



# SARA Quick Start Guide

## INSTITUTION APPLICATIONS

### Overview:

This Quick Start Guide for Institution Applications may be used by SARA State Portal Entity (SPE) staff and institutional staff engaged in the annual institutional application process. It is intended to provide general guidance and does not include any state-specific guidance. This guide includes descriptions of potential documentation required, the goal of each requirement related to SARA policy, and the SARA policy reference. This tool was created using existing SPE materials and tools from several states, along with reviews and feedback from SPEs and regional compact staff.

### Confirm Your State's Requirements:

SARA State Portal Entities have the responsibility and authority to hold institutions in compliance with SARA policy. This information is intended to serve as general guidance; institutions should be in regular contact with their [SARA State Portal Entity](#) for state-specific requirements, directions, and guidance.

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**About SARA Quick Start Guides:** 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](#).

## Section 1-Verification of Requirements for Institution Participation in SARA

Requirement Number	Requirement Description	Is Documentation Required?	Documentation Examples	Goal of this Requirement (What are SPEs looking for?)	Policy Manual Sections Addressing the Requirement
1.	Documentation of legal domicile in home state	Yes	<p>Example documentation:</p> <p><i>Most recent</i> documentation of institution's authorization to operate in the state, such as the following example documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Code of state legislation</li> <li>___ Copy of enabling statute</li> <li>___ Letter of Authorization (or equivalent) from home state's governmental entity responsible for business registration</li> <li>___ 990 PF Form (first page)</li> <li>___ Articles of Organization most recently filed with the state.</li> </ul>	Confirmation that the institution has legal domicile in the state.	Section 3.1 Eligibility
2.	Documentation of Accreditation Status	Yes	<p>Example documentation:</p> <p><i>Most recent</i> action letter from institution's primary accrediting agency (or</p>	Confirmation that the institution is currently accredited.	Section 3.1 Eligibility

			equivalent that specifies current accreditation status).		
3.	Agree to notify home state's SPE of any negative changes to accreditation status	It is the state's purview to determine what, if any, documentation is required after initial application review.		Confirmation that the state and NC-SARA are aware of any negative change to the institutions' accreditation status that might impact SARA participation.	Sections 3.2(a)(1) and 4.3(e)
4.	Federal Financial Responsibility Composite Score	Yes (if the institution is not public)	<p>Example documentation:</p> <p>__ Letter from US Dept of Education with calculated FRSC Score</p> <p>__ Copy of US Dept of Education spreadsheet row containing most recent FRCS Score</p> <p><i>Institutions controlled or owned by another entity should include the FRCS of the parent entity.</i></p> <p>__ Non-Title IV institutions must provide the FRCS score calculated by a certified, independent accountant using the USDOE methodology. Review the requirements in the most current <i>SARA Policy Manual</i>.</p>	Confirmation that the institution has the financial resources to carry out the mission and appropriately serve students and that they have the minimum score required for SARA participation.	2.5 c. Functional responsibilities of SARA States

5.	Abide by C-RAC Guidelines	It is the state's purview to determine what, if any, documentation is required after initial application review.		Confirmation that the institution adheres to policy and practices to facilitate the delivery of high-quality distance education courses and programs.	4.7 Incorporation and use of C-RAC Guidelines
6.	Does not enforce Arbitration Agreements	It is the state's purview to determine what, if any, documentation is required after initial application review.		SARA participating institutions are not permitted to enforce arbitration agreements on students enrolled under SARA provisions, and such agreements must not be applied. Institutions that utilize mandatory arbitration agreements for the resolution of non-SARA complaints or disputes shall provide a disclosure that such agreements must not be applied towards a complaint or dispute that falls within the scope of the <i>SARA Policy Manual</i> .	4.4 c Responsibilities for resolving complaints

