



SARA
*How to Become an Approved
SARA Institution*

June 18, 2014
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Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 

Answering Questions in the background



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Feedback from the last Webinar


- ▶ Overall satisfaction rating out of 5.0: **4.28**
- ▶ Most requested future topic: **SARA**
- ▶ Most useful info: **State Authorization**
- ▶ Most requested improvement: **Logistics**



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Improvements to the Webinar

- ▶ Shorter and slower 
- ▶ PowerPoint **slides ahead of time** and posted to the website afterward
- ▶ **Chat questions** - we will respond as quickly as we can and send out a document with responses within 48 hours
- ▶ **Fewer words** - more graphics



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Structure of the Webinar


Total Webinar Time = 60 minutes

Part I:
Quick SARA overview and implementation timeline (JLP)

Part II:
A walk through the state application process (JLP)

Part III:
Submission, review, acceptance, and payment processes (co-presenters)

Part IV:
Questions and Answers (everyone)





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PART I:

A Quick SARA Overview and Implementation Timeline

Jenny Parks










National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements
Approved Institution

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SARA Key Elements

- Institutional academic integrity 
- Institutional financial responsibility 
- Triggers for "physical presence" 
- Complaint processing 
- Data collection and sharing 
- Accountability for institutional catastrophes 



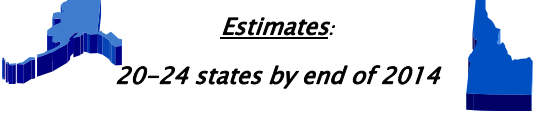
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Stages to SARA membership

STAGE 1

A state must have the legal ability to join the agreement



Estimates:
20-24 states by end of 2014
40-45 states by end of 2015



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Examples of SPAs



- ▶ North Dakota University System
- ▶ <https://www.ndus.edu/system/state-authorization/>



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Stages to SARA membership



STAGE 3

A state must submit its application to its regional compact and be approved for membership



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Examples of states that have already joined SARA



<http://nc-sara.org/sara-states-institutions>



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Stages to SARA membership 

STAGE 4

Institutions apply to their SPAs once the SPAs are ready for them





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Examples of Institutions that have already joined SARA 

<http://nc-sara.org/states/nd>




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Estimated timeline for M-SARA SPAs to accept Institutional applications 

States	Estimated SPA opening
Indiana North Dakota	Already taking applications
Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska	Fall 2014
Iowa, Missouri, Michigan?, Ohio	January 2015



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Estimated timeline for W-SARA SPAs to accept Institutional applications



States	Estimated SPA opening
Idaho, Nevada	Already taking applications
Alaska, Colorado, Washington	July 2014



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PART II:

A Walk Through the Institutional Application Process

Jenny Parks



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Where to find the application



On the NC-SARA website:

<http://nc-sara.org/files/docs/SARA-Institutional-Application.pdf.pdf>

NC-SARA

National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements

Home About FAQs Documents News Events Links Contacts Blog States



Application for institutional approval to participate in SARA

An institution seeking approval to operate under the terms and standards of the State Authorization Reciprocity Network (SARA) must meet the requirements in the application below.

Application for institutional approval to participate in SARA (save file for fillable pdf option)

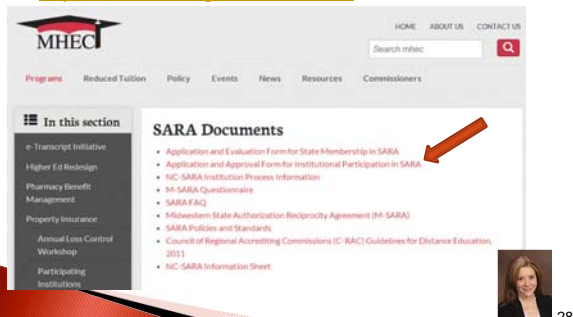
Regional SARA Directors



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Where to find the application

