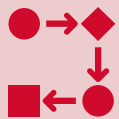


Massachusetts SARA Initial and Renewal Application Process

Purposes of the SARA Webinar



Discuss eligibility and application requirements to participate in Massachusetts SARA.



Summarize the steps involved in the initial and annual renewal application processes.



Answer questions and provide additional guidance and technical assistance.

MA SARA Application Portal

- EDvera (madhe.edvera.com) is DHE's SARA application portal.
- All applications must be submitted through EDvera. EDvera allows DHE staff to review and communicate within the applications.
- DHE has published an EDvera user guide for training purposes. It is available within the Help & Support section of EDvera.
- Email sarainquiries@dhe.mass.edu for technical assistance and support

Reminders

1. MA DHE cannot accept PDF applications.
2. 90-Day SARA Renewal Notices are sent on the first day of an institution's SARA Renewal Participation Cycle.
3. The institution's SARA Renewal Application is due 30 days after the Renewal Notice is sent.
4. Board of Higher Education policy requires State Universities and Private Institutions to pay the DHE SARA Fee at the time of application submission. Community Colleges are exempt.
 1. However, all institutions, including community colleges, must still pay the annual NC-SARA Fee after DHE approves the institution's initial or renewal application.

Massachusetts SARA Participation History

Regulation Promulgation and Joining SARA

In July 2017
Massachusetts received
statutory authority to
enter into interstate
reciprocity agreements.

The Massachusetts Board
of Higher Education (BHE)
authorized the
Commissioner of Higher
Education to pursue
participation in the State
Authorization Reciprocity
Agreement (SARA).

The BHE promulgated
regulations to govern the
entry of Massachusetts
into SARA. 610 CMR
12.00 went into effect on
March 23, 2018 (later
revised July 24, 2020).

On June 7, 2018, The New
England Board of Higher
Education's Executive
Committee granted final
approval for the
Commonwealth's
application to participate
in SARA.

MA SARA Initial & Renewal Applications

1. Requirements - Screenshot

REQUIREMENTS FOR INSTITUTION PARTICIPATION IN SARA

Core Requirements

1. In a SARA member state, the main campus or central administrative unit is domiciled in a state, territory or district that has joined the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA) initiative and is authorized to operate in that state.* Only distance education content originating in the United States, a U.S. territory, or district and provided from within a SARA state is eligible to be offered under SARA.** **(Attach documentation.)**

CEO or CAO initial here

2. Accreditation

The institution is a U.S. degree-granting institution that is accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. [Secretary of Education](#) and whose scope of authority, as specified by the Department, includes distance education. **(Attach documentation of accreditation verification.)**

CEO or CAO initial here

4. Federal Financial Responsibility Composite Score

For independent institutions, the state accepts an institutional federal financial responsibility composite score of 1.5 or higher as indicative of sufficient minimum financial stability to qualify for participation in SARA. For institutions owned or controlled by another entity (i.e., a parent entity), the relevant score will be the composite score of the parent entity as identified by the state portal entity. An institution's financial status must be evaluated using a score based on the most recent fiscal year for which a composite score is available. Acceptable composite scores shall be calculated by either the responsible federal agency, the state, or by a certified, independent accountant acceptable to the state. If a calculated composite score is not available for the most recent fiscal year for which financial statements are available, the state may calculate, or require an institution to have calculated by a certified, independent accountant acceptable to the state, a composite score based on the institution's most recent audited financial statements.

CEO or CAO initial here

Acceptable Documentation:

- M.G.L. c. 75 sec. 1 (UMASS)
- M.G.L. c. 15A sec. 5 (S/U,CC, & UMass)
- Articles of Organization/Amendments
- First page of most recently filed Form 990

Acceptable Documentation:

- ❖ Accreditation Letter
- Documents that may also be requested:
- ❖ Comprehensive Evaluation Letter
 - ❖ Interim Evaluation Letter
 - ❖ Distance Education Expedited Review Letter
 - ❖ Progress Letter
 - ❖ Annual Report on Finance and Enrollment Letter

- Public institutions leave this blank

1.1 Requirements - Text

Core Requirements

1. In a SARA member state, the main campus or central administrative unit is domiciled in a state, territory or district that has joined the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA) initiative and is authorized to operate in that state.* Only distance education content originating in the United States, a U.S. territory, or district and provided from within a SARA state is eligible to be offered under SARA.** (Attach documentation.)

