

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.

March 1, 2022

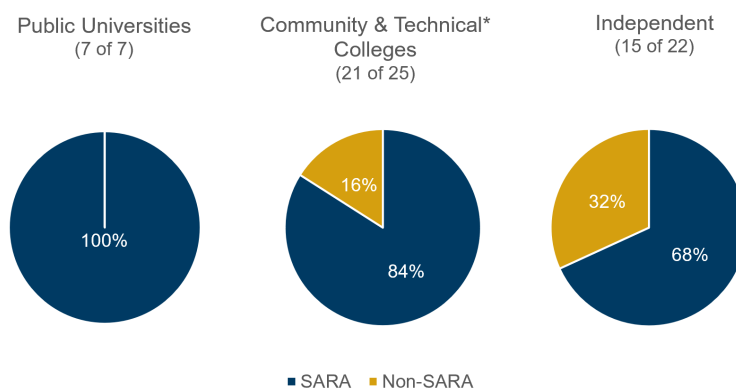
Background

The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) is a voluntary agreement among its member states and U.S. territories that establishes comparable national standards for the 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 serves as the State Portal Entity (SPE) for all institutions domiciled in Kansas. As the portal entity, KBOR serves as the interstate point of contact for SARA questions, complaints, and other communications for institutions domiciled in Kansas and students taking online courses from those institutions.

Membership and Participation

For a state to participate in SARA, its legislature must authorize it to join the Agreement. There are over 2,300 participating institutions representing 49 member states, two territories (Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands), and the District of Columbia. In the Fall of 2020, over 5.8 million students were enrolled exclusively in distance education. This is nearly double the enrollments from the previous year, which is due to the shift from in-person to online learning modalities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

45 Kansas institutions are participating in SARA as of February 15, 2022. The charts below illustrate participation by sector¹.

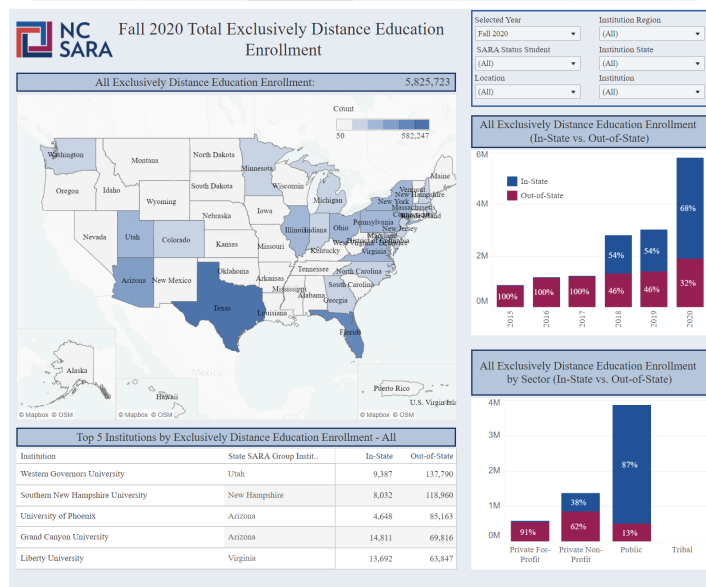


*Washburn University Institute of Technology participates under the approval of Washburn University and is not included in this count

¹ Two participating institutions are private/out-of-state postsecondary and not reflected in the charts by sector.

2021 Annual Data Report

Institutions participating in SARA agree to provide data representing their exclusively distance education enrollments and out-of-state learning placements (clinical rotations, student teaching, internships, etc.) to NC-SARA annually. In coordination with the 2021 Annual Data Report release, NC-SARA announced the availability of interactive data dashboards on their website. These dashboards allow individuals to review the national data and disaggregate the data by region, state, and institution.

