

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Consent Item
September 13, 2017

SUBJECT: Approval of New Rules for the Postsecondary Reciprocal Distance Education Coordinating Council

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

For Approval

AUTHORITY FOR STATE BOARD ACTION

Sections 1000.35(3)(j), (10), Florida Statutes (Chapter 2017-87, Laws of Florida)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Postsecondary Reciprocal Distance Education Coordinating Council (Council) was established by the legislature in 2017. Its function is to administer Florida's participation in a reciprocity agreement with other states for the delivery of postsecondary distance education. The Commissioner of Education serves as the Council's chair. Its additional members are the Chancellor of the State University System, the Chancellor of the Florida College System, the executive director of the Commission for Independent Education, and the president of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida.

One of the Council's functions is to recommend rules to the State Board of Education for approval. On August 3, at a public meeting, the Council approved the attached rules. The proposed rules are necessary in order for Florida to join the entity that administers a reciprocity agreement among 47 states.

The proposed rules govern Florida institutions' participation in distance education through NC-SARA's agreement. The rules provide for an institution's application to participate; criteria for the Council's approval of that application; annual renewals of the Council's approval; requirements of the institution's participation; and establishes fees associated with these activities. Participation in NC-SARA's reciprocity agreement will enable a Florida institution to deliver distance education to students residing in any of the 47 other member states without seeking separate authorization from the other states.

Supporting Documentation Included: Proposed Rules 6N-1.001, Definition of Terms; 6N-1.002, Approval of In-State Institutions to Participate in NC-SARA; 6N-1.003, Provisional Approval; 6N-1.004, Annual Renewal of Approval of In-State Institutions to Participate in Florida's reciprocity agreement; 6N-1.005, Annual Fees for In-State Institutions to Participate in Florida's reciprocity agreement; 6N-1.006, Student Complaints Against In-State Member Institutions; and 6N-1.007, Termination of an In-State Institution's Participation in Florida's reciprocity agreement. Form 1000, Application and Approval Form for Institutional Participation in SARA; Form 1001, Renewal Application for Institutional Participation in SARA; and Form 1002, FL-SARA Fee Transmittal Form (under separate cover)

Facilitator: Morgan Champion, Director, Postsecondary Reciprocal Distance Education

6N-1.001 Definition of Terms

Terms used in these rules are defined in Section 1000.35, F.S.

- (1) “Accredited” means holding institutional accreditation by name as a U.S.-based institution from an accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
- (2) “Council” means the Postsecondary Reciprocal Distance Education Coordinating Council.
- (3) “C-RAC guidelines” mean the Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education adopted by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions.
- (4) “Distance Education” means instruction offered by any means where the student and faculty member are in separate physical locations, including, but not limited to, online, interactive video, or correspondence courses or programs.
- (5) “In-State institution” means an institution of higher education that holds its legal domicile in the State.
- (6) “Member institution” means a postsecondary educational institution approved by the Council to participate in a reciprocity agreement.
- (7) “National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement” or “NC-SARA” means the national organization that administers the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement.
- (8) “State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement” or “SARA” means the agreement specifying procedures and conditions for reciprocal recognition of institutions approved to provide distance education by states that are members of NC-SARA.
- (9) “Student” means the recipient or intended recipient of postsecondary educational activities as provided under the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement.

Rulemaking Authority 1000.35(10), FS. Law Implemented 1000.35(3), (5)-(7), FS. History–New

6N-1.002 Approval of In-State Institutions to Participate in NC-SARA

- (1) An in-State institution seeking approval to participate in SARA shall submit an application to the Council on Form 1000, Application and Approval Form for Institutional Participation in SARA (DOS link), effective October 2017. This form is incorporated by reference and may be obtained without cost from the Council’s website at www.flara.org or by writing to the Commission for Independent Education at 325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1414, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400.

