

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR STATE RECIPROCITY AGREEMENTS (SARA)

SARA:

Agreement of reciprocity between the member states, districts and territories that establishes comparable national norms for the interstate offer of distance education courses and programs of higher education, in those institutions that have a license to operate. This voluntary agreement allows the institution to offer its academic programs without having to undergo the licensing process in each place where it is interested to offer their authorized programs.

Regulations applicable to HEIs that offer distance education outside of Puerto Rico:

The US Department of Education requires evidence of authorization to operate from the State, as a condition of eligibility to participate in the Title IV Funds. The SARA policy is consistent with Federal Law and therefore subject to changes based on federal regulations.

Goals:

1. Expand the academic offer and reduce costs for students.
2. Prevent institutions from having to seek approval for their courses and distance programs individually in each state.
3. Allow states to maintain vigilance over the compliance processes of their own institutions.

Criteria to accept the states in this initiative:

1. Accept institutional accreditation as sufficient evidence of academic quality to approve the participation of institutions.
2. Consider applications to participate in SARA from all sectors (public, private, for purposes, without purposes) of institutions that offer degrees and approve institutions that meet applicable standards.
3. In the case of private institutions accept as an index of financial responsibility those with a score of 1.5 or more.
4. Have an articulated and comprehensive process of consumer protection in relation to activities related to SARA.
5. Designation of an agency to coordinate the activities of the initiative that will serve as a point of contact for possible student complaints.
6. Guarantees that the state will work in coordination with other states that participate in the initiative.

For additional information you can access: <http://nc-sara.org/>