

Strategy Committee Draft Mission Statement

SARA

The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) is a voluntary agreement among member states, districts, and territories that establishes standards for the reciprocal authorization of institutions providing distance education across state lines. As of 2026, 49 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have voluntarily joined SARA. More than 2,400 institutions have received approval from their home state to participate in the agreement.

NC-SARA

The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) is a private nonprofit organization [501(c)(3)] that coordinates the implementation of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement in collaboration with the four regional, interstate education compacts:

- Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC)
- New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE)
- Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)
- Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)

NC-SARA supports the regional education compacts and member states as they implement the agreement and carry out their SARA-related work. Additionally, NC-SARA facilitates information exchange among the regional education compacts, member states, territories, the District of Columbia, and SARA institutions regarding participation and compliance with SARA.

Draft Mission Statement

The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA), in collaboration with the four regional education compacts, supports increased access to postsecondary distance education for learners across the United States through the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA).

The mission will be achieved by:

- Advancing efforts to align core elements and requirements of SARA reciprocity across the SARA member states.
- Expanding consumer protection by facilitating state-led SARA policy changes.
- Supporting increased availability to postsecondary distance education by institutions.
- Ensuring effectiveness and continuous improvement of the collaborative partnership with the SARA community.

Current Mission Statement

NC-SARA's mission is:

- To provide broad access to postsecondary education opportunities to students across the country;
- To increase the quality and value of higher learning credentials earned via distance education; and
- To assure students are well served in a rapidly changing education landscape.

NC-SARA strives to achieve its mission in several ways. First and foremost, we work to promote and advance inter-regional alignment on core elements and requirements of State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements. This is instrumental to our efforts to expand quality postsecondary distance learning opportunities nationwide.

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We also recognize the importance of collaborating with the full spectrum of stakeholders in the higher education community, including large- and small-scale distance education providers, institution accreditation agencies, elected state officials, state regulators, and state higher education executive officers. Through this collaboration, we also identify opportunities to participate in cooperative efforts of states and the larger higher education community to improve service to students and the nation through distance education.

Finally, we prioritize building public awareness of and support for SARA through regular communications to students, states, accreditors, institutional leaders and other stakeholders. It's important to consistently communicate the value and importance of SARA directly to those who benefit from these agreements.