Acceptable Documentation

Public IHEs: A copy of M.G.L. c. 75 sec. 1 (UMASS) or M.G.L. c. 15A sec. 5 (S/U,CC, & UMass)

Private IHEs: A copy of Articles of Organization/Amended Articles or First page of most recently filed Form 990

1.2 Requirements - Text

Consumer Protection

Accreditation

2. The institution is a U.S. degree-granting institution that is accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and whose scope of authority, as specified by the Department, includes distance education. (Attach documentation of accreditation verification.)

Acceptable Documentation

All IHEs: Most Recent Accreditation Letter

Documents that may also be requested: Comprehensive Evaluation Letter, Interim Evaluation Letter, Distance Education Expedited Review Letter, Progress Letter and/or Annual Report on Finance and Enrollment Letter

1.4 Requirements - Text

Federal Financial Responsibility Composite Score

4. For independent institutions, the state accepts an institutional federal financial responsibility composite score of 1.5 or higher as indicative of sufficient minimum financial stability to qualify for participation in SARA. For institutions owned or controlled by another entity (i.e., a parent entity), the relevant score will be the composite score of the parent entity as identified by the state portal entity. An institution's financial status must be evaluated using a score based on the most recent fiscal year for which a composite score is available. Acceptable composite scores shall be calculated by either the responsible federal agency, the state, or by a certified, independent accountant acceptable to the state. If a calculated composite score is not available for the most recent fiscal year for which financial statements are available, the state may calculate, or require an institution to have calculated by a certified, independent accountant acceptable to the state, a composite score based on the institution's most recent audited financial statements.

CEO or CAO initial here

Special Note

Public IHEs: Leave this initial field blank. **Private IHEs:** Initial this field

MA SARA Initial & Renewal Applications

2. Institutional Designation and Affirmation-Screenshot

Institutional Designation and Affirmation

Section 2 – Institutional Designation and Action and Information

I, the undersigned representative of this institution, having the authority to commit the Institution to operate under the SARA interstate agreement, hereby certify that this Institution meets all of the policies stated herein required for operation by the SARA Manual.

Institutional Signatory Officer Information

Prefix

Full name

Suffix

Title

Email address

Work phone number

Electronic Signature of Institutional Signatory Officer (please attach an image file)

 Drop file(s) here or [browse](#)

The chief executive officer (CEO) or chief academic officer (CAO) of the Institution signs the institution application and affirms compliance with SARA policy per the SARA Policy Manual Section 3.7(b)(2).

Title of Institutional Signatory Officer

Date of Electronic Signature

mm/dd/yyyy



Student Complaint System URLs

If you are entering multiple URLs, please separate the URLs with a semicolon (;)

URL to Institution's Student complaint form

URL to Institution's Student complaint website

- Institutional Signatory Officer can either be CEO or CAO only. CEO/CAO will initial all affirmations in application.

- If the institution does not utilize a complaint form in its complaint process, leave blank.

MA SARA Initial & Renewal Application

2. Institutional Designation and Affirmation- Institutional Signatory Officer-text

Section 2- Institutional Designation and Action and Information

I, the undersigned representative of this institution, having the authority to commit the Institution to operate under the SARA interstate agreement, hereby certify that this Institution meets all of the policies stated herein required for operation by the SARA Manual.

Institutional Signatory Officer Information

- *..Prefix
- *..Full name
- *..Suffix
- *..Title
- *..Email Address
- *..Work Phone Number

Electronic Signature of Institutional Signatory Officer (please attach an image file)

The chief executive officer (CEO) or chief academic officer (CAO) of the Institution signs the institution application and affirms compliance with SARA policy per the SARA Policy Manual Section 3.7(b)(2).

Title of Institutional Signatory Officer

Date of Electronic Signature

Special Notes

Institutional Signatory Officer can either be CEO or CAO only. CEO/CAO will initial all affirmations in application.

