



SARA Quick Start Guide

SHORT COURSES (Scope of SARA)

Does the scope of SARA include short courses on the ground in another state?

What does the SARA Policy Manual Say?

Section 5.4 Short Courses

Physical presence under SARA is not triggered if the instruction provided for a short course or seminar takes no more than 20 classroom hours in one six-month period.

Class meetings during a full-term course do not trigger physical presence if the instructor and students physically meet together for no more than two meetings, totaling six hours or fewer. Apparent abuses of these provisions may be brought to the attention of the home state by concerned institutions or others.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

N1 - Physical presence under SARA is not triggered if the instruction provided for a short course or seminar takes no more than 20 classroom hours in one six-month period. The 20-hour rule provision ONLY applies to short courses that are not offered in a traditional calendar term.

N2 - Class meetings during a full-term course do not trigger physical presence if the instructor or students physically meet together for no more than two meetings, totaling six hours or fewer. The six-hour/two meeting provision ONLY applies to full-term (semester or quarter length) courses.

N3 - To provide potential benefits to students, this provision enables a modest amount of face-to-face student-institution interaction without triggering physical presence in SARA states. It does not allow institutions to offer a succession of short courses, seminars or other offerings and thereby effectively establish continuing physical presence.

About SARA Quick Starts: When institutions participate in SARA, they agree to a set of compliance requirements as detailed in the [SARA Policy Manual](#). SARA Quick Starts are intended to help institution personnel understand a particular requirement to help them maintain compliance, communicate with colleagues regarding SARA requirements, and explain the requirement to students and other stakeholders. Institutions should always check for any state-specific requirements with their [SARA State Portal Entity](#).

What is the rationale?

Per Section 5.1 of the *SARA Policy Manual*:

SARA applies solely to postsecondary distance education activity conducted across state lines. It does not apply to distance education activity inside the SARA-participating institution's home state or to onground campuses. For purposes of SARA, "distance education" includes limited activities conducted for short periods on the ground."

Short courses often serve to support opportunities for face-to-face interactions for students; therefore, they are allowable on a limited basis so as not to trigger physical presence requirements, and are thus covered in SARA's scope. As explained in the Explanatory Note N3, this provision allows the potential benefits to students by "enabling a modest amount of face-to-face student-institution interaction without triggering physical presence in SARA states."

What does my institution need to do?

- Communicate with the colleges, departments, and/or faculty at your institution that offer short courses for credit and non-credit and make them aware of the SARA policy.
- Ensure that short courses meet the criteria outlined in SARA policy and do not exceed 20 classroom hours in one six-month period.
- Monitor short courses as applicable for your institution.
- Contact your state's [SARA State Portal Entity](#) for specific guidance or directions regarding this requirement.

Still Have Questions?

1. SARA State Portal Entities have the responsibility and authority to hold institutions in compliance with SARA policy. This information is intended to be general guidance for institutions; institutions should be in regular contact with their [SARA State Portal Entity](#) for specific requirements, directions, and guidance.
2. Feel free to email NC-SARA: info@nc-sara.org

Resources:

- [SARA Policy Manual](#), Section 5.4

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