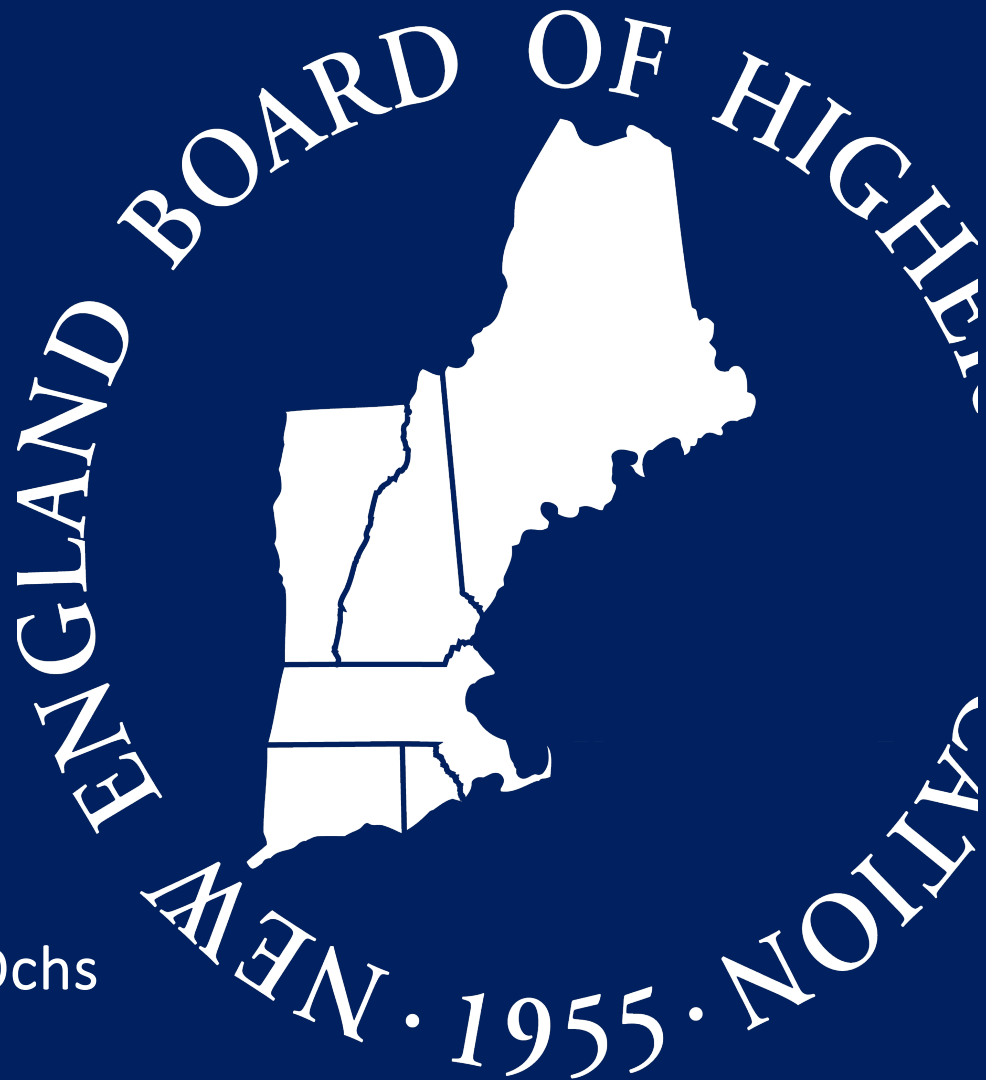


State Authorization  
Reciprocity Agreements  
(SARA)

Director, Jared Abdirkin  
Program Coordinator, Charlotte Ochs



# NEBHE

New England Board of Higher Education was founded in 1955, when six visionary New England governors – realizing that the future prosperity of New England rested on higher education – committed their states to the shared pursuit of academic excellence. Soon thereafter, NEBHE was approved by New England’s six state legislatures and authorized by the U.S. Congress.

