

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:
- *Primary SARA Contact* - Receives all email communications to the institution, i.e., invoices, payment reminders, payment confirmations, renewal application notices, data reporting notices, reminders
 - *Primary Billing Contact* - Receives only invoices, payment reminders, payment confirmations
 - *CEO/CAO* - Receives only SARA participation related emails (CEO/CAO signs the institution application and affirms compliance with SARA policy per the SARA Policy Manual Section 3.7(b)(2))
 - *Authorized Signatory Contact* - Signs and receives all SARA administrative forms (extensions, etc.)
 - *Additional Billing Contact* - Receives only invoice-related emails and SARA participation-related emails
 - *Additional SARA Contact* - Receives all email communications to the institution that Primary SARA Contact receives as additional contact, i.e., invoices, payment reminders, payment confirmations, renewal application notices, data reporting notices, reminders
 - *Data Reporting Contact* - Receives only data reporting related emails

Q5. Which questions on the SARA application are most overlooked or completed incorrectly? [\[back to top\]](#)

- 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) 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).
 - 4) Page 5, “Mailing address of the institution” – Applicants should enter the address that shows in IPEDS.
 - 5) Page 5, “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.
 - 6) Page 5, “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.
 - 7) Page 5, “Institution link to Professional Licensure disclosures” data field – Applicants should enter data into this data field. (See question 11)
 - 8) Page 12, Branch Campus Information section – If applicable, applicants should list campus(es) located *outside* of KY.

Q6. Which application form should be used by an institution applying for *initial participation* in SARA? [\[back to top\]](#)

- A. There is 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 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 5, 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 5 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 6 of the application, what information should be provided in the “Institution links to SARA student complaint process” fields? [\[back to top\]](#)

- A. Institutions operating under SARA policies shall provide their and SARA’s complaint resolution policies and procedures to all students taking courses under SARA policies on the institution’s website and in the institution’s catalog or equivalent information provided either in print or electronically to students when they enroll.

Q11. On Page 6 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.

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 7/1/26, NC-SARA revised the Application and Approval Form for Institution Participation in SARA. REF: <https://nc-sara.org/applications-and-approval-forms>

Q13. Which campuses should be listed in the “Branch campus information” section of the application, located on Page 12 of the application? [\[back to top\]](#)

- A. Only *out-of-state* campuses 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 be required to start 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 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.

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, 2nd Floor
Frankfort, KY 40601

B. --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 5% 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 2027 timeframe to report exclusively distance education enrollments and out-of-state learning placements will be May 15, 2027 through June 15, 2027.

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 by uploading data as a .csv file in the spring following the due date for institutions to report their Fall Enrollment (EF) data to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

The templates that institutions will be required to use can be found below:

- [Exclusively Distance Education Enrollments \(EDEE\) Template](#)
- [Out-of-State Learning Placement \(OOSLP\) Template](#)

Q31. Is there any guidance regarding Professional Licensure? [\[back to top\]](#)

A. Yes. Professional Licensure Frequently Asked Questions:

REF:

<https://nc-sara.org/professional-licensure-directory/>

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](#)

[News and Events](#)

[NC-SARA \(Main\) Website](#)

[NC-SARA Institutional Data Reporting Website](#)

[Professional Licensure Directory](#)

[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](#)