Frequently Asked Questions –
State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA)

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Q1. What does the acronym SARA stand for? [back to top]
A.   State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA)

Q2. What is the difference between SARA and NC-SARA? [back to top]
A.   Higher education stakeholders joined together in 2013 to establish the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA), which streamlines regulations around distance education programs.

The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) is a nonprofit organization that helps expand students' access to educational opportunities and ensure more efficient, consistent, and effective regulation of distance education programs. NC-SARA helps states, institutions, policymakers, and students understand the purpose and benefits of participating in SARA.

"SARA" refers to the agreement, whereas "NC-SARA" refers to the organization.

Q3. Is there a SARA Policy Manual? [back to top]
A.   Yes. The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA) Policy Manual can be found here.

Q4. How many SARA contacts is an institution allowed to have? [back to top]
A.   Each institution is allowed to have the following SARA contacts, which are housed in the NC-SARA database:
- *Named on Invoice* (receives all email communications to the institution, i.e., invoices, renewal application notices, data reporting notices, reminders)
  - Only one person may be selected
  - The person Named on Invoice must also be identified as one of the following roles below
- *Primary Contact* (receives all email communications to the institution)
- *Secondary Contact* (receives all email communications to the institution)
- *Billing Contact* (receives invoice related emails and SARA participation related emails)
- *Authorized Signatory Contact* (signs and receives all Administrative forms)
- *Data Reporting Contact* (receives data reporting related emails and SARA participation related emails)
- *CEO/CAO* (receives SARA participation related emails)

Q5. Which questions on the SARA application are most commonly overlooked or completed incorrectly?
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A.
1) Page 1, top-right – Applicants should indicate "Initial Application" or "Renewal Application."
2) Page 1, Question 2 – Applicants should enter data into the "Name of Accrediting Agency" data field.
3) Pages 1-2 – Applicants *should not* input checkmarks into the "SARA State Portal Entity confirms the institution meets the requirement" column – this column is reserved for use by CPE staff as the SARA State Portal Entity (SPE).
4) Page 2, Question 4 – Applicants should enter data into the "FFRCS" data field and into the "Year Reporting (most recent published)" data field. (Note: Public institutions leave this blank).
5) Page 4, "Mailing address of the institution" – Applicants should enter the address that shows in IPEDS.
6) Page 4, "Institution OPEID number" data field – Applicants should enter the Institution's OPEID number, which can be found on the IES/NCES *College Navigator* Website after searching by institution name.
7) Page 4, "Institution IPEDS identification number" data field – Applicants should enter the Institution's IPEDS ID number, which can be found on the IES/NCES *College Navigator* Website after searching by institution name.
8) Page 5, "Institution link to Professional Licensure disclosures" data field – Applicants should enter data into this data field.
9) Page 7, Branch Campus Information section – If applicable, applicants should list campus(es) located in KY only.

Q6. Which application form should be used by an institution applying for *initial participation* in SARA?
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A.   There is now only one application available for use which can be found here under the "Application and Approval Form for Institution Participation in SARA" heading. Applicants should indicate *"Initial Application"* at the top, right of the application form.

Q7. Which application form should be used by an institution applying to *renew its participation* in SARA? [back to top]

A.   There is now only one application available for use which can be found here under the "Application and Approval Form for Institution Participation in SARA" heading. Applicants should indicate *"Renewal Application"* at the top, right of the application form.

Q8. On Page 4, how should the "Institution FTE (latest IPEDS)," and the accompanying "Year reporting" be determined? [back to top]
- A.   Click here to access guidance from NC-SARA.

Q9. For institutions that have more than one official mailing address, a P.O. Box address, and/or a physical address, which address should be entered in the "Mailing address of the institution" field, located on Page 4 of the application? [back to top]
- A.   The address information entered into the "Mailing address of the institution" field on the NC-SARA application should match the institution's address information that is entered into IPEDS.

Q10. On Page 5 of the application, what information should be provided in the "Institution link to SARA student complaint process" field? [back to top]
- A.   Information provided here should be the institutional link that students use to address complaints with appropriate college officials, and file formal grievances.