On the regional compact websites:
<http://www.mhec.org/sara-documents>



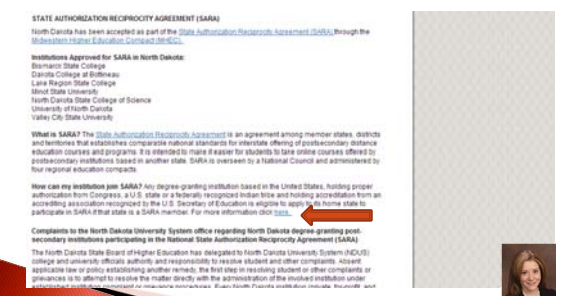
SARA Documents

- Application and Evaluation Form for State Membership in SARA
- Application and Approval Form for Institutional Participation in SARA
- NC-SARA Institution Process Information
- M-SARA Questionnaire
- SARA FAQ
- Midwestern State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (M-SARA)
- SARA Policies and Standards
- Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) Guidelines for Distance Education, 2011
- NC-SARA Information Sheet

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Where to find the application

On the portal agency websites:
<https://www.ndus.edu/system/state-authorization/>



STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROcity AGREEMENT (SARA)
 North Carolina has been accepted as part of the [State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement \(SARA\)](#), through the [Midwestern Higher Education Compact \(MHEC\)](#).

Institutions Approved for SARA in North Dakota:
 Bemidji State College
 Dakota College of Business
 Latah Region State College
 Idaho State University
 North Carolina State College of Science
 University of North Carolina
 Utah State University

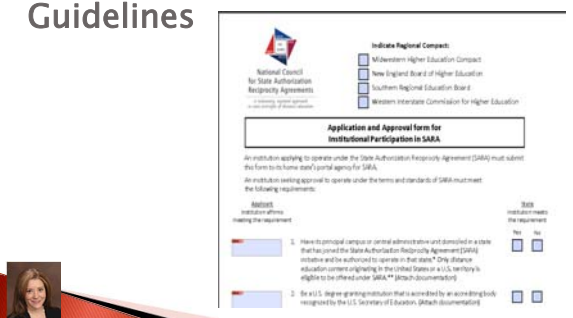
What is SARA? The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement is an agreement among member states, districts and territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. It is intended to make it easier for students to take online courses offered by postsecondary institutions based in another state. SARA is overseen by a National Council and administered by four regional education compacts.

How can my institution join SARA? Any degree-granting institution based in the United States, holding proper authorization from Congress, a U.S. state or a federally recognized Indian tribe and holding accreditation from an accrediting association recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education is eligible to apply to become a state to participate in SARA if that state is a SARA member. For more information visit [SARA](#).

Complaints to the North Dakota University System office regarding North Dakota degree-granting post-secondary institutions participating in the National State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)
 The North Dakota State Board of Higher Education has delegated to North Dakota University System (NDUS) college and university officials authority and responsibility to resolve student and other complaints. Award applicable law or policy establishing another remedy, the first step in resolving student or other complaints or grievances is to attempt to resolve the matter directly with the administration of the involved institution under the institution's applicable policies, procedures and grievance resolution process. [What North Dakota institutions include in SARA](#) and [What North Dakota institutions include in SARA](#)

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Institutional SARA application and C-RAC Guidelines



Institute Regional Compact:

- Midwestern Higher Education Compact
- New England Board of Higher Education
- Southern Regional Education Board
- Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

Application and Approval Form for Institutional Participation in SARA


An institution applying to operate under the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) must submit the form to its home state's portal agency for SARA.

An institution seeking approval to operate under the terms and standards of SARA must meet the following requirements:


Requirement	Does institution meet the requirement?
1. Have its principal campus or central administrative unit located in a state that has joined the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) and be authorized to operate in that state? Only distance education courses originating in the United States in a U.S. territory, eligible to be offered under SARA. (Attach documentation)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Be a U.S. degree-granting institution that is accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. (Attach documentation)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

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What are the parts of the Application?




	Same for all states	Different by state (Page 8 only)
Requires documentation	Items 1, 2, & 3 • OPE ID - location • Accreditation • FRS	• State Fees • Surety Bonding • Low FRS documentation
Requires Affirmation	Everything else ** C-RAC Guidelines**	





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What's the same and requires documentation?




