

UPDATE NEWSLETTER

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SARA update and steps for institutions to participate



As of September 25, 2014, there are nine approved states participating in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements and all are accepting institutional applications. Those states are: Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota and Washington.

In addition, SARA applications from Louisiana, Virginia, and West Virginia have been submitted to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), becoming the first three states in that region to apply. Several other states are close to submitting applications to their respective compacts. NC-SARA staff anticipate that there will be 18-20 SARA states by the end of December. In addition, numerous states are working on legislation to be introduced in 2015. An up-to-date list of state actions regarding SARA is available at: <http://nc-sara.org/content/sara-state-status>.

After a state joins SARA and has established its state portal agency (SPA) to perform its SARA duties, accredited degree-granting institutions offering distance education courses can seek approval from their home states. The institutional process starts with the SARA application that is available at <http://www.nc-sara.org/files/docs/SARA-Institutional-Application.pdf.pdf>. Institutions applying to operate under SARA must submit this application to its home state portal agency. SPA contacts are available at: <http://www.nc-sara.org/content/state-portal-agency-contacts>

Once the institution application has been approved by the SPA, NC-SARA, the regional compact, and the institution will be notified of the approval. The SPA will send the institution a link to the NC-SARA payment form to finalize participation in SARA. Item 12 on the application details annual SARA institutional fees; these are based on most recent reported IPEDS numbers:

- \$2,000/year for institutions with fewer than 2,500 FTE students
- \$4,000/year for institutions between 2,500-9,999 FTE students
- \$6,000/year for institutions with 10,000 or more FTE students

Payment details are included in the form. Payments are accepted by credit card, check or electronic funds transfer. Note, if electing to pay by check the system creates an invoice. If another individual at your institution is processing the check, please forward this invoice to them. Institutions requiring a W-9 need to email NC-SARA staff at: information@nc-sara.org.

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Checks should be payable to: WICHE/NC-SARA and mailed to: WICHE/NC-SARA, 3035 Center Green Drive, Suite 200, Boulder, Colorado 80301. Checks received prior to SPA approval will be returned and checks made payable to any payee other than the above will cause a delay in finalization of institutional participation.

Credit card payments are part of the online process. Cards accepted: VISA, MasterCard and American Express. Note, statements will show a charge to WICHE (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education) for this transaction.

Once payment is received, the institution is officially participating in SARA and will be listed on the nc-sara.org site. Institutions will also receive a welcome letter from NC-SARA with access to approved SARA institution logos.

For institutions that are active online, with students in many states, the potential benefits of SARA are obvious. SARA can enable more efficient provision of distance education to a broader market. It can reduce the number of other-state regulations institutions must monitor and respond to, reduce the number of applications to other states, and, most obviously, significantly reduce costs for obtaining and renewing authorization. For students, SARA will expand access to educational offerings, improve overall quality and should lead to better resolution of complaints from students in SARA states. Furthermore, by reducing costs to institutions, SARA can reduce a rapidly growing institutional cost that in one way or another is passed along to students.

For more information regarding institutional payments, contact:

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Questions about institutional closures

SARA staff are occasionally asked for help in identifying good approaches to dealing with institutional closures.

The U.S. Department of Education requires recognized accrediting agencies to have policies on the closure of institutions that are eligible to participate in federal Title IV programs. See: http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=9fa936e2ee2bf1e897a4ef2fc8645895&node=se34.3.602_124&rgn=div8

An example of such material can be found at: <http://www.sacscoc.org/subchg/policy/Closeprogramcampusinstitution.pdf> This example is from the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; other accrediting bodies provide similar material.



National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements

A voluntary, regional approach to state oversight of distance education

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Upcoming Presentations

**Oregon Higher Education Coordinating
Commission Informational Meeting**
October 1, 2014
Salem, Oregon

**The Nursing Education Xchange (NEXus)
Annual Executive Committee Meeting**
October 8, 2014
Portland, Oregon

**University Professional & Continuing
Education Association (UPCEA) Central
2014 Regional Conference**
October 22, 2014
Denver, Colorado

**The Presidents' Forum 2014 Annual
Meeting**
October 23, 2014
Washington, DC

**Online Learning Consortium International
Conference**
October 29, 2014
Lake Buena Vista, Florida

**University Professional & Continuing
Education Association (UPCEA)
New England Regional Conference**
October 29-31, 2014
Manchester, Vermont

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