



NC-SARA & NAVIGATING NEGOTIATIONS

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The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements, commonly known as NC-SARA, is a private organization established in 2013 to enhance the quality of distance education programs. NC-SARA is dedicated to expanding distance education, making programs more accessible, assuring cost savings, improving uniformity and coordination efforts between states, and collaborating with regional compacts. The University of Detroit Mercy is one of 2,300 educational institutions participating in NC-SARA and holds Midwestern Higher Education Compact membership.

What is negotiated rulemaking?

Negotiated rulemaking is a process for amending administrative rules. Neutral facilitators, federal agencies, and relevant parties of interest draft proposed rules and conduct negotiations until a consensus is reached. Negotiated rulemaking can be a meticulous, lengthy process in which committee members debate administrative language over several meetings. Typically, the process allows the public to weigh in with comments, questions, or specific feedback.



Over the past year, NC-SARA, with The Department of Education, policymakers, and other educational stakeholders, have been actively undergoing negotiations surrounding challenges that compromise the quality and consistency of distance education programs nationwide. Current negotiations underway for proposed modifications to SARA Policy include topics relating to, but are not limited to, the following:

- Reciprocity Exclusion & Student Enrollment Among States
- Addressing Compliance with Applicable State Laws Relating to Closure
- Distance Education Complaint Process & Requirements

The upcoming regulation, which will take effect as early as July 1, 2024, is a significant step towards ensuring transparency and quality in distance education. It will require SARA participating institutions to disclose whether licensure-granting programs meet or do not meet educational requirements for US states and territories where students are enrolled. This new policy, with its focus on student protection, will provide a clear framework for educational institutions and prospective students alike, ensuring that students' interests are well served in their respective educational endeavors.



The NC-SARA board and regional compact members recently reviewed the most updated version of *Issue Papers: State Authorization(v3)*, which highlights complaint systems and governance of in-state authorization. The Department of Education's proposal, which is under review by the Program Integrity and Institutional Quality Committee, can be found [here](#).

[Click here](#) to learn more about The Department of Education's Negotiated Rulemaking for Higher Education 2023-2024.

As part of our commitment to NC-SARA, we will begin the data-collection process in the upcoming weeks. Your role as a faculty or staff member who serves as a designated lead of exclusively distance online academic programs is crucial in this process. You will receive communication from the CETL to verify and obtain the most accurate information to document online programs. Your contribution is highly valued, and we look forward to this collaboration.

For inquiries relating to the Detroit Mercy distance education data-reporting process, please email cetl@udmercy.edu.