(2) The Council shall, upon receipt of an in-State institution's complete application to participate in NC-SARA, approve the application if:

(a) The applicant is an in-State institution authorized to operate in Florida pursuant to law;

(b) If a private institution, an audited financial statement showing the financial responsibility composite score;

(c) The applicant is accredited;

(d) The institution, if it participates in federal Title IV financial aid, and has a federal financial responsibility rating of at least 1.5; or has a federal financial responsibility composite score of 1.0 to 1.5, and the Council has determined, upon examination of additional financial information, that either the institution has sufficient financial strength for state authorization or that the score between 1.0 and 1.5 results from an accounting error or the misapplication of General Accepted Accounting Standards in calculating the score. This alternative shall only be available for two (2) consecutive years. An institution whose composite score remains below 1.5 for three (3) years or longer shall no longer be eligible for participation in SARA;

(e) The institution, if it does not participate in federal Title IV financial aid, would, in the determination of the Council, have a federal financial responsibility rating of at least 1.5, or, with justification deemed acceptable by the Council, at least 1.0; and

(f) The institution makes its state authorization-related complaint policies and procedures readily available to students, and informs students that they may appeal state authorization-related complaints to the Council pursuant to this rule.

(g) For any course or program potentially leading to professional licensure: the institution notifies students and potential students that the course or program meets the licensing requirements of the state where the students or potential students reside; or the institution notifies students and potential students that it cannot confirm whether the course or program meets the licensing requirements of the state where the students or potential students reside, provides students and potential students with current contact information for applicable licensing boards, and advises students and potential students to determine whether the course or program meets state licensing requirements;

(h) The provisional approval criteria in 6N-1.003, F.A.C., do not apply; and

(i) The applicant has paid the fee required in 6N-1.005, F.A.C.

Rulemaking Authority 1000.35(10), FS. Law Implemented 1000.35(3), (5)-(7), FS. History--New

6N-1.003 Provisional Approval

(1) The Council shall, upon receipt of an in-State institution's complete application to participate in SARA, approve the institution to participate in SARA on a provisional status if the institution meets the requirements of this rule chapter, but:

(a) Is on probationary status or the equivalent with its institutional accrediting association;

(b) Uses a letter of credit or is under a cash management agreement with the U.S. Department of Education;

(c) Is the subject of a publicly announced investigation by a government agency, and the investigation is related to the institution's academic quality, financial stability, or student consumer protection; or

(d) Is the subject of an investigation by the State related to the institution's academic quality, financial stability, or student consumer protection.

(2) Terms and Length of Provisional Status.

(a) An in-State institution approved to participate in SARA on provisional status shall meet any requirements the Council deems necessary, including enrollment limits, to ensure state authorization standards are met regarding program quality, financial stability, and consumer protection.

(b) The length of the provisional status of an in-State institution approved to participate in SARA shall be determined by the Council and may not exceed one (1) year.

(3) Application for Removal of Provisional Status.

(a) If an in-State institution approved to participate in SARA on provisional status no longer meets the provisional status criteria set forth in subsection (1) of this rule, it may submit a written request to the Council for removal of its provisional status designation and approval as a SARA member institution.

(b) The Council shall grant the request if the criteria justifying provisional status no longer apply, and if the institution meets the requirements of 6N-1.002, F.A.C.

(c) If the Council determines that an in-State institution approved to participate in SARA on provisional status no longer meets the requirements of their provisional approval or fails to gain full approval by the deadline established by the Council, the Council shall:

1. Terminate the institution's reciprocity agreement; or

2. Allow the institution a grace period of twelve (12) months to come into compliance with the reciprocity

agreement standards.

(4) In any 3-year period, the Council may grant an institution only one (1) grace period in which to correct non-compliance under this rule.

Rulemaking Authority 1000.35(10), FS. Law Implemented 1000.35(3), (6)-(7), FS. History--New

6N-1.004 Annual Renewal of Approval of In-State Institutions to Participate in Florida's Reciprocity agreement

(1) An in-State institution shall apply to the Council annually on Form 1001, Renewal Application for Institutional Participation in SARA (DOS link), effective October 2017. This form is incorporated by reference and may be obtained without cost from the Council's website at www.flara.org or by writing to the Commission for Independent Education at 325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1414, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400.