7.	Responsible for institution activities	It is the state's purview to determine what, if any, documentation is required after initial application review.	<p>Example documentation:</p> <p>Agreement/contract with Third party provider.</p>	Confirmation that third-party providers meet the standards that the institution has agreed upon for SARA participation.	5.5 Third-party providers
8.	Will resolve complaints	Yes	<p>Example documentation:</p> <p>___ A copy of the student complaints policy/procedures applicable to distance education students</p> <p>___ A copy of the policy/procedure that explains which students are eligible to file a SARA complaint</p> <p>___ Other complaint types addressed in policy/procedure</p>	Confirmation that complaint policies are in place, can be easily found by students or others who believe they have a complaint against the institution.	<p>4.4 Responsibilities for resolving complaints.</p> <p>4.5 Process for Resolving Complaints</p> <p>4.6 Oversight of Complaint Investigation</p>
9.	Application signed by CEO or CAO	No	<p>Requirement of initials and signature on application.</p> <p>In some states, applications not signed by CEO or CAO are returned for the appropriate signature.</p>	Confirmation that the leadership of the institution is aware of and agrees with the requirements for SARA participation.	Institution Application form instructions, first paragraph

10.	Agree to professional licensure disclosures	It is the state's purview to determine what, if any, documentation is required after initial application review.	<p>Example documentation:</p> <p><b>General Disclosures:</b> For prospective and enrolled students, the following lists for all Professional Licensure programs</p> <p>___ A list of all states for which the institution has determined that its curriculum <b>meets</b> the state educational requirements for licensure or certification;</p> <p>___ A list of all states for which the institution has determined that its curriculum <b>does not meet</b> the state educational requirements for licensure or certification; and</p> <p>___ A list of all states for which the institution <b>has not made a determination</b> whether its curriculum meets the state educational requirements for licensure or certification.</p> <p><b>Direct Disclosures:</b> For prospective students <b>prior to enrolling</b> and <b>enrolled SARA students</b> who are located in a state where the Professional Licensure program does not meet the requirement or if the institution has not</p>	Confirmation that students are aware of how the program they are matriculated in or considering does or does not prepare them for professional licensure in the state where they are located.	5.2 Programs leading to Professional Licensure
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			<p>made a determination* whether the program meets the requirements, <b>an email or other direct electronic communication sent directly to the student</b>, containing notice to that effect.</p> <p>___ A copy of an example or examples of the institution's Direct Disclosures including all necessary information</p>		
11.	<p>Instruction: Institution agrees that in cases where the institution cannot fully deliver instruction as contracted, a reasonable alternative or reasonable financial compensation will be provided.</p>	<p>It is the state's purview to determine what, if any, documentation is required after initial application review.</p>		<p>Student consumer protections in case a program or institution closes or is unable to deliver instruction as promised to the student.</p>	<p>2.5 Functional responsibilities of SARA States</p>
12.	<p>Catastrophic events: Well-documented policies and practices for addressing</p>	<p>It is the state's purview to determine what, if any, documentation is required after initial application review.</p>	<p>Example documentation:</p> <p>___ A copy of the institution's disaster recovery plan, procedure, policy, or affirmation which includes the institution's procedures for preserving student</p>	<p>Student consumer protections: confirmation that institution has a plan to manage catastrophic events.</p>	<p>2.5 Functional responsibilities of SARA States</p>

			records in the event of institutional closure in accordance with the institution's accrediting body's standards for institutional closure.		
13.	Agree to Provisional status, if applicable	It is the state's purview to determine what, if any, documentation is required after initial application review.		Confirmation that the institution understands that provisional status will have requirements that must be met for continued participation in SARA.	3.2 Provisional admission or renewal of an Institution
14.	Agree to Pay State fees, if applicable	It is the state's purview to determine what, if any, documentation is required after initial application review.		Confirmation that states requiring fees are able to collect them.	3.6 Participation Fees
15.	Agree to pay SARA fees	No	Affirmation Only	Confirmation that NC-SARA is able to collect annual fees to participate in SARA.	3.6 Participation Fees
16.	Agree to share data	No	Affirmation Only	Confirmation that the institution will share data annually with NC-SARA as required by SARA policy.	6.1 Data submission by participating institutions



\* For students located in states where the institution has **not made a determination**, the institution must provide in its direct notice to prospective and enrolled students current contact information for any applicable licensing boards and advise the student or applicant to determine whether the program meets requirements for licensure where the student or applicant is located.

### 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](mailto:info@nc-sara.org)

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