One of four regional higher education compacts (New England Board of Higher Education, Midwestern Higher Education Compact, Southern Regional Education Board, and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education)



# SARA

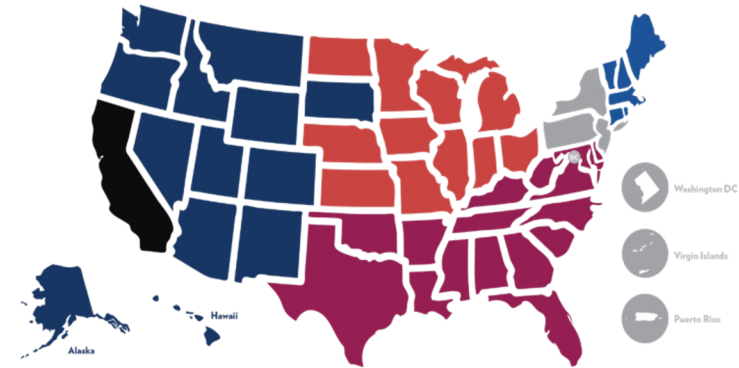
SARA, the **State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement**, is a voluntary **agreement** currently including 49 member states and 3 territories

The agreement was **established in 2013** in response to the **growing demand to streamline regulations** around distance education programs.

With its reciprocity provisions, the agreement enables institutions to gain approval to **offer distance education in participating U.S. states and territories** without having to individually apply to each state for approval.

Participation in SARA reduces the costs of delivering online learning—resulting from inconsistent, complicated and expensive regulatory processes—**saving institutions millions of dollars in fees while helping create access for students to high-quality online programs.**

The **Regional Compacts** coordinate the agreement with member states and territories in their region, and to manage and centralize functions, fee collection and more, **NC-SARA** was created.



# NC-SARA

The **National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements**, in collaboration with the four regional higher education compacts, develops and implements an effective and efficient reciprocal state-level authorization process for postsecondary distance education. NC-SARA collects and analyzes enrollment and complaint data, provides professional development to states and institutions, monitors federal regulations and engages in dialogue therein.

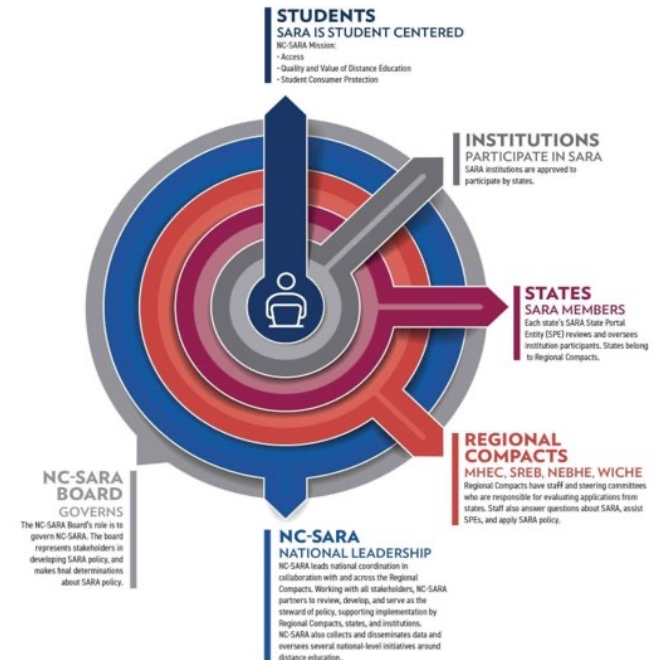
NC-SARA provides tools to institutions in the form of:

SARA Learning Station

Quick Start Guides (field trips, military bases, oversees students, short courses, student complaints, third party contracts, etc)

Professional Licensure Directory

Data Dashboards



# N-SARA

N-SARA refers to SARA in the NEBHE region, which includes the membership of the **six New England states, plus New York and New Jersey** who facilitate the Agreement by:

- Meeting regularly with regional leaders (virtual and in-person)
- Coordinating continuing education regionally and nationally for states and institutions
- Regular attendance at conferences and NC-SARA Board meetings to engage with stakeholders, often to present on SARA and developments therein
- Monitoring US ED reported financial information and institution accreditation statuses
- Engaging in national (US ED) and SARA policy development
- Generating quarterly newsletter
- Sending an annual mailing to all IHE Presidents

# N-SARA Fast Facts

- 367 institutions participate in SARA in our region
- 493,434 students enrolled at NEBHE SARA institutions at a distance in Fall 2022, **about 50%** of whom were enrolled outside of their home state
- Nearly **\$33 million** saved by NEBHE region institutions and nearly **\$154 million** saved by institutions nationwide in 2023
- Continued growth of institutional participation; Over **20** new in the last year
- More students incoming to NEBHE region than enrolling outside the region as compared to other regions

# U.S. Department of Education Regulatory Developments

- "Negotiated Rulemaking" started in January 2024, with a focus on state authorization and reciprocity (among other areas)
- *No final language yet*, however can likely expect some changes such as a requirement for direct authorization if your institution enrolls 500 or more students at a distance in any state outside your home state
- NC-SARA "Call to Action" : <https://www.nc-sara.org/sara-neg-reg-call-action>
- NC-SARA email list: <https://formstack.io/71987>

# Applying for Participation

An institution seeking approval to participate in and operate under the terms and standards of SARA must **meet the requirements for eligibility** and prepare an application to participate in SARA.

Once completed, institutions submit their applications to their home state's SARA State Portal Entity (SPE).

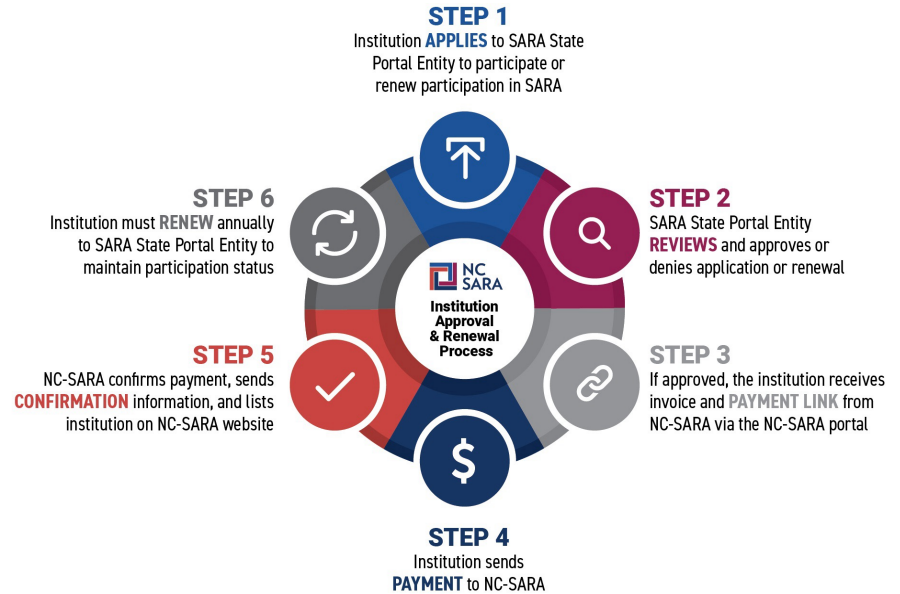
The average institution is saving nearly **\$66,000** annually by participating in SARA, per recently updated NCHEMS & NC-SARA report.

Maine Department of Education (DOE) SARA Application process:

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/highered/sara>

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) SARA Application process:

<https://www.mass.edu/foradmin/sara/application.s.asp>



New York State Education Department (NYSED) SARA Application process:

<https://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/sara-application-process>



# Thank you

Jared B. Abdirkin  
Director, N-SARA  
[jabdirkin@nebhe.org](mailto:jabdirkin@nebhe.org)  
(617)533-9503

Charlotte Ochs  
Program Coordinator, N-SARA  
[cochs@nebhe.org](mailto:cochs@nebhe.org)  
(617)357 9620