(2) The Council shall approve the renewal application if the in-State institution continues to meet the requirements set forth in this rule chapter.

(3) An in-State institution approved to participate in SARA on provisional status may not renew its provisional status.

Rulemaking Authority 1000.35(10), FS. Law Implemented 1000.35(3), (6)-(7), FS. History--New

6N-1.005 Annual Fees for In-State Institutions to Participate in Florida's Reciprocity Agreement

(1) An in-State institution shall pay annually the application and renewal fees set forth in this rule including fees to the Council and fees to NC-SARA. The institution shall submit shall submit a FL-SARA Fee Transmittal Form to the Council on Form 1002 (DOS link), effective October 2017. This form is incorporated by reference and may be obtained without cost from the Council's website at www.flara.org or by writing to the Commission for Independent Education at 325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1414, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400.

(2) Fees to the Council.

(a) For institutions with fewer than 2,500 full-time equivalent enrollment, the annual, nonrefundable fee due to the Council is \$1,500.

(b) For institutions with between 2,500 and 9,999 full-time equivalent enrollment, the annual, nonrefundable fee due to the Council is \$3,000.

(c) For institutions with 10,000 or more full-time equivalent enrollment, the annual, nonrefundable fee due to the Council is \$4,500.

(3) Fees to NC-SARA. Fees due annually to NC-SARA to participate in SARA are prescribed by the National Reciprocity Agreement. Fees paid by institutions to NC-SARA are independent of and in addition to those due to the Council under subsection (2) of this rule. Failure to pay fees to the NC-SARA shall render the institution's approval in Florida null and void.

Rulemaking Authority 1000.35(10), FS. Law Implemented 1000.35(3), (5)-(7), FS. History--New

6N-1.006 Student Complaints Against In-State Member Institutions

(1) A student who receives distance education from an in-State member institution may, after the student has exhausted the institution's procedures for the resolution of grievances, and within two (2) years of the incident about which the complaint is made, file a written complaint to the Council, which shall include:

(a) Institution name;

(b) Type of student;

(c) Enrollment dates;

(d) Program Credential;

(e) Program Name;

(f) Student Name;

(g) Address;

(h) Phone;

(i) Email;

(j) Description of complaint;

(k) Description of resolution the complainant is seeking; and

(l) The complaint may be made alleging that the institution:

1. Has engaged in dishonest or fraudulent activity; or

2. Has operated a course or a program contrary to practices set forth in the C-RAC guidelines in a way that has harmed the student.

(2) A student is authorized under this rule to complain that the institution provided false or misleading:

- (a) Recruitment or marketing materials;
 - (b) Job placement data;
 - (c) Information about tuition, fees, or financial aid;
 - (d) Information about admission requirements;
 - (e) Information about the institution's accreditation;
 - (f) Information about whether course work meets relevant professional licensing requirements or the requirements of specialized accrediting bodies; or
 - (g) Information about the transferability of course work to other institutions.
 - (3) The Council shall send a copy of a complaint received under subsection (2) of this rule to the institution that is the subject of the complaint.
 - (4) Within thirty (30) days of the date that the Council sends a copy of a complaint received under subsection (3) of this rule to an institution, the institution shall provide a written response addressing all of the allegations and the institutions resolution thereof.
 - (5) Within thirty (30) days of the date the Council reviews the institution's response under subsection (4) of this rule, or if the Council receives no response under subsection (2) of this rule, the Council shall issue a notice to the institution containing:
 - (a) The Council's findings regarding the complaint;
 - (b) The actions that the institution shall take, if any, to comply with the requirements set forth in this rule; and
 - (c) The consequences of failing to take the actions prescribed by the Council, which may include the termination of the institution's participation in the reciprocity agreement outlined in 6N-1.002 of this rule.
- Rulemaking Authority 1000.35(10), FS. Law Implemented 1000.35(3), (6)-(7), FS. History--New

6N-1.007 Termination of an In-State Institution's Participation in Florida's Reciprocity Agreement

- (1) If the Council finds that an in-State member institution fails to meet the requirements of this rule chapter, the Council may:
 - (a) Issue a notice of deficiencies to the institution; or
 - (b) If the institution meets the requirements of 6N-1.003, F.A.C., permit the institution to participate in Florida's reciprocity agreement on provisional status, subject to the requirements of 6N-1.003, F.A.C.