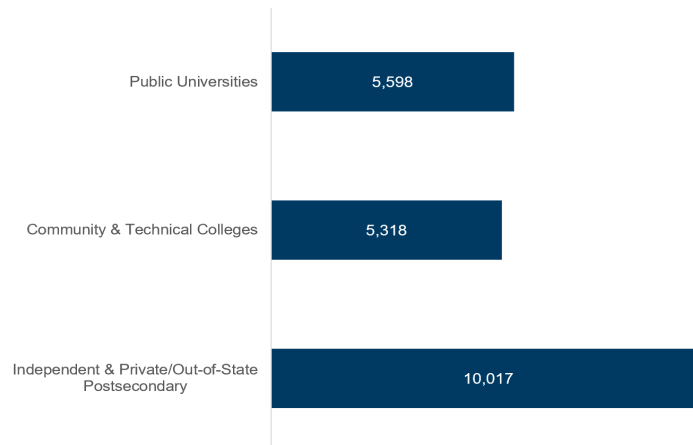


The interactive data dashboards are available at <https://nc-sara.org/data-dashboards>.

Enrollments and Out-of-State Learning Placements

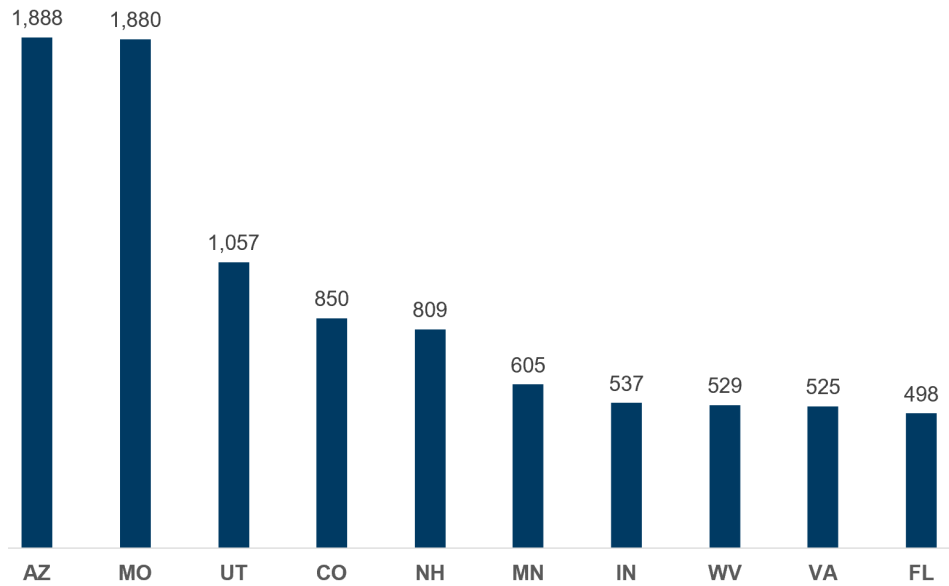
The Fall 2020 exclusively distance education enrollments and 2020 calendar year out-of-state learning placements for participating Kansas institutions are provided below.

In Fall 2020, over 20,000 out-of-state students were enrolled in participating Kansas SARA institutions.



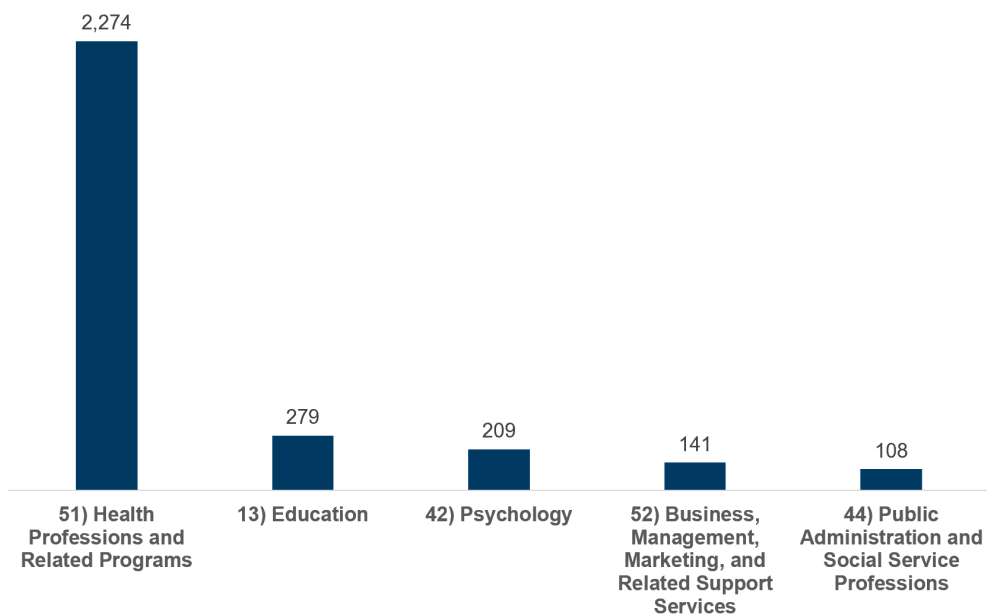
The top three locations where Kansas institutions are enrolling students are Missouri, Texas, and non-SARA member states and territories.

