



ESSENTIAL DUTIES OF SARA STATE PORTAL ENTITIES (SPEs)

OVERVIEW

How SARA State Portal Entities (SPEs) are established within their states varies greatly. In some states, the SPE is a state regulatory agency (education, higher education, consumer protection, etc.). In other states, the SPE is a state-level SARA entity focused exclusively on SARA oversight and operations. But in all cases, SPEs function as the SARA administrators and oversight bodies for their states.

This document reflects the *general* essential duties of SARA SPEs and SPE staff, regardless of how the SPE is situated within their state. The focus is on the duties and responsibilities of SPE staff that are specific to SARA. It is not intended to be prescriptive but to describe the duties of SPEs necessary to meet their obligations to implement SARA on behalf of the state.

This version reflects development by and feedback from multiple constituents. This includes several SPEs (including SPE Advisory Committee members), regional compact SARA staff, and NC-SARA staff. It also reflects several of the requirements of SARA member state responsibilities described in the [SARA Policy Manual](#). This document will continue to be refined over time. If you have feedback on the *Essential Duties of SARA State Portal Entities*, please email education@nc-sara.org.

SUMMARY OF ESSENTIAL DUTIES

SARA SPEs develop, plan, implement, administer, and manage SARA activities for their states. SPEs also liaise between institutions, regional compact SARA staff, other SARA member states, the state SARA council (if applicable), students, NC-SARA, and other stakeholders. Specific policy requirements of SPEs are articulated in the [SARA Policy Manual](#).

ESSENTIAL DUTIES OF SARA STATE PORTAL ENTITIES

1. Institutional Approvals, Renewals, and Compliance
 - a. Review applications from institutions for participation in SARA; approve or deny applications.
 - b. Evaluate institutional eligibility under SARA policies and any applicable state laws, regulations, and procedures.
 - c. Provide guidance and oversight of in-state educational institutions seeking approval to operate under SARA.
 - d. Work with institutions to ascertain status and compliance with all regulations, policies, and requirements related to SARA.
 - e. Assess continuing institutional compliance with all regulations, policies, requirements, and guidelines related to SARA renewals.
 - f. Partner with regional compact staff and/or NC-SARA when interaction with the state's institutions is required, as needed (e.g., issues with reporting required data in a timely manner).
 - g. Monitor institutional changes, including mergers, acquisitions, and closures, for potential impact on SARA participation.

2. State SARA Administration and Oversight
 - a. Maintain contact information for SARA institutions using the SARA Portal.
 - b. Maintain a repository of all documents related to the administration of SARA for the state.
 - c. Supervise and lead staff members with SARA responsibilities (where applicable).
 - d. Advocate for, encourage, and potentially develop regulatory and policy amendments related to SARA issues as needed.
 - e. Develop and manage program budgets, fee structures, and payment arrangements for SARA purposes (where applicable).
 - f. Prepare proposals and reports related to SARA as needed; ensure compliance with district, state, and federal agencies' policies for internal and external audits (where applicable).

3. Student Complaints
 - a. Develop and implement procedures for managing the SARA student complaint process for the state.
 - b. Monitor, receive, review, and resolve SARA student complaints regarding home state SARA institutions.
 - c. Collaborate with other states' SPEs as needed on complaint resolution.
 - d. File quarterly student complaint reports with NC-SARA as required by the *SARA Policy Manual*.

4. Communication
 - a. Serve as a key contact for state SARA-related activity and communications.
 - b. Establish or manage outreach efforts to eligible institutions about participating in SARA.
 - c. Provide advice and direction regarding SARA-related inquiries from institutions, students, and other members of the public in the state.
 - d. Promote any SARA-related initiatives in the state.
 - e. Coordinate the communication about SARA for the state.

5. Collaboration and participation with regional compacts and NC-SARA
 - a. Working in conjunction with regional compacts and NC-SARA, arrange and/or prepare for meetings on behalf of the SPE responsible for SARA implementation.
 - b. Serve as liaison with local, regional, and national partners for the purpose of establishing and maintaining partnerships.
 - c. Advise constituents as needed and where appropriate on policy matters related to SARA.
 - d. Participate in SARA-related meetings, training, and educational programs.
 - e. Collaborate with peer SPEs in the region and across the country to support a seamless administration of SARA.
 - f. Participate in regional steering committees, if applicable.
 - g. Participate in the SARA Policy Modification Process, as applicable.
6. State Membership
 - a. Ensure the state is meeting the requirements of SARA membership, including in each of the areas outlined in items one through five above, on an ongoing basis.
 - b. Prepare the state SARA membership renewal and submit it to the regional compact (every two years).
 - c. Develop regulatory and policy amendments and updates related to SARA issues for the state as needed.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

The following skills and abilities may be helpful to consider in drafting position descriptions for SPE staff.

1. Demonstrated understanding of regulatory policies and procedures as they apply to post-secondary institutions.
2. Superior organizational and administrative skills as well as the ability to work independently.
3. Strong interpersonal, verbal communication, and written communication skills.
4. Ability to understand, apply, and interpret the provisions of the laws, regulations, policies, and procedures governing agency operations as applicable.
5. Ability to develop and maintain professional, collaborative working relationships with institutions of higher education, external entities, and the general public.
6. Ability to use computer software packages (including word processing, database management, and spreadsheet applications).
7. Ability to take initiative, use sound judgment to make decisions, resolve problems, adapt to changing needs, and work effectively with all levels of staff.
8. Demonstrated ability to exercise judgement and discretion in safeguarding confidential or sensitive information.
9. Travel is often required.

If you have feedback on the *Essential Duties of SARA State Portal Entities*, please email education@nc-sara.org.

Last updated 4.8.25