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STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCALITY AGREEMENT (SARA)

On September 11, 2015, Michigan State University (MSU) became an official member of the National Council of State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) and began participating in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA).

About SARA. SARA is a voluntary agreement among member states, districts and territories that establishes comparable nationwide standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. SARA does not supersede state laws governing institutions with a physical presence in the state.

Prior to SARA, accredited postsecondary institutions were required to obtain approval to deliver distance education in every state in which online degree or certificate programs were offered. Under SARA, colleges or universities in a SARA state only need authorization from the state where the main/central campus or central administrative unit resides – known as the "home state" – to offer distance education to residents of any other SARA member state.

MSU and Other SARA Participating Institutions are obligated to comply with other states' laws regarding the delivery of distance education. For purposes of this summary, distance education includes any traditional, online, and hybrid program or course involving instruction given, in whole or in part, outside the state of Michigan. State laws regarding distance education vary state by state, and even program-by-program within a state. Consequently, compliance with state authorization requirements is an ongoing process. To learn more about SARA, visit the [NC-SARA](#) website.

Participating SARA U.S. States and Territories - Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, U.S. Virgin Islands, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

Non-Participating SARA State - California.

Non-Participating U.S. Territories – American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Republic of Palau, and Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Physical Presence "Triggers" - For purposes of SARA, an institution has physical presence and therefore must meet the state's current non-SARA requirements if it does any of the following:

- a. Establishes a physical location for students to receive synchronous or asynchronous instruction;
- b. Requires students to physically meet in a location for instructional purposes more than twice per full term (quarter or semester) course for a total of more than six hours;
- c. Establishes an administrative office;
- d. Provides information to students for the purpose of enrolling students, or provides student support services, from a physical site operated by or on behalf of the institution in the state;
- e. Offers a "short course" that requires more than 20 contact hours
- f. Provides office space to instructional or noninstructional staff;
- g. Maintains a mailing address or phone exchange in a state.

Physical presence under SARA is not triggered if the instruction provided for a short course or seminar takes no more than 20 classroom hours. Class meetings during a full-term course do not trigger physical presence if the instructor and students physically meet together for no more than two meetings, totaling less than 6 hours. Apparent abuses of these provisions may be brought to the attention of the home state.

ABOUT STATE AUTHORIZATION - U.S. STATES, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, AND U.S. TERRITORIES

MSU is required to comply with state's laws regarding distance education for both participating and non-participating SARA states. The following state summaries provide information regarding each state's requirements to offer distance education to its residents, enrollment and continuation restrictions, and other relevant information for offering online and distance education in each respective state.

- **Student Physical Location** – Course and program availability varies by state. Admission into a program is granted at the time of initial acceptance into the program and is dependent on program availability in the state where the student is physically located at the time of admission. If a student moves to a different state after admission to the program, continuation within the program will depend on the availability of the program within the new state where the student is physically present. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of a change in physical presence.
- **Military Personnel** - Whether military personnel stationed outside the state of Michigan may enroll or continue in a MSU distance education program is based on where military personnel are stationed.
- **Title IV Higher Education Act Notice | Change of State Residence** – A student who changes their state of residence while enrolled in a program may become ineligible for Title IV Higher Education Act funding if the change in residency results in a student participating in a program in a state in which MSU does not meet licensure or certification requirements in the that new state of residence.
- **Traditional Courses** - Regulations also vary state by state with respect to traditional courses that take place outside the state of Michigan (internship, externship, clerkship, practicum, rotation, clinical, independent study, study away, mentoring, advising, proctoring, and the like) and **may not necessarily be the same as regulations regarding online distance education outlined in the following state by state information.**
- **Supervised Field Experience** - Under SARA a “supervised field experience” means a student learning experience under the oversight of a supervisor, mentor, faculty member or other qualified professional, located in the host state, who has a direct or indirect reporting responsibility to the institution where the student is enrolled, whether or not credit is granted. Courses and programs incorporating a “supervised field experience” **are covered by the provisions of SARA as long as the field experience does not involve a multi-night stay across state lines in a SARA member state.**
- **Out-of-State Student Educational Learning Placements** - A student out-of-state learning experience placement means an internship, externship, clerkship, practicum, rotation, clinical, student teaching, independent study, study away, and the like, taken by a student who is **physically present** at a facility, site or location that takes place in a U.S. state, district, or territory outside the state of Michigan (excluding foreign countries). **This applies to traditional, online, and hybrid courses, regardless of the course or section number.**
- **SARA Rule of 10:** Under SARA, a member institution cannot provide placement of more than ten (10) students in an individual academic course who are receiving simultaneous instruction at one instructional, clinical or practicum site without prior official approval from the state where the out-of-state learning experience takes place. Please contact the Office of Accreditation, Assessment, Curriculum (AACC) at ES.AACC@msu.edu to obtain further information and details regarding state approval.