

**Responsible Official:** President

**Responsible Office:** Office of the President

**Next Review Date:** July 2023

# CATASTROPHIC EVENTS POLICY

## POLICY STATEMENT

The University of Mount Olive (UMO) acknowledges the need to prepare for unexpected, catastrophic events such as natural or human-made disasters, pandemic outbreaks, and other events that affect its continuity of operations and programs. UMO will mitigate the impact of crisis situations and operational disruptions through implementing policies and procedures that provide for continuity of operations in case of a catastrophic event. The Catastrophic Event Plan outlines processes for student notification, teach out plans, refunds, and continuity of education at another institution.

## REASON FOR POLICY/PURPOSE

This policy and its procedures provide guidance for a safe and efficient response to disruptive events that impact University of Mount Olive's students. UMO maintains and adheres to policies and procedures pertaining to crisis situations, catastrophic events, and program discontinuances in order to minimize the length of time that students' educational activities are disrupted.

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

A catastrophic event is defined as an unforeseen event, outside the control of the University, which prevents the University from offering services, instruction, or maintaining typical business operations. This plan is intended to cover the University's main campus, all educational instructional sites, and online program operations.

## POLICY/PROCEDURES

### Notifications

In the event of a catastrophic event, UMO will use the Emergency Mass Notification System (e2Campus) to disseminate information, updates, or directions to faculty, staff, and students. Notifications are developed by members of the Crisis Management Team and authorized by the President.

### Crisis Management Team

The Crisis Management Team includes staff and administrators from departments across the university, including Executive Council, Public Relations, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Technology Services & Support.

### Operational Systems

The [Technology Service and Support Policy](#) ensures that systems are protected from vulnerabilities, adequately secured, and backed up to prevent record destruction and/or data loss. The [Digital Information Protection Policy](#) ensures the security and confidentiality of information.

## Record Management

In the event of closure, the University has procedures for protecting student records. Current academic records are stored electronically in our student information system. This system is password protected with specific security permissions. Copies of these records are backed up both on-site as well as at a secondary off-site location. Academic transcripts from other institutions are imaged upon receipt. This system is also password protected and available to staff with specific security permissions based on their job responsibilities. Electronic documents are backed up nightly on-site as well as at a secondary off-site location. Academic records prior to 2003 have been scanned on a password protected site and are available to staff with specific security permissions based on their job responsibilities. Paper-based academic records that are in-process, such as paper transcripts, are stored in fireproof file cabinets until they can be digitized and subsequently destroyed.

## Refunds

The standard UMO [Refund Policy](#) is publically available on our website. UMO will provide guidance for ensuring that financial refunds are processed timely and consistently and in accordance with UMO policy, and applicable federal, state and accreditation requirements. In the event that a catastrophic event occurs, the university maintains the authority to enact additional financial refunds to students that are deemed appropriate during such circumstances.

## Instruction Disruption or Program Discontinuances

UMO may address instruction disruptions and program discontinuances on a case-by-case basis due to the specific needs of each degree or program. This allows the institution to better serve the needs of students by program or individual circumstance. Face-to-face classes that are deemed unable to proceed in person may be moved to a fully online format. In the event that a degree or program must be discontinued, the University will proceed according to 34 CFR 602.24(c) of federal requirements for catastrophic events. A teach-out plan will be submitted to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) prior to its implementation. If UMO is unable to deliver instruction due to a catastrophic event, the university will commit to one or more of the following:

- Providing a reasonable alternative for delivering instruction and/or services for which students have paid
- Providing reasonable financial refund for the education students did not receive
- Providing assistance for transferring earned credits to other institutions

In all cases, students will be counseled about their options by their advisors to determine appropriate next steps or assistance with transferring to another institution if needed.

## CONTACTS

President

Vice President for Student Affairs

Vice President for Academic Affairs

Institutional Accreditation Liaison

## APPROVED BY

Executive Council

## APPENDICES (INCLUDING ANY FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS)

None

## HISTORY/REVISION DATES

Original adoption date(s): 06/15/2022

Last Amended date: 06/15/2022

End Date for Policy (if applicable):

## RELATED COMPLIANCE STANDARDS/EXTERNAL POLICY DOCUMENTS:

[34 CFR 602.24](#) Additional procedures certain institutional agencies must have.

(c) Teach-out plans and agreements

SACSCOC Standard 14.2 (Substantive Change *(see also related policies, guidelines and templates)*);

- [Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](#): Teach-outs; Appendix C Quick Reference-- Conditions for SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION and for an Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan
- [CLOSING A PROGRAM, SITE, BRANCH OR INSTITUTION](#) --Good Practices