

Colleges Comply with and Avoid State Authorization Regulations
*Colleges increasingly comply with state authorization regulations for distance education;
often by not enrolling students from a state.*

**Results of "What are Colleges Doing (or Not Doing) About State Authorization" Survey
Conducted by UPCEA, WCET, and M-SARA
May 2014**

When enrolling students at a distance in other states, colleges increasingly choose to comply with state laws or to not enroll students from certain states. [Recent survey results](#) show that the number of colleges in full compliance with "state authorization" regulations rose from 5% in 2011 to 25% this year.

"While there is still much room for growth, in terms of compliance, the trend is definitely in the right direction," said Russ Poulin, interim co-executive director of the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET). "We are pleased to see more colleges following these regulations designed to protect consumers."

Conducted by a partnership of the University Continuing Professional & Continuing Education Association (UPCEA), the Midwestern State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (M-SARA), and WCET, the survey measures colleges progress in obtaining authorization in other states. In its third administration, the previous surveys were conducted in 2011 and 2013.

"The 498 respondents is a new record for this survey," said Jim Fong, director of the UPCEA Center for Research and Consulting. "The growing participation shows tremendous interest in the topic."

Institutions increasingly in compliance

"In the 2011 survey, only one-third of respondents had applied to a state," said Jenny Parks, director of M-SARA. "Now two-thirds of responding colleges with distance education programs are actively seeking to comply with these regulations."

That leaves one-third of responding colleges that have yet to apply to a single state. Some of those colleges are researching the regulatory requirements and some are in conversation with states, but have not applied. Only three percent have done nothing.

The top reasons given for not having applied to a state include: the costs are too high, they are waiting on the emerging State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement, the institution is collecting information, and the college is waiting for more clarification on regulations. Part of the need for "clarification" is the new reciprocity agreement, federal regulations that are currently being negotiated, and the differences in laws among the states.

PRESS RELEASE
EMBARGOED until 1:00 AM Eastern Time on Friday May 16

Colleges denying admissions in selected states

About three-quarters (72%) of respondents decided not to admit students in some states.

"If the cost to apply is too high or the application process too difficult for the number of students that the college plans to enroll in a state, it is an understandable business decision not to enroll students in that state," said Poulin.

The following table shows the top five states in which colleges decided to no longer enroll students in the 2013 and 2014 survey. The percentage is of all those colleges that decided not to enroll students in at least one state. Both the raw numbers and percentages grew significantly in one year.

State	2013		2014		Increase
Arkansas	37	30.3%	98	50.8%	61
Minnesota	46	37.7%	92	47.7%	46
Massachusetts	40	32.8%	77	39.9%	37
Alabama	29	23.8%	69	35.8%	40
Maryland	30	24.6%	63	32.6%	33
Total	122		193		

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