



## SARA Quick Start Guide

### Understanding Participation Fees Related to SARA

#### What fees are required of institutions approved to participate in SARA?

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

**Subsection 3.6 Participation Fees** describes the fees required for SARA participation by institutions that have been approved by their home state. Requirements include:

Institutions may have to pay two fees to participate in SARA.

- a. NC-SARA fee (required of all institutions)
  1. This annual fee\* is based on an institution's total full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment as submitted to the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) each fall as 12-month FTE enrollment. See NC-SARA website (<https://nc-sara.org/participation-fees>).
  2. Institutions not reporting to IPEDS would use the FTE count for the same time period.
  3. An institution participating in SARA for the first time that has not paid its NC-SARA fee within 60 days of its state's approval of the institution's application to participate in SARA must submit a new application to its home state SARA State Portal Entity.
  4. Institutions indicate and SARA State Portal Entity staff verify enrollments through IPEDS or similar resources.
  5. An institution that withdraws from SARA receives no fee refund from NC-SARA.

\*Fees are reconsidered by the National Council for SARA every two years.

- a. A separate state fee may be required of SARA-participating institutions whose home state has established a fee to cover costs associated with SARA oversight.
  1. States may use any fee structure that is rationally related to the state's actual or projected workload.
  2. A SARA member state may fund its work to investigate and resolve complaints arising from the operations of the institutions it approves to participate in SARA in any reasonable way permitted by law. A SARA member state may charge its own SARA-participating institutions a SARA participation fee that reflects the state's estimated costs to manage its responsibilities under SARA, including support for carrying out such investigations. SARA policies do not preclude a billable costs approach to funding such work.

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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 with their [SARA State Portal Entity](#) for any state-specific requirements.

3. A SARA member state may increase its bonding or reserve fund requirements for institutions for which it is the home state in order to cover the potentially greater risk owing to the state's expanded responsibility for the institution's multistate distance education offerings.

### What is the rationale?

There are costs associated with the administration of SARA in each member state as well as with the coordination of SARA nationally. NC-SARA fees and state SARA fees are assessed annually on participating institutions to cover these administrative costs.

### What does my institution need to do?

- Be aware of your institution's deadline to pay SARA-related fees in a timely manner each year.
- Determine if your institution's home state requires a separate state fee for administering SARA, and if so, what it is. The current list of state fees can be found on the NC-SARA website: [State Fees for In-state Institutions](#). Please contact your SARA State Portal Entity staff to confirm.
- Communicate with relevant departments or individuals at your institution to ensure timely payment of SARA fees to NC-SARA and your state (if applicable).
- Ensure that your institution's contact information is accurate by notifying your [SARA State Portal Entity](#) of any changes in a timely manner. This includes ensuring that the billing contact is current for your institution.

### 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)

### Resource:

- [SARA Policy Manual](#), Subsection 3.6

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