



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) PA State Portal Entity

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▶ SARA - PA State Portal Entity - Brief History

- Act 35 of 2016 was passed by the General Assembly and signed by Governor Tom Wolf on June 1, 2016
- The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) joined SARA in Fall 2016 and was designated by Act 35 as the SARA State Portal Entity
- In order to be a State participating in SARA, the state must belong to or be affiliated with a regional compact
- Pennsylvania is affiliated with the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB)

SARA - Commonwealth of PA

Today will include an overview of:

- Annual Institutional Renewal
- Annual Institutional Fees
- Institutional Application Pertinent Details
- PA Requirements for Composite Score Review

SARA - Annual Institutional Renewal

- Institutions must renew annually
- Institutions receive a renewal reminder
- PA institutions must submit two forms:
 - Institutional Renewal Application, including required documents
 - The PA Supplement
- Completed forms and all documents are emailed to giwetten@pa.gov

SARA - Annual Institutional Fees

Pennsylvania's Fee:

- Original regulation fees sunset in 2018
- Reduced fee schedule is planned to resume in 2023

Distance Tuition Revenue Fee

\$0-9,999

\$10,000-4,999,999

\$5,000,000-19,999,999

\$20,000,000-39,999,999

\$40,000,000 and over

Proposed New Fee

\$1,000

\$2,000

\$3,000

\$5,000

\$7,000

SARA - Annual Institutional Fees

National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement's Fee (NC-SARA)

After renewal forms and documents have been received and processed by PDE, institutions must pay the NC-SARA fee (this fee has NOT been waived and must be paid annually):

- Institutions will receive an email from NC-SARA
- Institutions must pay the fee before the institution's individual renewal due date

SARA - Institutional Application Pertinent Details

Please ensure within the institutional application that ALL fields are completed and/or initialed, including:

1. Catastrophic Events
2. Complaint Link
3. Professional Licensure Link
4. Additional Campus Information

SARA - Institutional Application Pertinent Details

By initialing the application, the institution is ensuring a policy for:

1. Catastrophic Events

- Complete #11 on page 3 and keep a copy at the institution
- Should include safety and emergency plans as we have learned through the COVID-19 pandemic
- This can be requested by the Pennsylvania State Portal Entity at any time for verification purposes

2. Complaint Link

- Located on page 4
- To confirm compliance with 34 CFR§668.43(b) Institutional information:

The institution must make available for review to any enrolled or prospective student upon request, a copy of the documents describing the institution's accreditation and its state, federal, or tribal approval or licensing. The institution must also provide its students or prospective students with contact information for filing complaints with its accreditor and with its state approval or licensing entity and any other relevant state official or agency that would appropriately handle a student's complaint.

SARA - Institutional Application Pertinent Details

The institution must include:

3. Professional Licensure Link (Federal Requirement)

- Include the link where professional licensure disclosures are listed
- Use additional paper if necessary

4. Additional Campus Information

- Make sure to add any additional campus information
- Use additional paper if necessary

SARA - PA Requirements for Composite Score Review

Review of Institutional Composite scores in PA

- Score of 1.5 or greater - approved
- Score of less than 1.5 - for new institutions, is not permitted
- Score between 1.0 and 1.49 - renewed on provisional status
- Score below 1.0 - removed
- Score is not on the most recent Federal Financial Responsibility Composite Score listing (currently published 2018-19) - Pennsylvania will place the institution on provisional status and the institution must provide:
 - The two most recent audited financial statements, including the current year
 - eZ-Audit acknowledgement from United States Department of Education (USDE) showing the current year was submitted and is being reviewed by USDE

SARA related questions should be emailed to the PA State Portal entity contact.

Pennsylvania SARA Contacts

Gina Wetten, Higher Education Associate II, PDE

giwetten@pa.gov

(Primary PA State Portal Entity SARA Contact)

Michele Simmons, Administrative Assistant, PDE

michellsim@pa.gov

(Updates to SARA Contact and/or Complaint Link)

Lynette Kuhn, Division Chief, PDE

Lykuhn@pa.gov

(Division of Higher Education, Access, and Equity)

Websites:

- **PA SARA Website:** [State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement PA](#)
- **NC-SARA Website:** <https://www.nc-sara.org/> (NC-SARA Manual 21.1, 5-28-2021)

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Thank You!

The mission of the Pennsylvania Department of Education is to ensure that every learner has access to a world-class education system that academically prepares children and adults to succeed as productive citizens. Further, the Department seeks to establish a culture that is committed to improving opportunities throughout the commonwealth by ensuring that technical support, resources, and optimal learning environments are available for all students, whether children or adults.