(2) Within twenty (20) days of receipt of the notice of deficiencies, the institution shall respond in writing to the Council, setting forth the institution's objections to the Council's findings.

(3) Within twenty (20) days of review of the institution's written response to the notice of deficiencies, or if the Council receives no written response, the Council shall issue a decision on whether to terminate the institution's participation in Florida's reciprocity agreement.

Rulemaking Authority 1000.35(10), FS. Law Implemented 1000.35(3), (6)-(7), FS. History--New



National Council
for State Authorization
Reciprocity Agreements

*A voluntary, regional approach
to state oversight of distance education*

Institution Name: _____

Indicate 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 this form to its home state's SARA portal entity.

The chief executive officer (CEO) or chief academic officer (CAO) of the institution completes and submits the application including any state-specific fees and committing to any special requirements permitted by SARA to the state portal entity.

When the state portal checks “yes” on this form, the state affirms that the applicant institution has followed proper procedures and provided necessary documents to operate under SARA, but this affirmation does not necessarily represent state evaluation of the institution's ability to perform under SARA policies.

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

**INSTITUTION Applicant
to complete this column**

**STATE Entity to
complete this column**

CEO or CAO

Institution meets
the requirement

Initial here

Yes No

.....

1. The principal campus or central administrative unit domiciled in a state that has joined the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) initiative and be authorized to operate in that state. * Only distance education content originating in the United States or a U.S. territory is eligible to be offered under SARA.** (Attach documentation)

.....

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)

.....

3. For non-public institutions, have a financial responsibility index score from the U.S. Department of Education that is 1.5 or above, or, if its score is between 1.0 and 1.49, successfully demonstrate to its home state's portal entity that it is nevertheless sufficiently financially stable to justify participation in SARA. (Attach documentation) Public institutions are presumed to be sufficiently financially stable for SARA purposes. Public institutions leave this blank.

Institutional Application for SARA

Institution Name: _____

Institution Applicant to
initial this column

STATE Entity to
complete this column

CEO or CAO initial here

Yes No

- 4. Agree to abide by the *Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education* adopted by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions. (See Appendix)
- 5. Agree to be responsible for the actions of any third-party providers used by the institution to engage in operations under SARA.
- 6. Agree to notify its home state’s portal entity of any negative changes to its accreditation status.
- 7. Agree to provide data necessary to monitor SARA activities, including annual reporting of distance education enrollments by state, in accordance with the *NC-SARA Data Sharing Agreement*.
- 8. Agree to work with its home state’s portal entity to resolve any complaints arising from its students in SARA states, and to abide by decisions of that entity.***
- 9. Apply to its home state’s portal entity over the signature of the institution’s CEO or chief academic officer.
- 10. Agree to notify in writing all students in a course or program that customarily leads to professional licensure, or which a student could reasonably believe leads to such licensure, whether or not the course or program meets requirements for licensure in the state where the student resides. If an institution cannot determine through its contact with relevant licensing entities whether the course or program meets licensure requirements in the student’s state of residence, the institution may meet this SARA requirement by informing the student in writing and providing the student the contact information for the appropriate state licensing board(s). An e-mail dedicated solely to this purpose and sent to the student’s best known e-mail address meets this requirement. The institution should use other means to notify the student if needed.
- 11. Agree, in cases where the institution cannot fully deliver the instruction for which a student has contracted, to provide a reasonable alternative for delivering the instruction or reasonable financial compensation for the education he or she did not receive.
- 12. Agree to pay to the state any state fees for SARA participation required by the home state for administering SARA.
- 13. Agree to pay its annual SARA participation fee to the National Council for SARA (NC-SARA). This single annual fee replaces any fees that the institution would ordinarily pay to other SARA member states.
- 14. Agree to abide by conditions of provisional approval, if necessary.

