department</td>
<td>2020-2021</td>
<td><a href="mailto:advisor@utrgv.edu">advisor@utrgv.edu</a></td>
<td>1/13/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34573</td>
<td>Course Substitution</td>
<td>01234567</td>
<td>Jane Doe</td>
<td>Primary Major</td>
<td>Department</td>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td><a href="mailto:advisor@utrgv.edu">advisor@utrgv.edu</a></td>
<td>1/19/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34943</td>
<td>Course Substitution</td>
<td>01234567</td>
<td>John Doe</td>
<td>Primary Major</td>
<td>Department</td>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td><a href="mailto:advisor3@utrgv.edu">advisor3@utrgv.edu</a></td>
<td>2/10/2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STEP 3.** Click the **Make a Decision** button to process the request and a new popup window will display.

**STEP 4.** In the popup window, proceed to enter a decision (**Approve** or **Deny**), justification, and click **Submit** to complete the request. Once the request has been submitted, it will continue in the workflow to the next approver.
Email Notifications and Workflows

Email Notifications

Users that submit course substitution(s) as well as the students that requests are submitted for will receive an email notification once the course substitution has been submitted and processed by the Degree Audit Systems and Support Team.

Approvers will also receive an email notification once a course substitution enters their queue for decision maker.

Please be aware that approvers will receive a daily email reminder to process requests in their queue if those requests are 5 days or older.

General Workflow

Contact Information

If you have additional questions or access to the Graduate Course Substitution portal, please contact the Degree Audit Systems and Support team at gradcertification@utrgv.edu.
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Frequently Asked Questions

1. Student’s basic information is not up to date, how can it be updated before I submit the request?
   - All Basic Information fields are editable so you can type or select an item on the respective drop-down menu.

2. As approver, can I find in the portal the student’s graduation application status and term?
   - Once you log in, the list of requests pending on your queue will display. The last two columns will show the student’s graduation application status and term. If the columns are blank, then indicates that the student has not yet applied for graduation.