What is State Authorization?

State Authorization is a legal term that applies to a university’s compliance with the rules and regulations of each state in which it serves students. Each institution of higher education is individually required to seek authorization to provide online education to students who reside in states other than its home state as well as to allow its students to participate in out-of-state field experiences, such as internships and practicums.

**Important Note:** Programs that typically lead to licensure to practice in the field, such as nursing and education, may require additional approval from another state’s licensing agency before being permitted to provide online learning to that state’s residents or to send BU students to that state for field experiences.

What is SARA?

SARA stands for “State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement”. It is a voluntary agreement among member states and US territories that establishes national standards for offering online/distance education programs to students outside of the institution’s home state and for students to participate in out-of-state field experiences (e.g. internships, clinicals, practicum, student teaching). Put simply, SARA provides state authorization to multiple states by the institution being authorized in just one state, the institution’s home state.

Therefore, since BU is a SARA participant and is authorized in PA, it is also authorized in all other SARA-member states (all but CA), District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands.

SARA has no effect on state licensing laws and requirements. For jobs that require a license or certification, like being a nurse, teacher, social worker, or CPA, individuals are still subject to the unique licensing laws and requirements of the state where they intend to work professionally, which may be different from PA laws and may be different from what the BU program offers.

**PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION**

If I am a BU student or prospective student who would like to participate from or in a state other than PA, either in an online course or a field placement in a program leading to a license/certification (Education, Nursing, AuD, Athletic Training, MAcc, and others), what should I do?

Before starting such a program, we encourage you to:

1. Contact BU’s Institutional Compliance Program Coordinator (ICPC) to determine licensing requirements and to ensure the approval of the program in the state where you will be physically located at the time of instruction or field experience.
2. Contact the appropriate licensing board of the state where you will be physically located to confirm licensing laws and requirements in that state.
3. Contact the director of the BU program to review that state’s licensing requirements and to determine if the program fulfills those requirements.

Visit [http://intranet.bloomu.edu/state-authorization](http://intranet.bloomu.edu/state-authorization) for ICPC and professional licensing board contact information.
Does SARA mean that Bloomsburg University doesn’t have to worry about State Authorization anymore?

SARA streamlines the authorization process for many programs. Students in programs not leading toward a license or certification may participate from and in all SARA-member states/territories. However, SARA doesn’t cover all activities outside of PA.

- BU is still required to comply with each state’s professional licensing board requirements.
- The National Council of SARA (NC-SARA) has its own policies that BU agreed to follow, such as the “rule of 10”, which refers to a limit on the number of students placed in out-of-state field experiences (up to 10 students per site per program at one time).
- BU’s Institutional Compliance Program Coordinator (ICPC) is charged with maintaining SARA renewal annually, as well as submitting annual data reports on student out-of-state physical locations for both distance education and field experiences. (Student ID is protected in accordance with FERPA.)

What if I am a BU student in a field experience or an online program leading to licensure and I’m planning on moving to another state?

State Authorization for SARA purposes refers to where you are physically located during your instruction or field experience, which may or may not be the location (US state or territory) of your legal residence.

Relocation may impact your plan of study, progression in the program, and the ability to secure appropriate clinical placements, internships, or other types of field experiences. If you relocate to a state or country where BU is not permitted to offer your program, we cannot guarantee your ability to continue in the program.

You are encouraged to contact BU’s Institutional Compliance Program Coordinator at least one term (15 weeks) in advance of your intended move to enable collaboration with your program director and academic advisor to make every effort to accommodate your relocation.

How can I find the most current info on BU’s State Authorization status?

BU State Authorization: http://intranet.bloomu.edu/state-authorization

BU Distance Education: http://intranet.bloomu.edu/distance-education

NC-SARA website: http://www.nc-sara.org

Need answers to other State Authorization questions? Contact Bloomsburg University’s Institutional Compliance Program Coordinator, Jessica Heid, at 570-389-3862 or jheid@bloomu.edu.