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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 participants in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA) in accordance with SARA established policies and standards in providing distance education.

**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, 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 & U.S. TERRITORIES**

MSU is required to comply with state's laws regarding distance education for both participating and non-participating SARA states. The [State Authorization State-by-State Summary](#) provides 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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.**
- **Out-of-State Supervised Field Experience** - Under SARA policy, a “supervised field experience” means a student learning experience, occurring in a host state, comprised primarily of the practical application of previously studied theories and skills, 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) under the oversight of a supervisor, mentor, faculty member or other qualified professional who has a direct or indirect reporting responsibility to the institution where the student is enrolled, whether or not credit is granted. The supervised field experience is part of a program of study offered by the enrolling SARA institution. Examples include internship, externship, clerkship, practicum, rotation, clinicals, student teaching, independent study, study away, and the like, applies to traditional, online, and hybrid courses, regardless of the course or section number.

#### **Additional approvals may be required for:**

- Out-of-state supervised field experience placements by a student or students enrolled in a program that leads to professional licensure may require **prior state board approval** where the out-of-state supervised field experience takes place; and *there may be limitations or restrictions as to whether a student is allowed to participate in or complete an out-of-state supervised field experience in a particular state.*
- Placements of more than ten (10) students *in any* program or course *simultaneously* at a placement facility.

*If the host state requires approval of out-of-state supervised field experiences by agencies or boards responsible for professional requirements in fields requiring licensure or certification for practice, such professional approval requirements remain in effect and approval may be required from the professional licensure board in the state where the field experience takes place.*

- **Out-of-State Student Educational Learning Placements** – Under SARA policy, a student out-of-state learning experience placement means an internship, externship, clerkship, practicum, rotation, clinicals, 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) under the oversight of a supervisor, mentor, faculty member or other qualified professional who has a direct or indirect reporting responsibility to the institution where the student is enrolled, whether or not credit is granted. The supervised student out-of-state learning experience is part of a program offered by the

enrolling SARA institution. This applies to traditional, online, and hybrid courses, regardless of the course or section number.

**Additional approval may be required for:**

- Out-of-state student educational learning placements by a student or students enrolled in a program or course that leads to professional licensure may require **prior state board approval** where the out-of-state supervised field experience takes place; and *there may be limitations or restrictions as to whether a student is allowed to participate in or complete an out-of-state student educational learning placement in a particular state.*
- Placements of more than ten (10) students *in any* program *simultaneously* at a placement facility.

*If the host state requires approval of supervised out-of-state student educational learning placements by agencies or boards responsible for professional requirements in fields requiring licensure or certification for practice, such professional approval requirements remain in effect and approval may be required from the professional licensure board in the state where the field experience takes place.*

- **Placement of 10 or More Students in a Supervised Field Experience or Out-of-State Student Educational Learning Placement**

In accordance with SARA policy and referred to as the “Rule of 10,” member institutions **cannot provide for the placement of 10 or more students** enrolled in the same academic program or course to be placed *simultaneously* at one facility or site location outside a member institution's home state. The “Rule of 10” is applicable to all programs and courses, credit or non-credit, all student levels, and methods of delivery (on-ground, online or hybrid). **Before placing 10 or more students enrolled in ANY academic program** in an out-of-state field experience or experiential learning placement course or courses, be sure to verify well in advance that **Michigan State University** has or has not been granted authorization by the appropriate state agencies. Email [es.aacc@msu.edu](mailto:es.aacc@msu.edu) to obtain information on current state authorization status.



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