2. Institutional Designation and Affirmation- Student Complaint System URLs-text

Student Complaint System URLs

If you are entering multiple URLs, please separate the URLs with a semicolon (;)

URL to Institution's Student complaint form

URL to Institution's Student complaint website

Special Notes

If the institution does not utilize a complaint form in its complaint process, leave blank.

MA SARA Initial & Renewal Applications

2. Institutional Designation and Affirmation

contd.- screenshot

Federal Financial Responsibility Composite Score (FFRCS) or equivalent

Does the institution participate in Title IV?

- Yes
 No

Please provide the most recent financial responsibility composite score provided in writing by the U.S. Department of Education, either published online or provided in letter form to the institution by the responsible Department of Education official. If your institution does not have an FFRCS Score calculated by US-DOE, please contact us. Note: Public institutions leave this field blank, as they are presumed to be financially stable for the purpose of eligibility to participate in Massachusetts SARA.

FFRCS Score

Frcs Score Year

For institutions with a financial responsibility score between 1.0 and 1.49 only:

If you are entering multiple URLs, please separate the URLs with a semicolon (;)

1. A written explanation from institutional management as to why the institution's score is below 1.5 and the requirements imposed on the institution by the U.S. Department of Education for continued participation in Title IV.

URL OR

No supporting documents.

2. A written statement in the most recent fiscal year audited financial statement confirming that the institution is financially stable. The audited financial statement must show that the institution has adequate revenue to meet its financial obligations, including payment of unearned tuition.

URL OR

No supporting documents.

3. The institution's financial responsibility score for the five (5) most recently available years. If an official financial responsibility score has not been received from the U.S. Department of Education but is ascertainable from the institution's financial records, the institution should calculate the score independently and provide it to the DHE.

URL OR

No supporting documents.

4. A corrective action plan and timeline.

URL OR

No supporting documents.

MA SARA Initial & Renewal Applications

2. Institutional Designation and Affirmation contd.- FFRCS- text

Federal Financial Responsibility Composite Score (FFRCS) or equivalent

Does the institution participate in Title IV?

Yes

No

Please provide the most recent financial responsibility composite score provided in writing by the U.S. Department of Education, either published online or provided in letter form to the institution by the responsible Department of Education official. If your institution does not have an FFRCS Score calculated by US-DOE, please contact us. Note: Public institutions leave this field blank, as they are presumed to be financially stable for the purpose of eligibility to participate in Massachusetts SARA.

FFRCS Score

FRCS Score Year

MA SARA Initial & Renewal Applications

2. Institutional Designation and Affirmation contd- FRCS Between 1.0 and 1.49-text

For institutions with a financial responsibility score between 1.0 and 1.49 only:

1. A written explanation from institutional management as to why the institution's score is below 1.5 and the requirements imposed on the institution by the U.S. Department of Education for continued participation in Title IV.
2. A written statement in the most recent fiscal year audited financial statement confirming that the institutions is financially stable. The audited financial statement must show that the institution has adequate revenue to meet its financial obligations, including payment of unearned tuition.
3. The institution's financial responsibility score for the five (5) most recently available years. If an official financial responsibility score has not been received from the U.S. Department of Education but is ascertainable from the institution's financial records, the institution should calculate the score independently and provide it to the DHE.
4. A corrective action plan and timeline.

MA SARA Initial & Renewal Applications

3. Affirmations and Assurances- screenshot

Affirmations and Assurances

1. The institution has an appropriate student complaint resolution process, which meets the requirements set forth in 610 CMR 12.07

CEO or CAO initial here

2. The institution has an adequate disaster recovery plan, particularly with respect to the protection of student records and in the event of closure, will follow the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)'s Considerations When Closing an Institution of Higher Education or the best practices of its national accrediting agency for addressing catastrophic events

CEO or CAO initial here

3. The institution understands and accepts the scope of authorization provided under SARA according to the SARA Manual and the terms of said SARA Manual as adopted and periodically updated by NC-SARA to administer the voluntary regional approach to state oversight of distance education.