Q11. On Page 5 of the application, what information should be provided in the "Institution link to Professional Licensure disclosures" field? [back to top]
- A.   Please include the institution's link to Professional Licensure disclosures.
Per the NC-SARA webpage: "Many students attend colleges and universities to earn a degree that prepares them for a specific field: to become a doctor, nurse, teacher, psychologist, engineer, or one of the many other occupations regulated by state and/or other government entities. States and other government entities have established standards of practice for the occupations or professions they have chosen to regulate, and they provide legal permission to practice those professions only to individuals who meet those standards. This is called professional licensure: professions for which people need to meet certain criteria in order to practice in that field." REF: https://nc-sara.org/resources/professional-licensure
Please review these links with more information about this requirement for reference:
  - https://wcetsan.wiche.edu/resources/professional-licensure
  - SARA Professional Licensure FAQ: https://nc-sara.org/sites/default/files/files/2024-06/Professional_Licensure_FAQ_NC-SARA_06.10.24.pdf

OR, if the institution does not have any professional licensure programs, then please provide a link to the institution's web page with a statement to that effect.

Q12. The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements application looks different than in the past, why is that? [back to top]
   A.   Effective 7/1/24, NC-SARA revised the Application and Approval Form for Institution Participation in SARA. REF: https://nc-sara.org/applications-and-approval-forms

         In 2021, NC-SARA combined the Initial Application and the Renewal Application into one, single application. There is now only one application available for use and applicants are to indicate "Initial Application" or "Renewal Application" in the top right of the form.

Q13. Which campuses should be listed in the "Branch campus information" section of the application, located on Page 7 of the application? [back to top]
   A.   Only campuses in KY should be listed, if applicable.

Q14. For public institutions, which attachments should be submitted as required documentation along with the institution's initial or renewal application? [back to top]
   A.   • The documentation required for Item 1 is the statute.
         • The documentation required for Item 2 is the institution's accreditation. documentation (e.g., documentation from SACSCOC)

Q15. For "Independent not-for-profit" or "Independent for-profit" institutions, which attachments should be submitted as required documentation along with the institution's initial or renewal application? [back to top]
   A.   • The documentation required for Item 1 is the institution's CPE licensure renewal letter.
         • The documentation required for Item 2 is the institution's accreditation documentation (e.g., documentation from ABHES, ATS, SACSCOC).

Q16. Is submission of a renewal application required every year after an institution is initially approved as a participating SARA institution? [back to top]
   A.   Yes.

Q17. When can an institution submit an initial SARA application and accompanying fee to CPE? [back to top]
   A.   At any time during the year.

Q18. When should an institution submit its renewal SARA application and accompanying fee to CPE?
[back to top]
   A.   Per Kentucky Administrative Regulation 13 KAR 4:010, CPE has to receive both the renewal application *and* fee at least 60 days prior to the institution's participation end date. Otherwise, the institution will not meet the renewal deadline, and instead, the institution will have to start all over with the initial SARA application and accompanying fee.

Q19. Do SARA-institution contacts receive communications from NC-SARA directly concerning SARA-related business? [back to top]

A.   Yes. Throughout the year SARA-institution contacts receive communications from CPE *and also from* NC-SARA. It is important to note which communications come from which agency so that timely responses and reporting can be made.

One example of a communication that comes **directly from NC-SARA** is the "SARA Institution Renewal Notification" email that notifies SARA contacts that it's time to renew institutional-SARA participation.

Another example of a communication that comes **directly from NC-SARA** is regarding SARA Data Reporting that notifies institutions of the data reporting window opening and closing each year.

Another example of communications that come **directly from NC-SARA** are reminder notices, which are sent at the 90-day, 60-day, and 30-day points in the renewal cycle. These notices are automatically generated and are sent until the renewal process is complete.

An example of a communication that **comes from CPE** is the "Renewal Application Approval by State Portal Entity" email that notifies contacts that CPE has approved its participation in SARA on the state level and that it's time to complete the renewal process by registering with and paying the fee due to NC-SARA.

