

Policy Title: Catastrophic Events & Disaster Recovery Policy

Policy Number: OIEP.500.02

Policy Owner: Associate Dean for Institutional Effectiveness & Planning

Responsible Office: Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Planning

Creation Date: 01/05/2026



1. Purpose and Scope

North American University (NAU) is committed to safeguarding the academic, financial, and personal interests of its students in the event of a catastrophic disruption. The purpose of this policy is to establish clear institutional expectations and procedures for disaster recovery, continuity of operations, and student protection following catastrophic events.

This policy ensures compliance with applicable state authorization requirements, including the Texas State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (TX SARA), accreditor expectations, and relevant federal and state regulations.

This policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, academic programs, instructional modalities (on-campus, hybrid, and distance education), and administrative operations of North American University.

2. Definitions

Catastrophic Event: Any natural, technological, financial, public health, or human-caused incident that substantially disrupts or threatens the University's ability to continue normal operations for an extended period. Such events may include, but are not limited to:

- Natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes, floods, fires, earthquakes).
- Public health emergencies or pandemics.
- Acts of violence or terrorism.
- Prolonged utility or infrastructure failures.
- Cybersecurity incidents affecting institutional systems.
- Financial insolvency or loss of authorization.
- Government-mandated closures.

Emergency Response: Immediate actions taken to protect life, safety, and property during an emergency, as governed by the University's Emergency Response Guide.

Disaster Recovery: Institutional actions taken to restore academic operations, student services, and administrative functions following a catastrophic event.

3. Policy

North American University maintains well-documented policies and practices for addressing catastrophic events and disaster recovery. The University is committed to:

- Protecting the safety and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and visitors.
- Ensuring continuity of instruction and essential services when reasonably possible.
- Protecting students' financial interests and academic progress.
- Preserving and safeguarding student academic records.

4. Procedure

A. Governance and Authority

- The President provides executive leadership and institutional decision-making authority.
- The University Crisis Management Team coordinate institutional continuity and recovery strategies.
- The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (OIEP) oversees compliance documentation, reporting, and coordination with accrediting bodies, state agencies, and regulatory bodies.

B. Continuity of Instruction and Operations

NAU will make reasonable and timely efforts to continue academic instruction and essential operations following a catastrophic event. Measures may include:

- Temporary suspension or modification of academic calendars.
- Transition to alternative instructional modalities, including distance education.
- Adjusted course schedules, assessment timelines, or instructional delivery methods.

All continuity decisions will prioritize student learning outcomes, academic integrity, and regulatory compliance.

C. Student Financial Protection

In the event of a catastrophic disruption or institutional closure, NAU will take appropriate steps to protect students financially, which may include:

- Refunds or prorated tuition adjustments in accordance with published refund and cancellation policies.
- Tuition assurance mechanisms such as surety bonds, letters of credit, or other protections as required by regulators.

- Assistance with transfer to other institutions.
- Implementation of teach-out plans in accordance with accreditor standards.

D. Teach-Out and Transfer Assistance

If NAU is unable to continue instruction in one or more academic programs:

- The University will develop and implement teach-out plans consistent with accreditor and regulatory requirements.
- Teach-out agreements with appropriate institutions may be utilized.
- Students will receive reasonable assistance with transfer advising, academic records, and documentation.

E. Protection of Student Records

North American University maintains secure and redundant systems for the protection and preservation of student academic records. In the event of a catastrophic event or institutional closure:

- Student records will remain protected and accessible.
- Custodial responsibility for records will be maintained in accordance with state and accreditor requirements.
- Students and alumni will retain access to official transcripts and academic documentation.

F. Communication

NAU will communicate promptly and transparently with students, faculty, staff, regulators, accreditors, and other stakeholders during and following a catastrophic event. Communication methods may include:

- Official University email.
- University website announcements.
- Emergency notification systems.
- Direct outreach to affected students.

G. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning and updated as necessary to reflect changes in regulatory requirements, accreditation standards, and institutional practices.

H. Compliance Statement

North American University affirms that it maintains well-documented catastrophic events and disaster recovery policies and agrees to provide this policy and related procedures to the Texas State Portal Entity or other regulatory bodies upon request.

5. Who Should Read This Policy

- Students
- Faculty
- Staff
- Administrators
- University Crisis Management Team

6. Related Documents and References

- Emergency Response Guide
- Academic Catalog
- REG.1300.21 Academic Records and Release of Information Policy
- BO.300.05 Refund and Cancellation Policies
- ACA.1100.08 Teach-Out Policy

7. History

- Creation date: 01/05/2026

8. Policy Approval

Policy Writer

01/05/2026

Date

Assoc. Dean for Institutional Effectiveness & Planning

01/05/2026

Date

Vice President for Academic Affairs

01/05/2026

Date

President, CEO

01/05/2026

Date