CEO or CAO initial here

4. The institution has reviewed and agrees to fully comply with the requirements and agreements set forth in 610 CMR 12.00 of the Massachusetts Code of Regulations.

CEO or CAO initial here

5. The institution accepts oversight from the Department of Higher Education (DHE) in all matters related to SARA.

CEO or CAO initial here

3. Affirmations and Assurances- text

Affirmation and Assurances

1. The institution has an appropriate student complaint resolution process, which meets the requirements set forth in 610 CMR 12.07

CEO or CAO initial here

3. Affirmations and Assurances- text

2. The institution has an adequate disaster recovery plan, particularly with respect to the protection of student records and in the event of closure, will follow the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)'s Considerations When Closing an Institution of Higher Education or the best practices of its national accrediting agency for addressing catastrophic events

CEO or CAO initial here

3. Affirmations and Assurances- text

3. The institution understands and accepts the scope of authorization provided under SARA according to the SARA Manual and the terms of said SARA Manual as adopted and periodically updated by NC-SARA to administer the voluntary regional approach to state oversight of distance education.

CEO or CAO initial here

3. Affirmations and Assurances- text

4. The institution has reviewed and agrees to fully comply with the requirements and agreements set forth in 610 CMR 12.00 of the Massachusetts Code of Regulations.

CEO or CAO initial here

3. Affirmations and Assurances- text

5. The institution accepts oversight from the Department of Higher Education (DHE) in all matters related to SARA.

CEO or CAO initial here

4. Institutional Eligibility- screenshot

4. Institutional Eligibility

Institutional Eligibility

1. Is the institution on probationary status or the equivalent with its institutional accrediting association?
 Yes No
2. Is the institution currently using a letter of credit or under a cash management agreement with the U.S. Department of Education?
 Yes No
3. Is the institution the subject of a publicly announced investigation by a government agency that is related to the institution's academic quality, financial stability or student consumer protection?
 Yes No
4. Is the institution the subject of a current investigation by an entity in the Commonwealth related to the institution's academic quality, financial stability or student consumer protection?
 Yes No

Note: If you have answered "Yes" to any of the above questions, please attach a written explanation:

No supporting documents.

4. Institutional Eligibility- text

Institutional Eligibility

1. Is the institution on probationary status or the equivalent with its institutional accrediting association?

Yes No

4. Institutional Eligibility- text

2. Is the institution currently using a letter of credit or under a cash management agreement with the U.S. Department of Education?

Yes No

4. Institutional Eligibility- text

3. Is the institution the subject of a publicly announced investigation by a government agency that is related to the institution's academic quality, financial stability or student consumer protection?

Yes No

4. Institutional Eligibility- text

3. Is the institution the subject of a publicly announced investigation by a government agency that is related to the institution's academic quality, financial stability or student consumer protection?

Yes No

4. Institutional Eligibility- text

4. Is the institution the subject of a current investigation by an entity in the Commonwealth related to the institution's academic quality, financial stability or student consumer protection?

Yes No

Note: If you have answered "Yes" to any of the above questions, please attach a written explanation:

5. Additional Documents- screenshot

1. Copy of the institution's student complaint procedure.

URL OR

No supporting documents.

2. Copy of the notice that will be sent to enrolling students regarding the institution's student complaint procedure in accordance with 610 CMR 12.03(1)(h). For renewing institutions, please also provide a redacted copy of a Student Complaint Notice sent to a student in the previous year.

URL OR

No supporting documents.

3. For institutions offering courses of programs that customarily lead to professional licensure (either via distance education instruction, or by placing students in out of state learning placements), the URL where the institution's general disclosures are posted, and copies of the direct disclosure templates that will be sent to inquiring/enrolling students as applicable, pursuant to 610 CMR 12.03(2). (Leave this field blank if the institution does not offer courses or programs that customarily lead to professional licensure, e.g., education and medical programs that require licensure post-graduation.) For renewing institutions, please also provide a redacted copy of a Direct Disclosure Notice sent to a student in the previous year.

URL OR

No supporting documents.

