

## **State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) and Student Complaint Procedures for Online Courses**

Massachusetts became a member of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) in June 2018. In March 2021, NEC was approved – through the Department of Higher Education (DHE), the SARA State Portal Entity of Massachusetts – to participate in Massachusetts SARA, which would allow NEC to offer distance education in other SARA member states and territories.

NEC students enrolled in online courses or programs may submit a complaint regarding such course or program to the Dean of Students using the [Student Complaint Form for Online Classes](#).

NEC will follow its established and published procedures in addressing any such complaint. These procedures are available in the Academic Catalog (beginning on page 36) at the following link: [Grievance Policy](#).

### **For Massachusetts Residents and Online Students in Non-SARA Member States and Territories**

At any time, Massachusetts residents or students located in non-SARA states and territories with unresolved complaints or concerns may file a consumer complaint with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) by using the [consumer complaint form](#). The DHE [consumer complaint form](#) should be used by students who are located in:

- Massachusetts
- Non-SARA Member States or Territories (e.g., California, Guam, etc.)

### **For Online Students Located in SARA Member States and Territories**

After you have exhausted the complaint procedures made available by NEC, located [here](#), if your complaint has not been resolved, you may file a complaint with the DHE by using the [SARA complaint form](#). The DHE [SARA complaint form](#) should be used by students who are located in [SARA member states and territories](#). This includes all students who are located in SARA member states and territories for the purposes of completing out-of-state learning placements, such as internships, practica, clinical experiences, etc. in SARA member states and territories outside Massachusetts.

Additional information from the DHE's [SARA complaint website](#) is below:

The SARA complaint process is as follows:

1. Students must first attempt to resolve their complaint using internal administrative procedures offered by the SARA institution.
2. After all administrative remedies have been exhausted with the MA-SARA institution, the student may submit a SARA Complaint via the URL below.

3. The Department shall send a copy of the complaint to the institution that is the subject of the complaint;
4. Within 30 days of the date that the Department sends a copy of the complaint to the institution, the institution must provide a written response to the student and the Department.

More information about DHE's complaint processes can be found [here](#).

Contact information for the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education:

Massachusetts State Portal Entity Contact

Alexander A. Nally

Assistant General Counsel

(617) 994-6910

[SARAINquiries@dhe.mass.edu](mailto:SARAINquiries@dhe.mass.edu)

State SARA Website

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

One Ashburton Pl, Rm 1401, Boston, MA 02108

New England Conservatory will not retaliate in any way against an individual who reports a perceived violation of NEC policy or local, state, or federal law. If a student believes they have been the target of prohibited retaliation, they should immediately contact the Dean of Students. Any person found to have engaged in prohibited retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

290 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA, 02115

Office of Student Services (617) 585-1310