

**DEGREE & CERTIFICATE-GRANTING ONLINE DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS**  
**TRADITIONAL COURSES, AND ON-GROUND OR FIELD EXPERIENCES**  
**TAKEN OUTSIDE THE STATE OF MICHIGAN**

**STATE AUTHORIZATION**

As an institution that participates in federal financial aid programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, Michigan State University is required to comply with recently published regulations regarding distance education. On December 19, 2016, the U.S. Department of Education published regulations, with an effective date of July 1, 2018, clarifying the state authorization requirements an institution must follow and added sections on required institutional disclosures for distance education and correspondence courses. The regulations require institutions of higher education to obtain approval from the states in which they provide postsecondary education programs. The regulations allow authorization to come directly from a state or through a “state authorization reciprocity agreement.”

MSU participates in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), which is an agreement among states that establishes national standards for the interstate offering of postsecondary distance-education courses and programs. Through SARA, MSU may provide distance education to residents of any other SARA member state without seeking authorization from each SARA member state. All states other than California and Massachusetts participate in SARA, and MSU has received approval or exemptions from those two states. Courses and programs incorporating a “supervised field experience” are considered distance education. Under SARA a “supervised field experience” means a student learning experience under the oversight of a supervisor, mentor, faculty member or other qualified professional, located in the host state, who has a direct or indirect reporting responsibility to the institution where the student is enrolled, whether or not credit is granted. Examples include practica, student teaching or internships.

At MSU, departments and colleges may propose new or updated programs for academic governance review at any time during the academic year. To remain a vital institution, the curriculum must change. Sometimes only a program’s delivery method changes. In any case, if the program is online, hybrid, or includes physical presence in another state, then state authorization regulations need to be considered in order for the program to be offered. To review MSU’s program integrity status, please visit:  
<https://esp.msu.edu/ProgramIntegrityComplianceOverview.pdf>

## COLLEGE AND DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

### ➤ University Curriculum and Catalog

Colleges and units will be prompted by University Curriculum and Catalog every semester and summer session to review the [Online and Off-Campus Programs](#) site to ensure their online programs have the correct program description, delivery method and other pertinent information listed.

#### How to Proceed:

- Per usual practice, all curricular requests are sent via the [RO Online Forms Menu](#).
- Required changes in the Online and Off-Campus Programs site can be sent directly to:

#### **Joy Speas**

##### **University Curriculum Administrator**

Office of the Registrar

Office: 355-8420 | Email: [jlspeas@msu.edu](mailto:jlspeas@msu.edu)

[Academic Program Cycle](#)

### ➤ State Authorization

Questions regarding State Authorization:

#### **Sandra Snyder-Townsend**

##### **State Authorization Distance Education Coordinator**

Office of the Registrar

Office: 353-4550 | Email: [townse45@msu.edu](mailto:townse45@msu.edu)

[State Authorization Website](#)

### ➤ Required Student Notification - Professional Licensure or Certification

**Applicants or students** enrolling in any online distance education course or program shall be notified if graduates of the program in which they are enrolling qualify to sit for any licensure, licensure exam, third party certification, third party certification exam, or similar credential related to the program's field of study. Notification shall be given regardless of whether or not the license, certification, or other credential is required for entry into the student's chosen field of study or occupation.

#### Required Student Notification

Colleges/Departments that offer online distance education courses or programs that potentially leading to professional licensure or certification must keep all students, applicants and potential students who have contacted them about the course or program informed as to whether such offerings actually meet state licensing or certification requirements. This must be done in one of two ways:

- a. The College/Department may determine whether the course or program meets the requirements for professional licensure or certification in the state where the applicant or student resides and **provide that information in writing to the student**; or
- b. The College/Department may **notify the applicant or student in writing** that MSU has not made a determination of whether the course or program meets requirements for professional licensure or certification in the student's state, provide the student with:
  - current contact information for any applicable licensing boards; and
  - advise the student to determine whether the program meets requirements for licensure or certification in the state where the student lives.

***The written notification shall be signed or otherwise acknowledge by the student and maintained on file.***

## ➤ Suggested Text for Websites, Brochures, Student Handbooks and Other Program Materials

If a College/Department is planning to offer an online degree program, an online graduate certificate program, or a program that requires physical presence in a state for which Michigan State University is not seeking authorization, then explanatory text should be included on program websites and in brochures and student handbooks. Below is the currently recommended text to be included:

*Michigan State University will not be offering certain online programs to students based on their state residency at the time of application for admission to Michigan State University - see State-By-State Summary <https://esp.msu.edu/StateSummary.pdf>*

## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION and COLLEGE OF NURSING

### ➤ Required Disclaimers – Alabama and Kentucky

Approval to offer online distance education programs to **Alabama** or **Kentucky** students is contingent upon the inclusion of the following statements appearing in all Michigan State University catalogs, enrollment and marketing materials:

#### Alabama – Nursing

*State approval of a program to offer Alabama licensed nurses' opportunities for advanced degrees does not indicate eligibility for approval to practice as an advanced practice nurse in Alabama. Applicants for approval in Alabama are required to meet the Alabama requirements for national certification, graduation from a specific-type program for the advanced practice approval, and completion of the appropriate application. Any program offering a pre-licensure track to Alabama students shall meet the requirements of the Alabama regulations for pre-licensure programs or the graduates may not be eligible to take the national licensure examination required by the Alabama Board of Nursing to enter the practice. [www.abn.alabama.gov](http://www.abn.alabama.gov)*

#### Alabama – Teacher Education

*State authorization to provide a program related to the preparation of teachers or other P-12 school/system personnel does not indicate eligibility for an Alabama certificate. Applicants for an Alabama certificate based on reciprocity must meet Alabama's test requirements and submit a valid, renewable professional educator certificate/license issued by another state at the degree level, grade level, and in the teaching field or area of instructional support for which an Alabama certificate is sought and for which Alabama issues a certificate. Applicants for Alabama certification in an area of administration must also document at least three years of full-time employment as an administrator in a P-12 school system(s) [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu).*

#### Kentucky – Teacher Education

*The following programs offered by Michigan State University's **College of Education** are not accredited by the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board and are not recognized for initial, additional, or renewal of certification or salary enhancement (rank change) for K-12 educators in Kentucky:*

- Educational Technology-Master of Arts
- Educational Technology-Graduate Certificate