*SARA considers the home campus to be where an institution has its legal domicile. Any disputes about which state is the home state will be resolved for SARA purposes by the affected regional compacts or the National Council (NC-SARA), as needed.

**The fact that a foreign institution is owned by a U.S. entity does not qualify distance education originating from the non-U.S. institution to be offered under SARA. Only distance education offerings under the oversight of the U.S. state or territory can be offered through SARA.

***Complaints must follow the institution’s customary resolution procedure prior to being referred to the state under SARA procedures. Grade appeals and student conduct appeals are not allowed under SARA.

Institutional Application for SARA

Institutional Designation and Affirmation

I, the undersigned representative of (institution name) _____
having the authority to commit the institution to operate under the SARA interstate agreement,
hereby certify that this institution meets all of the standards and requirements stated herein required
for operation under the SARA agreement.

Mailing address of institution:

Institution OPEID number:

Institutional Accrediting Organization:

Institution FTE (latest IPEDS):

Name of principal SARA contact:

Email of principal SARA contact:

Phone number of principal SARA contact:

Name of secondary SARA contact:

Email of secondary SARA contact:

Phone number of secondary SARA contact:

Link to complaint system

Typed name of institutional signatory officer:

Signature:

Date signed:

Title of signatory institutional officer:

Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education 2011

Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC)

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

*Analysis/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 inform how the online learning environment is created and supported;
- As appropriate, the institution incorporates into its online learning programs methods of meeting the stated institutional goals for the student experience at the institution;
- The recruitment and admissions programs supporting the online learning courses and programs appropriately target the student populations to be served;
- The students enrolled in the institution's online learning courses and programs fit the admissions requirements for the students the institution intends to serve;
- Senior administrators and staff can articulate how online learning is consonant 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.

Analysis/Evidence:

- Development and ownership of plans for online learning extend beyond the administrators directly responsible for it and the programs directly using it;
- Planning documents are explicit about any 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 linked effectively to budget and technology planning to ensure adequate support for current and future offerings;
- Plans for expanding online learning demonstrate the institution's capacity to assure an appropriate level of quality;
- The institution and its online learning programs have a track record of conducting needs analysis and of supporting programs.

*****These bulleted points illustrate actions, processes and facts that institutions may use to demonstrate that they meet SARA requirements.*

3. Online learning is incorporated into the institution's systems of governance and academic oversight.

Analysis/Evidence:

- The institution's faculty have a designated role in the design and implementation of its online learning offerings;
- The institution ensures the rigor of the offerings and the quality of the instruction;
- Approval of online courses and programs follows standard processes used in the college or university;
- Online learning courses and programs are evaluated on a periodic basis;
- Contractual relationships and arrangements with consortial partners, if any, are clear and guarantee that the institution can exercise appropriate responsibility for the academic quality of all online learning offerings provided under its name.

4. Curricula for the institution's online learning offerings are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.

Analysis/Evidence:

- The curricular goals and course objectives show that the institution or program has knowledge of the best uses of online learning in different disciplines and settings;
- Curricula delivered through online learning are benchmarked against on-ground courses and programs, if provided by the institution, or those provided by traditional institutions;
- The curriculum is coherent in its content and sequencing of courses and is effectively defined in easily available documents including course syllabi and program descriptions;
- Scheduling of online learning courses and programs provides students with a dependable pathway to ensure timely completion of degrees;
- The institution or program has established and enforces a policy on online learning course enrollments to ensure faculty capacity to work appropriately with students;
- Expectations for any required face-to-face, on-ground work (e.g., internships, specialized laboratory work) are stated clearly;
- Course design and delivery supports student-student and faculty-student interaction;
- Curriculum design and the course management system enable active faculty contribution to the learning environment;
- Course and program structures provide schedule and support known to be effective in helping online learning students persist and succeed.