Item 1:

- ▶ Determine the actual state in which your institution is domiciled: OPE ID no., articles of incorporation, charter, etc.
- ▶ Attach documentation of that location.
- ▶ You can use this website to look up your institution's OPE ID number and where it is registered: <http://www.ifap.ed.gov/ifap/fedSchoolCodeList.jsp>



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What's the same and requires documentation?



Item 2:

- ▶ Document that you are accredited by a regionally or a nationally recognized accreditor.
- ▶ Attach the letter from your accreditor to your application.
- ▶ For a list of accreditors and accredited institutions, use this link: <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/>

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What's the same and requires documentation?



Item 3:

- ▶ Document that your institution has a **federal financial responsibility score** of at least **1.5**
- ▶ OR document that your institution has a score of **1.0 to 1.49** with additional documentation as requested by the states.*
- ▶ To look up your FRS, use this link:
<https://studentaid.ed.gov/about/data-center/school/composite-scores>



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Comments from the SPA leaders at this point...



- ▶ Ross Miller, Indiana
- ▶ Tanya Spilovoy, ND



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What's the same and requires executive level affirmation?



Item 4:

Adherence to the C-RAC guidelines



- ▶ These are already a part of regional accreditation
- ▶ Update/verify your adherence
- ▶ Make sure that your signatory agent is aware of the guidelines, how your institution complies, and which documents verify the affirmation s/he is about to sign



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What's the same and requires executive level affirmation



Item 4: Adherence to the C-RAC guidelines

- ▶ If your institution does not already affirmatively adhere to the C-RAC guidelines, start the work now of preparing, documenting, and establishing adherence
- ▶ **No documentation is required with the SARA application**, but it could be required in the case of a complaint investigation



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What's the same and requires executive level affirmation



Item 4: Adherence to the C-RAC guidelines

Comment:

There are 9 guidelines with bulleted examples of adherence under each one – your institution needs to adhere to the numbered items, not to each bulleted example

Appendix
Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education
2013
Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC)

1. Online learning is appropriate to the institution's mission and purposes.
*Student Evidence *****

- The mission statement explains the role of online learning within the range of the institution's programs and services.
- Institutional and program statements of vision and values affirm the online learning environment is created and supported.
- As appropriate, the institution demonstrates how its online learning programs contribute to meeting the stated institutional goals for the student experience at the institution.
- The needs and administrative programs supporting the online learning courses and programs appropriately target the student populations to be served.
- The students enrolled at the institution's online learning courses and programs fit the admission requirements for the students the institution intends to serve.
- Senior administrators and staff can articulate how online learning is consistent with the institution's mission and goals.

2. The institution's plans for developing, sustaining, and, if appropriate, expanding online learning offerings are integrated into its regular planning and evaluation processes.
Student Evidence

- Development and renewal of plans for online learning extend beyond the administrators directly responsible for it and the programs directly using it.
- Planning documents are explicit about long goals to increase numbers of programs provided through online learning courses and programs and/or numbers of students to be enrolled in them.
- Plans for online learning are based effectively on budget and technology planning to ensure adequate support for current and future offerings.
- Plans for expanding online learning demonstrate the institution's capacity to assess an appropriate level of quality.
- The institution and its online learning programs have a track record of conducting needs analysis and of assessing programs.



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What's the same and requires executive level affirmation?




Item 5:

- ▶ Responsible for actions of third-party providers





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What's the same and requires executive level affirmation? 

Item 6:

- ▶ Notify SPA of changes to accreditation status

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What's the same and requires executive level affirmation? 

Item 7:



- ▶ Provide data to SPA/NC-SARA

Comments:


- ▶ Current scope of data collection endorsed by National Council on 5/14/14
- ▶ Working recommendation is to gather from institutions the number of on-line students out of state, by state

AND

- ▶ To gather from SPAs the number and category of complaints that rise above the institutional level
- ▶ Definitions, cycles, and more details are forthcoming from the Data and Complaints working group at NC-SARA

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What's the same and requires executive level affirmation? 

