

# New England State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement



The New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) enables the New England states and their higher education institutions to increase distance education opportunities for students with robust consumer-protection measures through a partnership among the four regional higher education compacts (including NEBHE) and a national council.

## The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) has been *the* catalyst for change in distance education.

In 2016, 5.8 million students enrolled in online courses, resulting in a 263% increase over the past 12 years. Today's students are unique: According to the Online Learning Consortium, 75% of undergraduates are age 25 or older and 85% of Americans enrolled in postsecondary institutions are non-traditional learners.

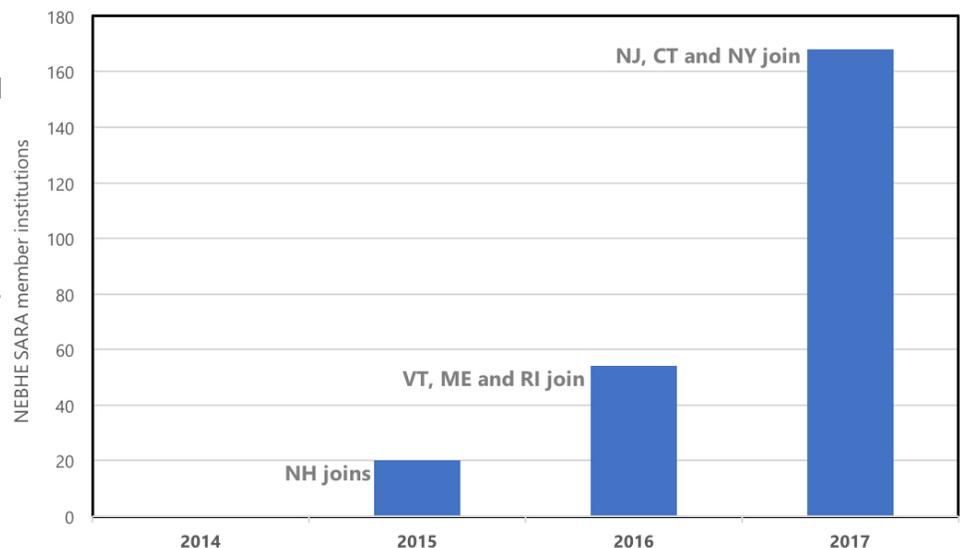
Prior to SARA, federal regulations required colleges and universities be authorized in every state to which they delivered online programs; this resulted in an inconsistent, complicated and expensive maze of regulatory processes and fees. (Imagine having to obtain a different driver's license for every state in the nation!) As enrollment in distance-education programs expanded, it was clear that a solution was needed.

In 2014, national leaders, regulators and higher education stakeholders developed a reciprocity framework that makes it possible for institutions to provide distance learning across state borders. with a single authorization obtained from the institution's home state. SARA essentially creates a single driver's license for participating states and approved institution members.

### What have the results of NEBHE's work—and that of its state, regional and national collaborators—been for the Northeast and the nation?

- As of July 1, 2017, 47 states and territories have joined SARA
- Nationally, over 1,500 institutions (131 regionally) have become members
- Continued streamlined complaint-reporting processes have ensured adherence to rigorous guidelines and transparency for students and parents
- Mandated Data Enrollment Reporting delivers on SARA's promise of transparency: Detailing distance education enrollment by institution and students' location

NEBHE SARA member state and institution growth by year



NEBHE continues to engage regional leaders in the assessment, development and implementation of sound education practices and policies of regional significance. **For more information, contact:**

**Sandra J. Doran, Esq.**  
Director, N-SARA  
617-533-9524  
sdoran@nebhe.org

**Rachael Stachowiak**  
Coordinator, N-SARA  
617-533-9503  
rstachowiak@nebhe.org