Answers | Payment: Q20 – Q21

Q20. What is the CPE fee structure (for fees made payable to CPE)? [back to top]

A.   From the Kentucky Administrative Regulation 13 KAR 4:010:

Section 6. Fees. The council shall charge an initial and annual renewal fee to institutions based on all enrolled full-time equivalent students, which shall be due at time of application. Applications shall not be reviewed without receipt of fee payment. Failure to pay a fee on or before the date of application shall be sufficient grounds for denial of an application. Fees shall be in addition to any fees charged by NC-SARA and shall be in accordance with the following schedule:

(1) Under 2,500 full-time equivalent students - $4,500;
(2) 2,500 – 9,999 full-time equivalent students - $7,500; or
(3) 10,000 or more full-time equivalent students - $10,500.

Q21. What is the NC-SARA fee structure (for fees made payable to NC-SARA)? [back to top]

A.   REF NC-SARA: https://nc-sara.org/participation-fees

Q22. What payment options are available to pay CPE? Is there a way to pay CPE online or with a credit card? [back to top]
A.
- Fees due to CPE may be paid *by check made payable to CPE* and mailed to:

     Jevonda Keith, Executive Director for Postsecondary Licensing
     Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
     100 Airport Road, 3rd Floor
     Frankfort, KY 40601

- *--OR--* Fees due to CPE may be paid *online* with a 2.75% vendor processing fee (REF: https://cpe.ky.gov/campuses/fees.html).

Q23. When should payment be submitted to CPE? [back to top]
A.   Per Kentucky Administrative Regulation 13 KAR 4:010, CPE has to receive both the renewal application *and* fee at least 60 days prior to the institution's participation end date.

Q24. What payment options are available to pay NC-SARA? [back to top]
A.   NC-SARA accepts check or credit card as payment.

Q25. When should payment be submitted to NC-SARA? [back to top]
A.   Upon CPE review and approval of the renewal application, NC-SARA will send an email notice to the institution contacts with instructions including a link for the institution to use to register; registration generates the institution's invoice sent by email to the institution from NC-SARA. Upon notice of an approved renewal application, the institution shall submit its renewal fee to NC-SARA within 30 calendar days of the date the institution is approved as renewed, but before the participation end date.

Q26. Is CPE's current W-9 available online? [back to top]
A.   Yes. CPE's current W-9 can be found online here.

Q27. Communication from CPE indicates that payment to NC-SARA is due by XX date, but communication from NC-SARA indicates a different due date. Why is this? [back to top]
A.   A 30-day (calendar) grace period beyond the institutional participation end is granted if the institution has been approved for SARA participation by the SARA State Portal Entity before the participation end date. If payment has not been received by NC-SARA within 30 calendar days of the participation end date, a late fee of 25% of the institution's renewal fee is applied if payment is received within five business days. The institution remains listed on NC-SARA's list of participating institutions. The institution is designated "Approved." Institutions are not listed as current SARA institutions until payment is received by NC-SARA.

Q28. What are the data reporting requirements for institutions participating in SARA? [back to top]
A.   The data reporting requirements can be found here.

Q29. What is the timeline for data reporting? [back to top]
A.   The 2024 timeframe to report Fall 2023 exclusively distance education enrollments and calendar year 2023 out-of-state learning placements will be May 15, 2024 through June 15, 2024.

Q30. Should data reports be submitted to CPE or to NC-SARA? [back to top]
A.   All data reports should be submitted directly to NC-SARA through two online surveys in the spring following the due date for institutions to report their Fall Enrollment (EF) data to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Q31. Is there any guidance regarding Professional Licensure? [back to top]
A.   Yes. Professional Licensure Frequently Asked Questions:
REF https://nc-sara.org/sites/default/files/files/2024-06/Professional_Licensure_FAQ_NC-SARA_06.10.24.pdf

Q32. Help Resources   [back to top]

CPE SARA Website
Staff overseeing CPE's SARA process can be reached by sending an email to: SARA@ky.gov

IES-NCES *College Navigator*
The IES-NCES *College Navigator* is a free consumer information tool created by the US Department of Education and its National Center for Education Statistics that provides selected IPEDS data.

Kentucky Administrative Regulation 13 KAR 4:010 (State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement)

Kentucky Revised Statute KRS 164.540

NC-SARA (Main) Website

NC-SARA Institutional Data Reporting Website

SARA Institution Welcome Kit
The Welcome Kit is a compilation of NC-SARA's resources for institutions.

SARA Learning Station

SARA Quick Start Guides

SARA Resources for States & Institutions