In Fall 2020, over 14,000 Kansans were enrolled in distance education offered in another SARA member state. The top ten enrollments by state are listed below.

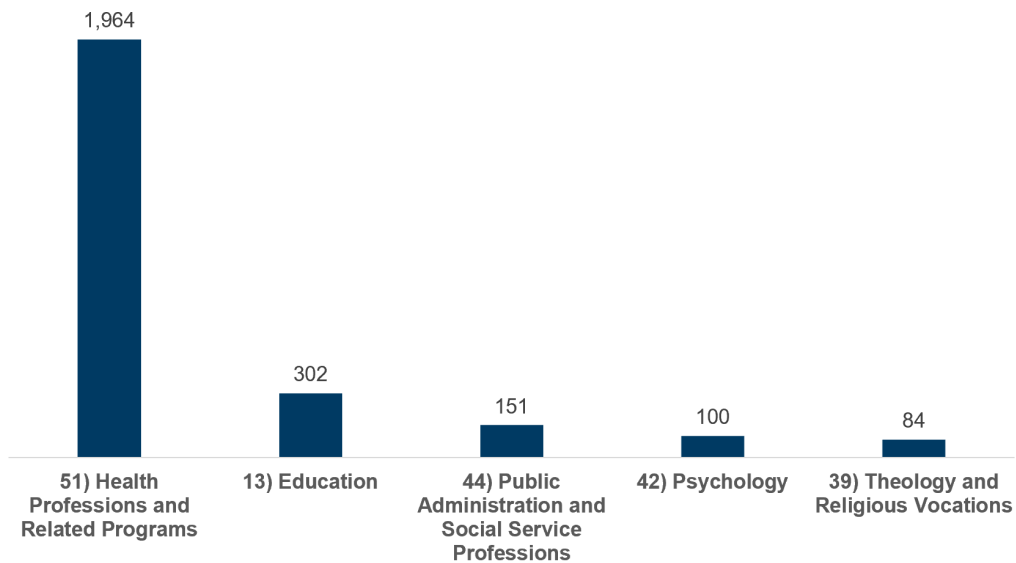


Western Governors University, Southern New Hampshire University, and Penn Foster College are the top three institutions enrolling Kansans.

In the 2020 calendar year, over 3,500 out-of-state students were placed in Kansas. The following represents placements in the top five CIP codes.



In the 2020 calendar year, Kansas institutions placed over 3,100 students out-of-state. The following represents placements in the top five CIP codes.



Cost Savings Study

To help quantify the value of SARA to institutions and member states, NC-SARA partnered with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to determine how much an institution saves by choosing to participate in SARA. This study, released in the spring of 2021, examined the cost for an institution to initially seek authorization in another state, as well as the cost to renew their authorization. The results of this study estimated that Kansas institutions participating in SARA saved over \$4.5 million in initial authorization costs and over \$1.5 million in renewal costs. These estimates likely understate the actual cost of seeking authorization in each state as the study only accounted for the direct authorization costs. It does not reflect the costs associated with the time it takes staff to determine the process and provide the required documentation to each state. The complete study is available to view online at <https://nc-sara.org/sara-cost-savings>.

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