- A copy of the Student Complaint Notice Template.
- A redact copy of a Student Complaint Notice Sent to a student last year. Notice must provide indicators that it was sent to a student (e.g., email that provides time and date or screenshot from automated system of notice sent to mass email list)
- A copy direct disclosures templates for all programs that lead to professional licensure.
- A redact copy of a direct disclosure to a student last year. The direct disclosure must provide indicators that it was sent to a student (e.g., email that provides time and date or screenshot from automated system of notice sent to mass email list).
- Link to General Professional Licensure website(s).

5. Additional Documents- text

1. Copy of the institution's student complaint procedure.

URL

OR

5. Additional Documents- text

2. Copy of the notice that will be sent to enrolling students regarding the institution's student complaint procedure in accordance with 610 CMR 12.03(1) (h). For renewing institutions, please also provide a redacted copy of a Student Complaint Notice sent to a student in the previous year.

URL

OR

Special Notes:

A copy of the Student Complaint Notice Template.

A redact copy of a Student Complaint Notice Sent to a student last year. Notice must provide indicators that it was sent to a student (e.g., email that provides time and date or screenshot from automated system of notice sent to mass email list).

5. Additional Documents- text

3. For institutions offering courses of programs that customarily lead to professional licensure (either via distance education instruction, or by placing students in out of state learning placements), the URL where the institution's general disclosures are posted, and copies of the direct disclosure templates that will be sent to inquiring/enrolling students as applicable, pursuant to 610 CMR 12.03(2). (Leave this field blank if the institution does not offer courses or programs that customarily lead to professional licensure, e.g., education and medical programs that require licensure post-graduation.) For renewing institutions, please also provide a redacted copy of a Direct Disclosure Notice sent to a student in the previous year

URL

OR

Requested Documents:

A copy direct disclosures templates for all programs that lead to professional licensure.

A redact copy of a direct disclosure to a student last year. The direct disclosure must provide indicators that it was sent to a student (e.g., email that provides time and date or screenshot from automated system of notice sent to mass email list).

Link to General Professional Licensure website(s).

MA SARA Initial & Renewal Applications

5. Additional Documents contd.- screenshot

4. Copy of the institution's disaster recovery plan, which shall include the institution's procedures for safeguarding student records in the event of institutional closure.

URL OR

No supporting documents.

5. List of institution's academic offerings (programs of study/degree programs) that the institution intends to offer pursuant to SARA. (Please use the "List of Academic Offerings" template available at <https://www.mass.edu/foradmin/sara/faq-resources.asp>)

URL OR

No supporting documents.

6. Documentation of the institution's tuition refund policy.

URL OR

No supporting documents.

7. Documentation of the institution's FFRCS Score calculated within the past year, e.g. a copy of a letter from US-DOE or an online published score from US-DOE. Institutions that do not participate in federal Title IV financial aid programs, please attach the institution's most recent audited score.

URL OR

- Please use the List of Academic Offerings excel sheet template on the FAQ website.

- Title IV Institutions:
US DOE Composite Score Excel sheet.
Most recent letter from US DOE.

- Non-Title IV/Municipal Institutions :
Most recent independent financial audit.

5. Additional Documents contd.- text

4. Copy of the institution's disaster recovery plan, which shall include the institution's procedures for safeguarding student records in the event of institutional closure.

URL

OR

5. Additional Documents contd.- text

5. List of institution's academic offerings (programs of study/degree programs) that the institution intends to offer pursuant to SARA. (Please use the "List of Academic Offerings" template available at <https://www.mass.edu/foradmin/sara/faq-resources.asp>)

URL

OR

Special Note:

Please use the List of Academic Offerings excel sheet template on the FAQ website

5. Additional Documents contd.- text

6. Documentation of the institution's tuition refund policy.

URL

OR

5. Additional Documents contd.- text

7. Documentation of the institution's FFRCs Score calculated within the past year, e.g. a copy of a letter from US-DOE or an online published score from US-DOE. Institutions that do not participate in federal Title IV financial aid programs, please attach the institution's most recent audited score.

URL

OR

Acceptable Documentation:

- **Title IV Institutions:**

US DOE Composite Score Excel sheet.

