

State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) Update

Summary

SARA allows accredited degree-granting institutions to offer distance education in other member states without having to seek individual authorization from those states. This report provides an update on the status of SARA in Kansas and nationwide. (June 14, 2017)

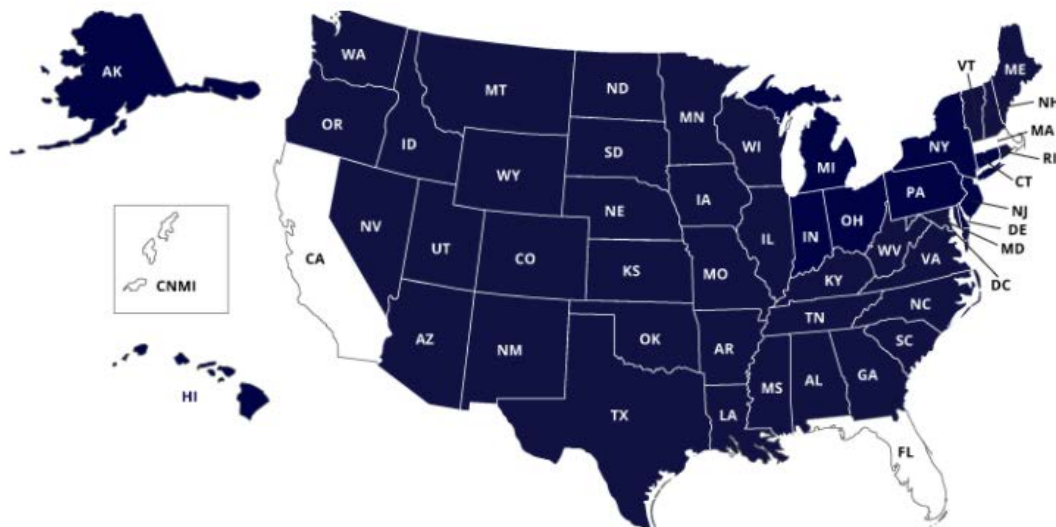
Background

The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) is a voluntary agreement among its member states and U.S. territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. It is intended to make it easier for students to take online courses offered by postsecondary institutions based in another state. Since 2014, Kansas has been approved as a member of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) through the Midwest Higher Education Compact (MHEC). The Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) serves as the State Portal Entity (SPE) for all institutions domiciled in Kansas, with staffing provided by the Academic Affairs Private Postsecondary Unit. As the portal agency for Kansas, KBOR serves as the interstate point of contact for SARA questions, complaints and other communications for institutions domiciled in Kansas and for students taking online courses from those institutions.

National Membership and Participation

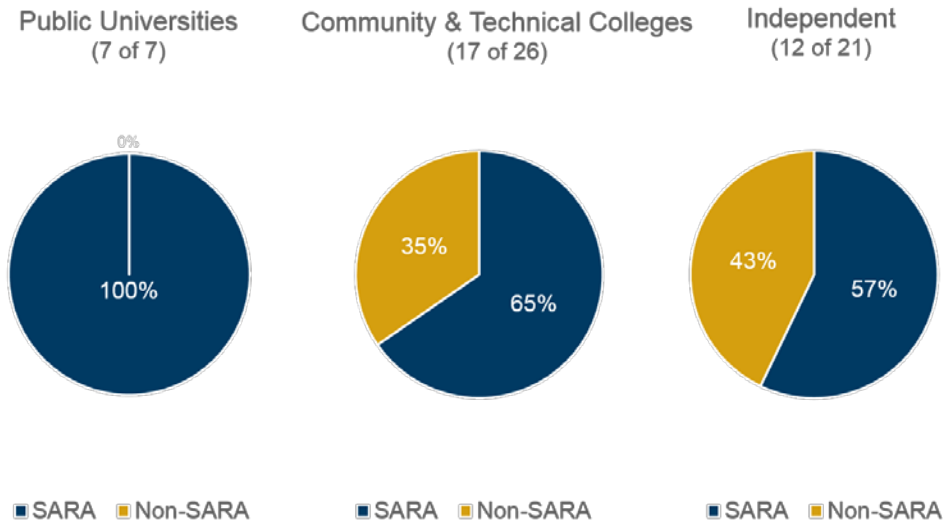
For a state to participate in SARA, its legislature must authorize it to join the Agreement. Legislative activities continue to increase the number of member states and allow more institutions to participate. Currently, there are over 1,500 participating institutions representing 47 member states (plus the District of Columbia). This is a nearly 50% increase in participating institutions from this time last year. Legislation has been introduced in both Florida and Massachusetts with plans being made to introduce legislation in California in 2018. Given this continued activity, we anticipate additional growth in the coming year.

As of June 1, 2017, 47 states (plus the District of Columbia) have joined SARA (darkened areas).