5. The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its online learning offerings, including the extent to which the online learning goals are achieved, and uses the results of its evaluations to enhance the attainment of the goals.

Analysis/Evidence:

- Assessment of student learning follows processes used in onsite courses or programs and/or reflects good practice in assessment methods;
- Student course evaluations are routinely taken and an analysis of them contributes to strategies for course improvements;
- Evaluation strategies ensure effective communication between faculty members who design curriculum, faculty members who interact with students, and faculty members who evaluate student learning;
- The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of the academic and support services provided to students in online courses and uses the results for improvement;
- The institution demonstrates the appropriate use of technology to support its assessment strategies;

- The institution documents its successes in implementing changes informed by its programs of assessment and evaluation;
- The institution provides examples of student work and student interactions among themselves and with faculty;
- The institution sets appropriate goals for the retention/persistence of students using online learning, assesses its achievement of these goals, and uses the results for improvement.

6. Faculty responsible for delivering the online learning curricula and evaluating the students' success in achieving the online learning goals are appropriately qualified and effectively supported.

Analysis/Evidence:

- Online learning faculties are carefully selected, appropriately trained, frequently evaluated, and are marked by an acceptable level of turnover;
- The institution's training program for online learning faculty is periodic, incorporates tested good practices in online learning pedagogy, and ensures competency with the range of software products used by the institution;
- Faculty are proficient and effectively supported in using the course management system;
- The office or persons responsible for online learning training programs are clearly identified and have the competencies to accomplish the tasks, including knowledge of the specialized resources and technical support available to support course development and delivery;
- Faculty members engaged in online learning share in the mission and goals of the institution and its programs and are provided the opportunities to contribute to the broader activities of the institution;
- Students express satisfaction with the quality of the instruction provided by online learning faculty members.

7. The institution provides effective student and academic services to support students enrolled in online learning offerings.

Analysis/Evidence:

- The institution's admissions program for online learning provides good web-based information to students about the nature of the online learning environment, and assists them in determining if they possess the skills important to success in online learning;
- The institution provides an online learning orientation program;
- The institution provides support services to students in formats appropriate to the delivery of the online learning program;
- Students in online learning programs have adequate access to student services, including financial aid, course registration, and career and placement counseling;
- Students in online learning programs have ready access to 24/7 tech support;
- Students using online learning have adequate access to learning resources, including library, information resources, laboratories, and equipment and tracking systems;
- Students using online learning demonstrate proficiency in the use of electronic forms of learning resources;
- Student complaint processes are clearly defined and can be used electronically;
- Publications and advertising for online learning programs are accurate and contain necessary information such as program goals, requirements, academic calendar, and faculty;
- Students are provided with reasonable and cost-effective ways to participate in the institution's system of student authentication.

8. The institution provides sufficient resources to support and, if appropriate, expand its online learning offerings.

Analysis/Evidence:

- The institution prepares a multi-year budget for online learning that includes resources for assessment of program demand, marketing, appropriate levels of faculty and staff, faculty and staff development, library and information resources, and technology infrastructure;
- The institution provides evidence of a multi-year technology plan that addresses its goals for online learning and includes provision for a robust and scalable technical infrastructure.

9. The institution assures the integrity of its online offerings.

Analysis/Evidence:

- The institution has in place effective procedures through which to ensure that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. The institution makes clear in writing that these processes protect student privacy and notifies students at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional costs associated with the verification procedures. (Note: This is a federal requirement. All institutions that offer distance education programs must demonstrate compliance with this requirement.);
- The institution's policies on academic integrity include explicit references to online learning;
- Issues of academic integrity are discussed during the orientation for online students;
- Training for faculty members engaged in online learning includes consideration of issues of academic integrity, including ways to reduce cheating.

