

### 3.1.a

#### Degree-granting Authority

An institution seeking to gain or maintain accredited status:

- a. has degree-granting authority from the appropriate government agency or agencies.

#### Judgment

Compliant  Non-Compliant  Not Applicable

#### Narrative

The University of South Carolina Columbia demonstrates compliance as an accredited institution by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and has degree-granting authority from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SC CHE) and South Carolina Code of Laws.

#### Historical Context of the University of South Carolina Columbia

The Palmetto State established South Carolina College — the precursor to the University of South Carolina — on Dec. 19, 1801, as part of an effort to unite South Carolinians in the wake of the American Revolution. South Carolina's leaders saw the new college as a way to promote "the good order and harmony" of the state. Carolina went through several reorganizations in which the curriculum frequently changed and its status shifted from college to university and back again. In 1906, the institution was rechartered for the final time as the University of South Carolina. In the early decades of the 20th century, Carolina made strides toward becoming a comprehensive university, and in 1917 it became the first state-supported college or university in South Carolina to earn regional accreditation. In the 1980s and 1990s, the university continued to develop its resources to better serve the Palmetto State. A concerted drive to achieve national recognition brought Carolina into the 21st century. In 2001, the University of South Carolina celebrated a legacy of 200 years of educating leaders for the future of South Carolina, the nation and the world.

#### Degree-granting authority in the state of South Carolina

The University of South Carolina Columbia is the flagship campus in the University of South Carolina (USC) system, which includes the research university in Columbia, three comprehensive universities (Aiken, Beaufort, and Upstate; each separately accredited by SACSCOC) and four regional Palmetto College campuses (Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter and Union, each branch campuses of the University of South Carolina and accredited with the University of South Carolina Columbia). The South Carolina State Code of Law, [SECTION 59-101-10 Designation of State Colleges and Universities](#) lists the University of South Carolina Columbia as a state public university within the state of South Carolina: "There are universities and colleges as follows: one located in the City of Columbia, styled the University of South Carolina; another in or near the Town of Orangeburg, styled South Carolina State University; Clemson University; Winthrop University; another styled The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina; the College of Charleston; another in or near the Town of Greenwood, styled Lander University; another in or near the City of Florence, styled Francis Marion University; the Medical University of South Carolina, and another in or near the City of Conway styled Coastal Carolina University. They are separate and distinct institutions, each under its separate board of trustees or visitors."

Degrees are awarded by the University of South Carolina Columbia at the doctor of philosophy, master's, professional, and baccalaureate levels. The regional Palmetto College campuses (Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter and Union) are branch campuses of the University of South Carolina Columbia and award degrees at the associate level. The institution's degree granting authority comes from the state of South Carolina. All South Carolina college and university programs require oversight approval and are subject to regulatory control from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SC CHE). The South Carolina Code of Law, [Title 59, Chapter 103, SECTION 59-103-35](#) that covers the "Submission of budget; new and existing programs" gives the SC CHE the authority to approve degree programs for colleges and universities in the state of South Carolina. The code states that "No new program may be undertaken by any public institution of higher education without the approval of the commission. The provisions of this chapter apply to all college parallel, transferable, and associate-degree programs of technical and comprehensive education institutions." SC CHE recognizes the University of South Carolina Columbia as a research institution, and the Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, and Union campuses as two-year regional branch campuses of the University of South Carolina Columbia.

#### Inventory of Academic Programs and Off Campus Sites

SC CHE periodically updates and provides an inventory of academic programs for all South Carolina Colleges and Universities. As evidence of SC CHE's oversight, the University has provided a copy of the most recent [program inventory](#) with programs highlighted for the University of South Carolina Columbia and the regional Palmetto College campuses (Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter and Union).

## Distance Education

The University of South Carolina Columbia has the appropriate state authorization for out-of-state students as required by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SC CHE). The University of South Carolina Columbia offers online degree programs and courses taken by out-of-state students and has an approved memorandum of understanding ([MOU between the University of SC Columbia and the National Council State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement \(NC-SARA\)](#)). The NC-SARA was established to simplify the process for students taking online courses offered by post-secondary institutions based in another state. University of South Carolina Columbia's participation in the SARA membership expands access to educational offerings that leads to better resolution of complaints from students in SARA states and enhances the overall quality of distance education. Additionally, it centralizes the authorization process for each institution by establishing state-level reciprocity agreements. SARA is a voluntary agreement among its member states and U.S. territories that establishes comparable national standards and uniform processes for interstate offerings of post-secondary distance-education courses and programs.

## Sources

-  [Code of Laws - Title 59 - Chapter 101 - Colleges And Institutions Of Higher Learning Generally \(Page 1\)](#)
-  [Code of Laws - Title 59 - Chapter 103 - State Commission On Higher Education](#)
-  [Code of Laws - Title 59 - Chapter 103 - State Commission On Higher Education \(Page 4\)](#)
-  [SCCHE4-yearInstitutionsInventory May 5 2020 \(Page 36\)](#)
-  [UofSC Columbia NC-SARA Renewal Application Final 2020](#)