

New England Board of Higher Education

Member States (6): Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

Introduction

In March 2019, Education Commission of the States released a comprehensive summary of the postsecondary governance landscapes in each state and the District of Columbia. The [interactive data visualization](#), individual state profiles and 50-State Comparison capture state governance ecosystems that consist of coordinating boards/agencies and governing boards, administrative/service agencies, advisory groups and membership organizations. These resources are intended to assist policy and education leaders in understanding postsecondary governance systems in their states and others.

In partnership with the regional higher education compacts, Education Commission of the States is providing an analysis of their member states' governance systems and individual profiles.

State Postsecondary Governance Models

Higher education governance systems across the states and District of Columbia are varied and complex. The structures are a mix of coordinating and governing boards at the state, system and institutional levels; and other agencies and organizations may play important roles in the postsecondary landscape.

While no two states have the same postsecondary governance system, the structures fall within general models — even though the categorization is not a straightforward process.¹ Beyond the basic approaches, numerous boards also govern other postsecondary systems, multi-campus institutions and individual institutions.

Single, Statewide Coordinating Board/Agency: Twenty states have a single coordinating board and/or agency that is responsible for key aspects of the state's role with public postsecondary institutions and, in some cases, independent colleges.

NEBHE states: Massachusetts.

Single, Statewide Governing Board: Eight states have a statewide governing board that manages and oversees most functions of the public higher education system and typically has broad authority over institutions.

NEBHE states: Rhode Island.

One or More Systemwide Coordinating or Governing Board: Nineteen states have one or more coordinating or governing boards that oversee institutions within a postsecondary system. These states do not have statewide coordinating or governing boards.

NEBHE states: Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.

Administrative/Service Agency: At least 11 states and the District of Columbia have higher education administrative agencies that may oversee financial aid and specific academic programs, institutional licensure approval and information/data services. The agencies' authority varies across the states and with respect to different types of institutions. These states also have system-level coordinating or governing boards and/or governing boards for individual institutions.

NEBHE states: Connecticut and New Hampshire.

Coordinating Boards/Agencies, Governing Boards and Administrative/Service Agencies

The following chart summarizes the number of statewide and major, systemwide coordinating boards/agencies and governing boards, as well as administrative/service agencies for NEBHE states. See Notes 1 for further explanation of the boards and agencies. The numbers in parentheses indicate states with more than one board.

Type of Board	Number of States	Number of Boards or Agencies	States
Single Statewide Coordinating Board/Agency	1	1	Massachusetts
Single Statewide Governing Board	1	1	Rhode Island
One or More Major, Systemwide Governing Board	4	6	Connecticut, Maine (2), New Hampshire (2) and Vermont
One or More Major, Systemwide Coordinating Board	0	0	N/A
Major, Systemwide Coordinating and Governing Board	0	0	N/A
Administrative/Service Agencies	2	2	Connecticut and New Hampshire

Appointing Authority of Higher Education Executive Officers

The following table summarizes the authority or entity that appoints, approves or hires the higher education executive officers for statewide and major, systemwide coordinating boards/agencies and governing boards, as well as administrative/service agencies for NEBHE member states. See Notes 2 for further explanation of the appointing authority of boards and agencies, including some of the states marked with parentheses.

Appointing Authority	Number of States	Number of Boards or Agencies	States
Agency Board or Agency Committee	0	0	N/A
Coordinating Board	0	0	N/A
Coordinating Board, With Approval of Governor	0	0	N/A
Governing Board	5	7	Connecticut (1), Maine (2), New Hampshire (2), Rhode Island and Vermont
Governing Board, With Approval of Governor and Senate	0	0	N/A
Governor	1	1	New Hampshire (1)
Governor, With Approval of Senate or Legislature	1	1	Connecticut (1)
Governor, on Recommendation of Coordinating Board	0	0	N/A
State Board of Education or Commission/Secretary of Education	1	1	Massachusetts

Notes 1

Connecticut has a Board of Regents for Higher Education that governs the system, which does not include the University of Connecticut, and an administrative office of higher education. New Hampshire has governing boards for the four- and two-year systems and a postsecondary division within the K-12 department of education.

Notes 2

Connecticut's Board of Regents for Higher Education appoints the system's executive director, and the governor appoints the director of the office of higher education. The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education appoints the executive director with the approval of the secretary of education, who is appointed by the governor. New Hampshire's governing boards appoint their system's executive director. The New Hampshire governor appoints the Division of Higher Education director in consultation with the K-12 education commissioner, higher education commission and state board of education.

Regional Compact Analyses and State Profiles

The analyses and state profiles for each regional higher education compact can be accessed from this [link](#).

Education Commission of the States Staff Contact

Mary Fulton, senior policy analyst

mfulton@ecs.org

¹ Aims C. McGuinness, State Policy Leadership for the Future: History of state coordination and governance and alternatives for the future (Denver: Education Commission of the States, 2016), <https://www.ecs.org/state-policy-leadership-for-the-future-history-of-state-coordination-and-governance-and-alternatives-for-the-future/>, 46-47.