Most recent letter from US DOE.

- **Non-Title IV/Municipal Institutions :**

Most recent independent financial audit.

6. Certification and Signature- screenshot

6. Certification and Signature

Certification and Signature

Electronic Signature of Institution's Principal SARA Contact (please upload an image file):

No supporting documents.

Date of Electronic Signature

mm/dd/yyyy

- ❖ Provide the signature of the individual listed as the SARA Primary Contact in section 2

6. Certification and Signature- text

6. Certification and Signature

Certification and Signature

Electronic Signature of Institution's Principal SARA Contact (please upload an image file):

No supporting documents.

Date of Electronic Signature

Special Note:

Provide the signature of the individual listed as the SARA Primary Contact in section 2.

MA SARA Initial & Renewal Applications

7. Payment- screenshot

Personal information

* Phone number

* Email address *

Financial information

* Payor first name (on card or account) *

* Payor last name (on card or account) *

* Paid address to payor address (i.e., the institution's address affiliated with the card or account) *

* Payor city *

* Payor state *

* Payor zip

PLEASE READ BEFORE CLICKING SUBMIT

PAYMENT: To prevent issues with payment submission, please be prepared to submit your payment within 15 minutes of clicking 'Submit Payment' below. If you are not prepared to provide all necessary payment information to submit your electronic payment, please click save and exit and return to this application tab when you have all necessary payment information and institutional approvals.

Submit Payment

- Private Institutions and State Universities directed to this payment page. SARA Billing Contact will submit payment, which will take them to nCourt to finalize payment. After payment has been finalized, they will be brought back to this page and, you click submit again.



If the system does not allow you to submit the application or continuously sends you to nCourt to submit another payment, log out of Edvera and email the DHE SARA Team immediately.

MA SARA Initial & Renewal Application

Payment- text

Personal information

*Phone number

* Email address

Financial information

*Payor first name (on card or account)

*Payor last name (on card or account)

*Paid address to payor address (i.e., the institution's address affiliated with the card or account)

*Payor city

*Payor state

*Payor zip

PLEASE READ BEFORE CLICKING SUBMIT PAYMENT: To prevent issues with payment submission, please be prepared to submit your payment within 15 minutes of clicking 'Submit Payment' below. If you are not prepared to provide all necessary payment information to submit your electronic payment, please click save and exit and return to this application tab when you have all necessary payment information and institutional approvals.

Submit Payment

Special Notes:

Private Institutions and State Universities directed to this payment page. SARA Billing Contact will submit payment, which will take them to nCourt to finalize payment. After payment has been finalized, they will be brought back to this page and, you click submit again. **If the system does not allow you to submit the application or continuously sends you to nCourt to submit another payment, log out of Edvera and email the DHE SARA Team immediately.**

Renewal Cycle - Timeline

Date	IHE Responsibilities	DHE Responsibilities
90 Days Before Expiration	Prepare renewal application and State Fee	Notify IHEs to submit renewal application and State Fee
60 Days Before Expiration	Submit renewal application and State Fee	Receive and review renewal application for completeness
30 Days Before Expiration	Provide resubmissions or clarifications if requested by DHE	Request resubmissions or clarifications, if needed
Expiration Date	If approved, pay NC-SARA Fee within 30 days	Submit approval to NC-SARA
30 Days After Expiration	Final deadline to pay NC-SARA Fee	DHE has no role in this part of the renewal cycle

Renewal Cycle - Documentation

- Documentation of student complaint notice distribution
- Documentation of professional licensure disclosure distribution, if applicable

Closing Comments

The applications are updated biannually after policy modifications. It is important to start a new application each year. It is also important to start and complete the SARA Renewal Application during the institution's renewal cycle.

Please inform the DHE SARA Team of any CEO, CAO, and/or SARA Contact updates.

Templates and examples will be provided to all webinar participants.

Templates & FAQs webpage: <https://www.mass.edu/foradmin/sara/faq-resources.asp#content>

DHE SARA Team:

Tiamekia Cezaire & Alex Nally
SARAINquiries@dhe.mass.edu

617-994-6910

Questions?