

Oklahoma Wesleyan University Catastrophic Event Policy

Summary. Oklahoma Wesleyan University maintains policies to address (i) the possibility of a catastrophic event affecting University academic and other operations, (ii) the security of students, faculty and staff on campus before, during, and after catastrophic events, including weather and security threats; and (iii) data protection in the event of a catastrophic event that disrupts its information technology systems.

Catastrophic Event Disrupting On-Campus Activities. A catastrophic event is defined as a natural disaster, weather event, pandemic, power disruption, or other unforeseen occurrence that is outside of the control of the University, and which prevents the University, its faculty, staff, and students from proceeding with normal University academic and operations activities. In such an event affecting on-campus activities, the University will use its best, commercially reasonable efforts to help students complete course work and achieve academic outcomes for the term during which the catastrophic event continues.

Catastrophic Event Disrupting Remote Activities. If a catastrophic event occurs in which the University is no longer able to offer classes on campus *or remotely*, the University will nonetheless use its best, commercially reasonable efforts to help students complete course work and achieve academic outcomes for the term during which the catastrophic event continues.

Use of Technology to Achieve Academic Outcomes and Preserve Data. If a catastrophic event occurs, the University will, to the extent possible under the circumstances, leverage widely-available educational technologies such as its Learning Management System, Brightspace, and other remote-learning and cloud-hosted collaboration resources to assist students in achieving academic outcomes for the then-current term. All University technology resources that are hosted by third-party vendors are expected to maintain 99.5% uptime/availability. The University's IT department actively monitors all outages to ensure that such vendors comply with the uptime/availability requirement.

It is the policy of the University that all academic records and data maintained by the University are retained, preserved, protected, stored and backed-up in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations, including the requirements of accrediting and other external agencies. This policy is maintained to assure that, if a catastrophic event occurs, the University adheres to industry best practices by endeavoring to ensure the integrity, confidentiality, security and long-term accessibility of all records and documents created, received or maintained in the course of the University's operations. For clarity, the data, academic records and information to be retained by the University as herein described may not necessarily include a particular student's academic papers, assignments, exams or homework.

Decisions Regarding Continuation of Coursework; Discontinuance of Programs. If a catastrophic event occurs, requiring the extended suspension of classes either on campus,

remotely, or both, the University will promptly undertake to use its best, commercially reasonable, efforts to determine how best to provide for the continuation of coursework and services. The Provost and members of the academic leadership team will make such decisions and work with faculty and students in an effort find solutions, to the extent possible and available, to mitigate the effects of the catastrophic event on student academic outcomes.

If it becomes necessary to discontinue a program in such circumstances, the University will address program discontinuances on a case-by-case basis according to the specific needs of each degree or program. This process will allow the University to better serve the needs of individual students by degree and program. In the event that a degree or program must be discontinued, the University will proceed in accordance with guidelines established by the Higher Learning Commission and by any other accrediting organizations or federal or state agencies applicable to the University. A teach-out plan will be submitted to the Higher Learning Commission and, if applicable, to other such organizations or agencies, prior to its implementation.

Financial Considerations. To the extent possible, the University will use its best, commercially reasonable, efforts to assure that students will not incur financial hardship or loss as a result of the catastrophic event. In undertaking such efforts, the University will comply with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding student financial hardship or loss for academic instruction or facility services that are not provided or delivered by the University because of the catastrophic event.

Weather or Safety Emergency on Campus. The University's safety protocols provide detailed emergency instructions related to evacuation, sheltering-in-place, and other safety measures for students, faculty and staff to try to ensure the physical safety, wellbeing, and protection of person and property during fire, severe weather, loss of utilities, active shooters and other weather and safety emergencies. These policies are communicated personally to students during the academic year and are summarized on the website at <https://www.okwu.edu/campus-life/campus-safety/>.

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