Participation in Kansas

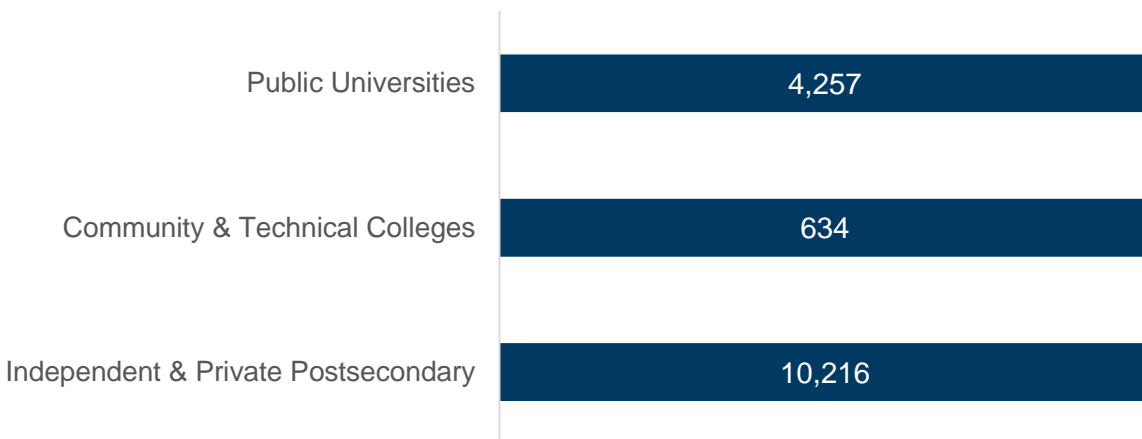
39 Kansas institutions are participating in SARA as of June 1, 2017. This represents a nearly 15% increase from this time last year and is the result of the approval of five additional community colleges. The charts below show participation by sector¹.



Enrollment Data

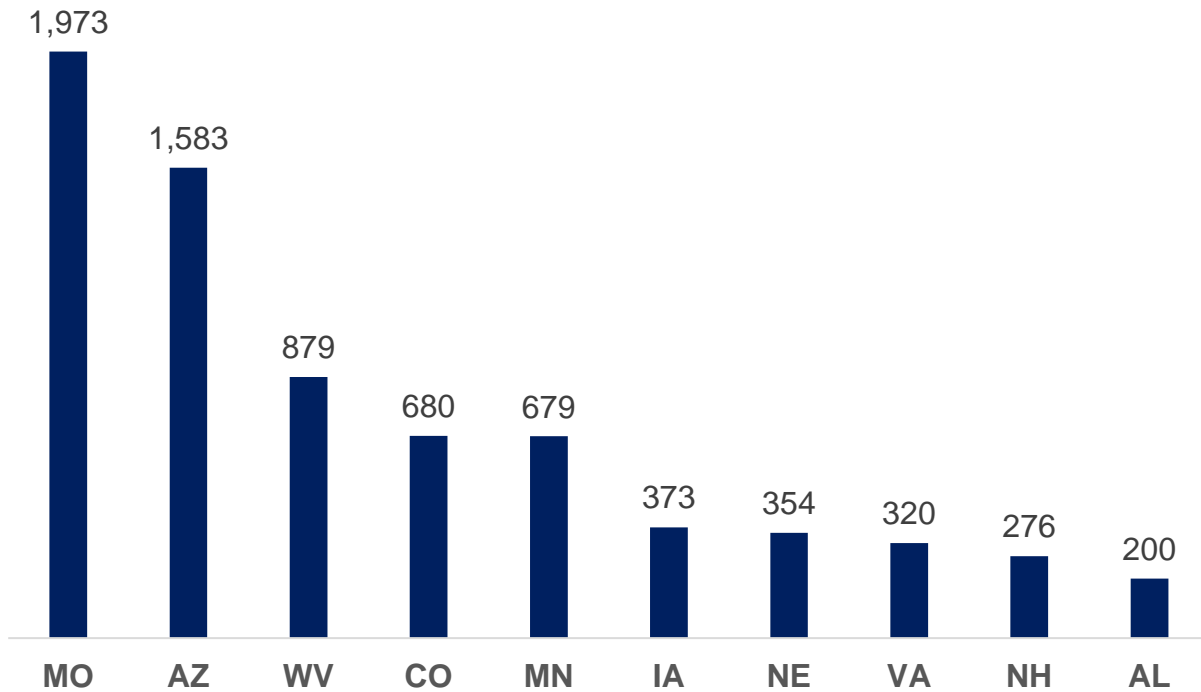
Participating SARA institutions agree to provide data representing their distance education enrollments to NC-SARA annually. In May 2016, the first reporting cycle was initiated and the compiled data was made available in September 2016.

In AY 2016, over 15,000 out-of-state students were enrolled in Kansas institutions approved to participate in SARA.



¹ Three participating institutions are private postsecondary and not reflected in the charts by sector.

In AY 2016, over 8,000 Kansans were enrolled in distance education courses and programs offered in another SARA member state. The top ten enrollments by state are listed below.



Annual Meeting

In July, staff will be attending MHEC's annual meeting of State Portal Entities. Topics of discussion will include a cost savings study, physical presence interpretations, and issues impacting institutional eligibility such as financial responsibility index scores for non-public institutions and accreditation status changes.

This and previous SARA reports are available at http://kansasregents.org/academic_affairs/sara.