

November 19-20, 2020

ITEM 191-101-R1120

Request for Authorization to Revise BOR Policy 221 – Authorization to Operate Postsecondary Institution in the State of Montana; OCHE/MUS

THAT

The Montana Board of Regents adopts the recommended revisions to Board of Regents' Policy 221.

EXPLANATION

The Montana Board of Regents is the authorizing body for postsecondary institutions wishing to issue degrees to Montana residents. This important quality assurance role is meant to ensure that institutions operating in Montana have adequate academic and financial integrity to serve students. Authorization by the board is also a prerequisite for institutions who wish to operate in Montana and grant Title IV federal aid to their students.

The proposed revisions, as included in the attached document, would revise the state authorization policy to:

1. **Clarify route for student state authorization appeals:** US Department of Education policy requires each state maintain a process for students to bring forward and have reviewed program integrity complaints related to authorized institutions. Current policy is unclear for non-MUS institutions, including Montana's community colleges, where such complaints can be directed.
2. **Establish institutional appeals process for NC-SARA participation:** The National Council of State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) oversees a reciprocity agreement covering 49 states. Montana's participation in NC-SARA enables Montana-based institutions to gain authorization in NC-SARA member states without approaching each state individually. OCHE reviews and approves Montana institution's participation in this reciprocity agreement according to NC-SARA guidelines. New NC-SARA guidelines require states establish an appeals process for institutions denied membership. The policy revisions establish such a process for Montana.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment #1 – Proposed Revisions to BOR Policy 221

Attachment #2 – Notification of Montana Postsecondary Educational Institution Program Integrity Complaint Process