



## SARA Quick Start Guide

### SARA Policy Modification Process

#### How can institutional staff and other stakeholders participate?

##### What does the *SARA Policy Manual* Say?

NC-SARA is a private nonprofit organization that helps expand students' access to educational opportunities and ensure more efficient, consistent, and effective regulation of distance education programs. Subsection 8.2 of the *SARA Policy Manual* provides details addressing the purpose, guiding principles, and process for making modifications to SARA Policy through the SARA Policy Modification Process. As stated in the purpose section, the process "...is intended to provide each of those parties [the four regional compacts and NC-SARA] – as well as the many additional stakeholders to SARA – a reasonable and appropriate voice in the review and approval of SARA policy changes."

##### What is the rationale?

Currently, the SARA Policy Modification Process is initiated in January of each year and includes a series of events and deadlines for proposal submissions, public comments, amendments, voting, etc. A calendar of important dates is published on the [SARA Policy Modification Process](#) webpage.

The SARA Policy Modification Process reflects the following guiding principles: transparency; collaboration; consistency; and clear and open communication among regional compacts, states, institutions, NC-SARA, and other stakeholders.

According to the *SARA Policy Manual*, "Proposed policy modifications shall be evaluated based on SARA's fundamental reliance on interstate reciprocity and trust, and on the fundamental purposes of SARA, which are to support high quality distance education, resolve problems encountered by students, and simplify and support the interstate offering of distance education using a model under which an institution's home state is primarily responsible for what the institution offers under the aegis of SARA."

##### How can my institution engage in the SARA Policy Modification Process?

- Ensure that contact information for your institution is current by communicating any changes to your [SARA State Portal Entity](#) (SPE) regularly. Institution contacts will receive notification of key milestones and public webinars related to each cycle of the SARA Policy Modification Process.
- Submit proposed SARA policy modifications. Please see suggested formatting on the webpage.
- Attend the SARA Policy Modification Process Public Forum to learn more about proposals that have been submitted.
- Review and evaluate proposals and provide relevant public comments on proposals under consideration through the formal public comment process.

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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 Start Guides 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](#).

- ❑ Attend NC-SARA webinars that explain changes to SARA policy resulting from approved proposals submitted through the SARA Policy Modification Process.
- ❑ Utilize learning resources (see list below) to help others at your institution understand changes to SARA policy in areas that affect institutions.

### Still Have Questions?

1. SARA State Portal Entities have the ultimate responsibility and authority to hold institutions in compliance with SARA policy. The information in this Quick Start Guide is intended to be general guidance for institutions, but institutions should be in regular contact with their [SARA State Portal Entity](#) for specific requirements, directions, and guidance.
2. Contact NC-SARA if you still have other questions: [info@nc-sara.org](mailto:info@nc-sara.org)

### Resources:

- [SARA Policy Manual](#), Subsection 8.2 SARA Policy Modification Process
- [SARA Policy](#) webpage
- [SARA Policy Modification Process](#) webpage
- [Participate in SARA Policy Modifications](#) webpage

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