

National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements

UPDATE NEWSLETTER

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Indiana approved as first SARA state



**Indiana has been approved by the
Midwestern Higher Education Compact
(MHEC) as the first state to join the
National Council for State Authorization
Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA).**

SARA is a nationwide initiative of states that will make distance education courses more accessible to students across state lines, as well as making it easier for states to regulate and institutions to participate in interstate distance education. The SARA agreements are being implemented by the four regional higher education interstate compacts, the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). The effort is funded by a \$2.3 million grant from Lumina Foundation.

"Indiana has enthusiastically supported the establishment of SARA from its earliest discussions and has been actively engaged in implementation of the concept," says Ken Sauer, Ph.D., senior associate commissioner for research and academic affairs at the Indiana Commission for Higher Education. Recent changes made by the Indiana General Assembly have consolidated and streamlined coordination of Indiana's system of higher education. Two changes in particular are of significant importance to Indiana joining MHEC-SARA. First, the Commission for Higher Education leads a newly created Indiana Board for Proprietary Education that oversees in-state and out-of-state proprietary institutions. Second, the Commission was granted oversight responsibilities for out-of-state public and not-for-profit institutions offering instruction in Indiana.

"This is really exciting for the Compact and for Indiana as we move this initiative forward for states, institutions, and students that will ultimately benefit from these reciprocity agreements," said Larry Isaak, MHEC president.

States that wish to join SARA must demonstrate to their regional SARA compact that they have an effective process for authorizing institutions that want to participate in the reciprocity agreement. That process must include, at a minimum: acceptance of national or regional accreditation as evidence of academic quality for approving institutions to participate in reciprocity; acceptance of an adequate federal financial responsibility score (1.5, or 1.0 with justification, at a minimum) for such participation; and an effective state process for consumer protection (including addressing consumer complaints) and ongoing oversight. States also need to have the authority to enter into the reciprocity agreement, which in many will require legislative action. Lastly, states and territories that don't belong to a regional compact but want to participate in SARA may either become full members of a compact or join, at reduced dues, solely to be part of SARA.

"SARA seeks to be part of the solution to issues in distance education and will save states and institutions time and money," said Marshall Hill, executive director of NC-SARA. Once a state joins SARA, accredited degree-granting institutions offering distance education courses can seek approval from their home states. When approved, these institutions will be able to operate in other participating SARA states without seeking independent authorization. This process is entirely voluntary (as is the process for states). An institution that chooses not to use SARA can continue to work with individual states to obtain approval to offer distance education to individuals residing in those states.



Staff Announcements

New England group appoints Doran to lead SARA

The New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) appointed former college president and legal expert Sandra J. Doran to direct the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) for New England. Doran is the former president of American College of Education, the fifth largest graduate school of education in the country, and former vice president, general counsel and chief of staff at Lesley University. She previously was vice president and general counsel at Shaw's, New England's second largest supermarket chain.

"Sandra brings a critical combination of experiences to this role, including academic quality assurance and accreditation, consumer protection and a deep understanding of the changing modes of higher education delivery. She has developed an extensive background in the rapidly evolving world of higher education technology, where online teaching, learning, and student outcomes are paramount," said NEBHE President and CEO Michael K. Thomas. "Her background in working with higher education institutions, state authorizers, and other stakeholders will be very valuable to regional and national endeavors related to SARA."

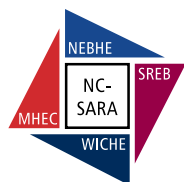
MHEC welcomes M-SARA Coordinator

Emily Jacobson is the coordinator of the Midwestern Regional State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (M-SARA). Emily assists with the development, implementation, management, and oversight of M-SARA, which enables states in the MHEC region to enter into a voluntary reciprocity agreement for the purpose of authorizing colleges and universities to provide online and other distance-based courses and programs to students living in other states.

Emily comes to the Compact from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UW-L) where she was the university undergraduate research coordinator. While at UW-L, Emily worked to increase awareness of undergraduate research on campus, increase student involvement and manage student grant processes. Emily has also worked as a communications specialist at Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Care in La Crosse, WI. Emily earned her bachelor of arts degree in communication studies from Winona State University. Emily joined the Compact in January 2014.

Oregon names new head of private postsecondary education

Juan Baez has accepted the position of Director for Private Post-Secondary Education at the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). Juan has a diverse background in education, workforce training, and public policy. Most recently he was principal of an elementary school in Corvallis, although his career has also included time in the private sector, at a community college, and in the Department of Employment.



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A voluntary, regional approach to state oversight of distance education

3005 Center Green Drive, Suite 130 • Boulder, Colorado 80301
303.541.0283 • information@nc-sara.org • www.nc-sara.org

Upcoming SARA presentations

Texas Distance Learning Association (TxDLA)
April 1-4, 2014
Corpus Christi, Texas

Distance Education and Training Council (DETC)
April 7-8, 2014
Hammock Beach, Florida

Higher Learning Commission annual meeting
April 12-14, 2014
Chicago, Illinois

National Association of State Administrators and Supervisors of Private Schools (NASASPS)
April 27-30, 2014
Little Rock, Arkansas

News

Rhonda Epper, W-SARA, has posted enabling legislation (passed in 2013 or earlier and introduced in 2014) for the WICHE states on the W-SARA website. Visit: wiche.edu/sara

Revision of SARA's Policies and Standards for Consumer Protection have been posted online. Visit: nc-sara.org/content/sara-policies-and-standards

New FAQs

If a corporation owns several degree-granting institutions, is the state where the corporate headquarters is located the "home state"?
No. The corporate parent is not a degree-granting institution. The home state is where the principal location of the degree-granting institution is domiciled. This is usually also the institution that carries the accreditation for a multi-state network of privately-owned colleges. One corporate parent might own several degree-granting institutions that are domiciled in several different states.

Does SARA cover all interstate placements of students in clinical sites and practica, or only those placements that are related to a distance-ed program?

SARA covers all interstate placements in clinical or practica situations among SARA member states, no matter the nature of the main program. However, some such placements may also be subject to the rules of professional licensing boards, in which case the placement must also meet such requirements. SARA does not supersede professional requirements imposed by such boards.