SARA State Supplemental Sheet for Institutions

SARA provides a degree of flexibility for states as they implement the agreement. Information about state-specific provisions may be added on this page for items such as fees (if any) to be charged in-state institutions, criteria for consideration of appeals of institutions having financial responsibility index scores between 1.0 and 1.49, etc.

State fee (if any):

State fee schedule:

State bonding requirement of institution (if any):

Financial responsibility criteria for ratings 1.0-1.49:

State Portal Entity Affirmation

Institutional application: Approved
 Provisionally Approved (see attached)
 Returned for Additional Data or information
 Denied

Conditions related to Provisional Approval

Typed name of State Portal Entity

Typed name of State Portal Entity contact

Signature

Date signed

Title of State Portal Entity contact

State Portal Entity email and phone



National Council
for State Authorization
Reciprocity Agreements

*A voluntary, regional approach
to state oversight of distance education*

Institution Name:

Indicate Regional Compact:

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

RENEWAL APPLICATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL PARTICIPATION IN SARA

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

The chief executive officer (CEO) or chief academic officer (CAO) of the institution completes and submits the application including any state-specific fees and committing to any special requirements permitted by SARA to the state portal entity.

When the state portal checks “yes” on this form, the state affirms that the applicant institution has followed proper procedures and provided necessary documents to operate under SARA, but this affirmation does not necessarily represent state evaluation of the institution's ability to perform under SARA policies.

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

**INSTITUTION Applicant
to complete this column**

**STATE Entity to
complete this column**

CEO or CAO

Initial here

Institution meets
the requirement

Yes No

- 1. The principal campus or central administrative unit remains domiciled in a state or district that has joined the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) initiative and is authorized to operate in that state. * Only distance education content originating in the United States or a U.S. territory is eligible to be offered under SARA **(Attach documentation)
- 2. The Institution retains its accreditation by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. (Attach documentation)
- 3. If non-public, the institution shall maintain a financial responsibility index score of 1.5 or above; and in the case of a score between 1.0 and 1.49, the portal entity has affirmed that sufficient documentation has been provided to support continued institutional participation in SARA. Public institutions leave this blank. (Attach documentation)

Institution Applicant to
initial this column

CEO or CAO initial here

STATE Entity to
complete this column

Yes No

- 4. The institution agrees to abide by the *Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education* and current *NC-SARA Manual*.
- 5. The institution agrees to maintain responsibility for the actions of any third-party providers used by the institution to engage in operations under SARA.
- 6. The institution agrees to notify its home state’s portal entity of any negative changes to its accreditation status.
- 7. The institution agrees to provide data necessary to monitor SARA activities, including annual reporting of distance education enrollments by state, in accordance with the *NC-SARA Data Sharing Agreement*.
- 8. The institution agrees to work with its home state’s portal entity to resolve any complaints arising from its students in SARA states, and to abide by decisions of that entity.***
- 9. The institution applies to its home state’s portal entity for renewal over the signature of the institution’s CEO or chief academic officer.
- 10. Agree to notify in writing all students in a course or program that customarily leads to professional licensure, or which a student could reasonably believe leads to such licensure, whether or not the course or program meets requirements for licensure in the state where the student resides. If an institution cannot determine through its contact with relevant licensing entities whether the course or program meets licensure requirements in the student’s state of residence, the institution may meet this SARA requirement by informing the student in writing and providing the student the contact information for the appropriate state licensing board(s). An e-mail dedicated solely to this purpose and sent to the student’s best known e-mail address meets this requirement. The institution should use other means to notify the student if needed.
- 11. The institution agrees, in cases where the institution cannot fully deliver the instruction for which a student has contracted, to provide a reasonable alternative for delivering the instruction or reasonable financial compensation for the education he or she did not receive.
- 12. The institution agrees to pay to the state any state fees for SARA participation required by the home state for administering SARA.
- 13. The institution agrees to pay its annual SARA participation fee to the National Council for SARA (NC-SARA). This single annual fee replaces any fees that the institution would ordinarily pay to other SARA member states.
- 14. Agree to abide by conditions of provisional approval, if necessary.

