



## **State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement - SARA**

Mercy University is a member of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) and follows the complaint resolution policies and procedures outlined within the [SARA Policy Manual](https://nc-sara.org/sara-student-complaints-0/) and summarized here: <https://nc-sara.org/sara-student-complaints-0/>

SARA consumer protection provisions require the institution's home state, through its SARA State Portal Entity, to investigate and resolve allegations of dishonest or fraudulent activity by the state's SARA-participating institutions, including the provision of false or misleading information.

Student complaints relating to consumer protection laws offered under the terms and conditions of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) must first be filed with the institution to seek resolution. This means that for students residing outside New York who are enrolled in Mercy University distance education programs, consumer protection complaints are addressed through New York State (the University's home state) rather than through the student's own state of residence.

### **Procedure for Filing Complaints (for Students Residing Outside NY)**

Mercy University is committed to investigating consumer protection concerns raised by students in distance learning courses and/or programs taken outside of New York State, including but not limited to truthfulness in advertising and accuracy of data related to course offerings, job placements, tuition, fees, and financial aid.

Consumer protection complaints resulting from distance education courses, activities, and operations may be submitted to Mercy University via the following complaint form for investigation and resolution <https://www.mercy.edu/about/mercy-college-policies/student-complaint-form>

Student complaints will be submitted to the Office of the Provost and examined objectively and thoroughly. The Provost will convene an ad hoc committee to evaluate the merit of the complaint and make any appropriate recommendation(s) for resolution and/or redress to the Provost. The Provost will make a final determination and communicate to the student the institution's official response to the complaint as well as any warranted redress.

### **NC-SARA Complaint Process**

The complaint process should begin with the institution and if a complaint is not resolved, it may be appealed to the New York State SARA Portal Entity.

If needed, the first step to filing a complaint is submitting the Mercy University Student Complaint Form online at: <https://www.mercy.edu/student-complaint-form>.

If students at Mercy University are not satisfied with the outcome of the institution's complaint resolution process in connection with a SARA matter, they should contact the New York State



Education Department at the following webpage <https://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/sara-student-complaint-process> in accordance with [NC-SARA complaint procedures](#).

The NC-SARA student complaint process can be found on their website at <https://nc-sara.org/sara-student-complaints-0/>.

Please note, this does not include complaints related to grades or student conduct violations, both of which are to be fully addressed via Mercy University processes, not through the NC-SARA complaint resolution procedures.

Please be aware that students may appeal the institution decision to the SARA State Portal Entity in New York State within two years of the incident about which the complaint is made.

### **NC-SARA Licensure Notifications**

Any institution operating under SARA policies that offers courses or programs potentially leading to professional licensure must keep all students, applicants and potential students who have contacted the institution about the course or program informed as to whether successful completion of such offerings will meet state licensing requirements.

### **Professional Licensure: What You Need to Know**

#### **What Is Professional Licensure?**

Some careers—such as teaching, nursing, psychology, social work, or engineering—require official licensure before you can work in the field. Students often pursue college degrees to prepare for these licensed professions, which are overseen by state or governmental agencies. These agencies set professional standards and grant authorization to practice only to those who meet the established requirements. This process, known as professional licensure, helps ensure that individuals entering these professions are well-trained and capable of providing safe and competent services.

#### **Check Before You Enroll**

If you're taking an online or distance education program to prepare for a licensed career, ensure that the program meets the requirements in the state where you plan to work. Schools that participate in SARA or federal financial aid programs must tell you if their programs meet those requirements.

#### **SARA's Role**

SARA doesn't approve programs for state licensing boards. Instead, it requires schools to clearly tell students whether a program will or will not meet licensure requirements where the student lives.

Any school operating under SARA policies must keep students, applicants, and prospective students informed if completing a program will meet state licensing requirements.

#### **Helpful Resource: NC-SARA Licensure Directory**



NC-SARA offers a directory with contact info for licensing boards in these five high-enrollment fields (<https://nc-sara.org/professional-licensure-directory>):

- Counseling
- Nursing
- Psychology
- Social Work
- Teacher Education

These links provide contact information which can be used by individuals on an as needed basis.