

State & International Authorization Processes and Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

State authorization refers to the legal requirements governing an institution's ability to offer postsecondary education to students located outside its home state. Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) complies with all applicable state and federal regulations related to distance education.

ECSU participates in the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA), which establishes national standards for interstate offering of distance education courses and programs.

State Authorization and NC-SARA Participation

Through participation in NC-SARA, ECSU is authorized to offer distance education courses and programs to students located in other SARA member states, subject to applicable policies and limitations.

- Most U.S. states and territories participate in NC-SARA
- California is not a SARA member; however, ECSU, as a public institution, may enroll students residing in California in accordance with state regulations
- For non-SARA locations, ECSU evaluates authorization requirements on a case-by-case basis

Federal Regulatory Compliance

ECSU complies with federal regulations governing distance education, including:

- **34 CFR §600.9(c)** – State Authorization
- **34 CFR §668.43(a)(5)(v)** – Professional Licensure Disclosures

These regulations require institutions to:

- Maintain appropriate authorization where students are located
- Provide public and direct disclosures regarding professional licensure
- Maintain a student complaint resolution process

Out-of-State Learning Placements

Educational activities such as internships, clinical placements, practicums, and student teaching fall under state authorization requirements.

Under NC-SARA:

- ECSU may place students in other SARA states without seeking additional authorization
- No more than 10 students per program may be placed simultaneously at a single site
- Exceeding this threshold may require additional authorization

Programs must coordinate all out-of-state placements with the Office of Distance Education.

Professional Licensure Disclosures

Some ECSU programs are designed to prepare students for professional licensure or certification in North Carolina.

- Licensure requirements vary by state
- Completion of a program does not guarantee eligibility for licensure outside North Carolina

ECSU provides:

- **Public disclosures** on program webpages
- **Direct disclosures** to students when:
 - A program does not meet state requirements, or
 - A determination has not been made

Direct disclosures are provided:

- Prior to enrollment, or
- Within 14 calendar days of determining the student's location

Students are responsible for verifying licensure requirements in their state.

International Distance Education

ECSU evaluates international online enrollments on a case-by-case basis.

- Regulations vary significantly by country
- ECSU does not guarantee:
 - Degree recognition
 - Licensure eligibility outside the United States

Before enrolling international students, ECSU may:

- Consult the country's Ministry of Education
- Evaluate legal and regulatory requirements
- Review U.S. sanctions and restrictions

ECSU reserves the right to deny enrollment in locations where compliance cannot be ensured.

Student Location Review

The Office of Distance Education works with Admissions to verify student location prior to each academic term.

If required, students will receive disclosures related to:

- State authorization
- Professional licensure

Reporting Requirements

ECSU submits annual NC-SARA reports, including:

- Number of distance education students
- Out-of-state learning placements

Programs must report placement data to the Office of Distance Education.

Student Complaint Process

Students enrolled in distance education courses must follow this process:

1. **Institutional Process**
Submit complaint through ECSU's grievance procedures
2. **North Carolina SARA Portal Agency**
If unresolved
3. **Student's Home State SARA Portal Agency** (if applicable)

Contact Information

Office of Distance Education
Elizabeth City State University
Email: stateauthorization@ecsu.edu