*SARA considers the home campus to be where an institution has its legal domicile. Any disputes about which state is the home state will be resolved for SARA purposes by the affected regional compacts or the National Council (NC-SARA), as needed.

**The fact that a foreign institution is owned by a U.S. entity does not qualify distance education originating from the non-U.S. institution to be offered under SARA. Only distance education offerings under the oversight of the U.S. state or territory can be offered through SARA.

***Complaints must follow the institution’s customary resolution procedure prior to being referred to the state under SARA procedures. Grade appeals and student conduct appeals are not allowed under SARA.

Institutional Renewal Application for SARA

Institutional Designation and Affirmation

I, the undersigned representative of (institution name) _____, having the authority to commit the institution to operate under the SARA interstate agreement, hereby certify that this institution meets all of the standards and requirements stated herein required for operation under the SARA agreement.

Mailing address of institution:

Institution OPEID number:

Institutional Accrediting Organization:

Institution FTE (latest IPEDS):

Name of principal SARA contact:

Email of principal SARA contact:

Phone number of principal SARA contact:

Name of secondary SARA contact:

Email of secondary SARA contact:

Phone number of secondary SARA contact:

Link to complaint system:

Typed name of institutional signatory officer:

Signature:

Date signed:

Title of signatory institutional officer:

SARA State Supplemental Sheet for Institutions

As institutions renew their participation in SARA, please feel free to provide comments or information about state-specific provisions, institutional characteristics or additional information specific to any item on this renewal application.

Significant institutional changes relevant to this renewal application:

State-specific topics (i.e., bonding, fee schedule):

Comments to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the SARA initiative:

State Portal Entity Affirmation

Institutional application: Approved
 Provisionally Approved (see attached)
 Returned for Additional Data or information
 Denied

Conditions related to Provisional Approval

Typed name of state portal entity:

Typed name of state portal entity contact:

Signature:

Date signed:

Title of state portal entity contact:

State Portal Entity email and phone



Postsecondary Reciprocal Distance Education Coordinating Council

FL-SARA Fee Transmittal Form

INSTITUTION DATA	
Name:	
Submitted By (Name & Title):	Date:

6N-1.005 Annual Fees for In-State Institutions to Participate in Florida's reciprocity agreement.

(1) An in-State institution shall pay annually the application and renewal fees set forth in this rule including fees to the Council and fees to NC-SARA. (2) Fees to the Council.
 (a) For institutions with fewer than 2,500 full-time equivalent enrollment, the annual, nonrefundable fee due to the Council is \$1500.
 (b) For institutions with between 2,500 and 9,999 full-time equivalent enrollment, the annual, nonrefundable fee due to the Council is \$3,000.
 (c) For institutions with 10,000 or more full-time equivalent enrollment, the annual, nonrefundable fee due to the Council is \$4,500.
 (3) Fees to NC-SARA. Fees due annually to NC-SARA to participate in SARA are prescribed by the National Reciprocity Agreement. Fees paid by institutions to NC-SARA are independent of and in addition to those due to the Council under paragraph (2). Failure to pay fees to the NC-SARA shall render the institution's approval in Florida null and void.

1. FL-SARA Fees	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FTE Enrollment fewer than 2,500 students= \$1,500 • FTE Enrollment between 2,500-9,999 students= \$3,000 • FTE Enrollment over 10,000 students= \$4,500 	\$
*FTE based on number reported to IPEDS	
TOTAL FEES REMITTED:	\$

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Submit the following to the Office of the Comptroller (see address below):
 - a. The original of this form, completed in entirety
 - b. One copy of this form
 - c. Your check, cashier's check or money order made payable to the FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
 Florida Department of Education
 Office of the Comptroller
 944 Turlington Building
 325 W. Gaines Street
 Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
2. Attach the following to your application and submit to the Commission Office (see address at top of page):
 - a. One copy of this form
 - b. One copy of your check, cashier's check or money order
3. Keep one copy for your records.

-----DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE-----

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