Published on *University of Colorado* (https://www.cu.edu)

July 2021 State Authorization Updates & Information [1]

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Not going to lie, I honestly thought it was May...

Hi everyone & happy July! It's summer! Not much going on in higher ed, right? Ha!

A few quick things:

- The regulations from the VA known as **Isakson & Roe** go into effect on 8/1/21. As a reminder, this impacts those working in state authorization, as it requires institutions to provide VA-funded students enrolled in professional licensure programs with information regarding "any additional requirements, including training, experience, or examinations, required to obtain the license, certification, or approval for which the course of education is designed to provide preparation." This is in addition to the requirements from ED and NC-SARA. While some organizations are trying to get Congress to back off on this, it goes into effect in 12 days (unless your university has obtained the one-year waiver, though I haven't heard if any of us have). Congress rarely moves that fast, so let's not get our hopes up. Please don't leave the folks in your VMA offices on the hook for this when you hold the keys to this information—contact them and, at the very least, provide the list of programs that fall into this category along with the contact information for all relevant state licensing agencies.
- Since the ED acknowledged that the concept of "Regional Accreditation" was invented and maintained by the "regional" accreditors (who subsequently rebranded as "institutional accreditors"), there's been a noticeable increase in their interest in state authorization. While states still regulate and review this (via NC-SARA and the State Portal Entities), don't be surprised if your ALO starts asking questions about your university's compliance with SARA and other state regulations regarding the delivery of education. Speaking of…
- My social media has seen a WILD uptick in ads from CU Online. Which is great (A+ on the marketing), and increased enrollment is a good thing. BUT this also means increased scrutiny on compliance with SARA, state authorization federal regulations, distance education definitions (including compliance with regular and substantive interaction requirements), tracking and assessment, C-RAC Guidelines compliance, and your institution's messaging regarding SARA compliance/participation, student complaints, and professional licensure programs. If you and your colleagues would like to review your compliance or progress, please let me know. I'm happy to assess things so far and help map out a plan to gather/maintain/document your compliance (the attached document is a great place to start).
- Lastly, something to think about for the future: For the first time, I heard **Coursera** mentioned by name today by folks at NC-SARA in the context of state authorization. After some side conversations with colleagues at other institutions, there seems to be a

general consensus that this could be one of the next areas where state authorization becomes relevant. As universities do more through Coursera, regardless of whether the courses are for credit or lead to a degree or certification (we're still accepting money for the courses and delivering education across state lines, which checks off one or two SARA requirements), it would be wise to look at how your university contacts or interacts with students using Coursera to access education. Consider how you might incorporate your state authorization messaging there. As mentioned earlier, we can always regroup on best practices for this and work on integrating it into your overall state authorization/compliance program.

Have a wonderful rest of the week and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out!

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