

Montana University System  
State Authorization Update  
September 5, 2014

In August of 2014, Montana was approved as a State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) state by the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements. At this time, there are nine SARA states (Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Washington). The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) is recognized as the “portal” agency for the state of Montana.

To date, the following Montana institutions have applied for SARA and have been approved through OCHE:

- University of Montana-Missoula
- Montana State University-Bozeman
- Montana Tech of the University of Montana
- Montana State University Billings
- Miles Community College

Currently, four of these five institutions have paid SARA fees and are officially recognized as SARA institutional participants; Miles Community College is working through the process at this time.

To date, three institutions from other states are authorized to offer programs in Montana via SARA (two from Indiana and one from Colorado). Note: SARA membership does not preclude the authorization of non-SARA institutions. Rather, authorization is granted on a case-by-case basis by verifying that the institution meets the current regulations.

Per the current in-state funding model, OCHE is not charging Montana institutions to participate in SARA. Although, institutions are required to pay an annual participation fee directly to SARA. These fees are on a sliding scale per FTE as follows:

- <2500 pay \$2000
- 2500-9999 pay \$4000
- >10,000 pay \$6000

Since few states are SARA members at this time, it will be at least one year before cost savings and process efficiencies are fully realized.