Item 8:


Agree to work with SPA to resolve complaints from on-line students coming from other SARA states

Comments:



- ▶ Very few complaints will rise above institutional complaint processes
- ▶ Student grade and conduct complaints are not eligible for SPA review


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What's the same and requires executive level affirmation 



Item 9:
Apply to the SPA over the signature of the CEO or CAO.




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What's the same and requires executive level affirmation 

Item 10:
Agree to notify all students in writing about whether the institution's programs in areas leading to professional licensure are known or not known to meet the licensure requirements of the students' states of residence.





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What's the same and requires executive level affirmation 


Item 11:
Agree to provide an alternative or financial compensation to students if institution cannot deliver the instruction for which the student has contracted.


Comments:
Plans an institution should have in place

- > Student records
- > Teach-out plans
- > Financial compensation for students when appropriate




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What's the same and requires executive level affirmation 


Item 12:
Pay annual SARA institutional fees 


\$2,000/yr. for IHEs with <2,500 FTE
\$4,000/yr. for IHEs with 2,500–10,000 FTE
\$6,000/yr. for IHEs with >10,000 FTE




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What's the same and requires executive level affirmation 

Item 13:
Pay annual state fees (varies by state)
Varies from states that have no fees to those that are considering a fee that is parallel to the NC-SARA fees. 




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What's different by states? 


State Fees 

Various models have been discussed in all the states; in IN and ND there are no state fees.




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What's different by states? 

Surety Bonds 

In some states nothing will change; in some states there is discussion of extending bonding to independent institutions in order to manage the risk of larger numbers of out-of-state students.





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What's different by states? 

Financial Responsibility Scores

Some states will not accept the lower scores, while some have discussed accepting a score of 1.0 without documentation as long as the school is still eligible to receive Title IV funds.


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Information about the North Dakota process 

Tanya Spilovoy, ND

Once your institutions applies to the ND SPA, this is what happens:

1. Tanya will review your application
2. Tanya will send a congratulatory e-mail to you and your executive officer signatory outlining next steps including
 - a) NC-SARA payment information
 - b) links to the ND SARA Portal agency and NC-SARA websites
 - c) links to the ND SARA Complaint Process
 - d) You will also need to publish your institution's complaint process and all accreditation agency complaint processes





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Information about the Indiana process

Ross Miller, Indiana

Once your institution applies to the Indiana SPA, we do the following:

- Evaluate the application for accuracy and completeness.
- Verify the accreditation status.
- Review the Federal Financial Responsibility Rating.
- Check enrollment figures.
- Review any complaints filed.
- Consider any other sources of information.



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PART III:

Submission, Review, Acceptance, and Payment Processes


Lisa Greco, Tanya Spilovoy, Ross Miller



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Institution Application Process

1. SPA will notify institution application for NC-SARA has been approved and send link to payment form to finalize participation in SARA.



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Institution Application Process

NC-SARA
National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements

Home * About * FAQ * Documents * News * Events * Links * Contacts * Blog * States *

NC-SARA Institution Form

Institution Information

Institution OPEID number *

Institution Name *

Institution Street Address *

Institution City *

Institution State *
- Select -

Institution Zip *

Institution Phone *

Please use this format: 555-555-5555



Institution Website URL *



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Institution Application Process

2.
When the institution completes the form, they will receive an email confirmation from NC-SARA with payment details.



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Institution Application Process



3.
Once payment is received, the institution is officially participating in SARA and will be listed on the nc-sara.org site.



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Institution Application Process



4.
Note: Grand opening sale is for 18 months for all institutions joining by September 1, 2014. The 18 months starts when they are official and payment has been received.



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Institution Application Process

5.
Once payment is received, institutions will receive a welcome letter with access to approved SARA institution logos.



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Institution Application Process




National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements
Promoting mutual growth in the interests of education



National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements
Approved Institution



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PART IV:

Questions and Answers


The Whole Gang plus Alan

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More Information?

- ▶ NC-SARA website: www.nc-sara.org
- ▶ Regional Education Compacts:
 - MHEC – www.mhec.org
 - NEBHE – www.nebhe.org
 - SREB – www.sreb.org
 - WICHE – www.wiche.edu



National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements
A voluntary, regional approach to state oversight of distance education

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Questions?

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