

Operating Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) University Property or at University-Sponsored Events

(Revised 5/25/2017)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an unmanned aircraft system (UAS)?

As defined by FAA, an Unmanned Aircraft System is an unmanned aircraft and the equipment necessary for the safe and efficient operation of that aircraft. An unmanned aircraft (an aircraft that is operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft) is a component of a UAS. See <https://www.faa.gov/uas/faqs/>

Why does the university use the term “UAS” and not “drone”?

The term UAS, or unmanned aircraft system, is in line with the industry standard. The term “drone” is typically associated with just the aircraft and is sometimes used by hobbyists to generically refer to a radio-controlled quadcopter (a helicopter with four rotors). The term UAS is a more accurate reflection of the capabilities employed on high technology systems.

Do I need approval from the university to use a UAS on university property or at a university-sponsored event?

Yes, the university’s UAS Policy can be found online at:

<http://www.udel.edu/safety/policies/uas.html>

You will also need to submit an “Application for Authorization to use UAS”

<https://www.udel.edu/safety/policies/uas-app.pdf>, and receive approval from the University prior to any UAS operations on any University Property or at a University-sponsored event.

Please note that operation of a UAS is also regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and by federal, state, and local laws. Anyone operating UAS on University property is personally responsible for complying with FAA regulations, state and federal laws, and all university policies and procedures.

What should I do to obtain permission from the university to operate a UAS on university property or a university-sponsored event?

1. Refer to the FAA website for helpful information and FAQs. See: https://www.faa.gov/uas/getting_started/. You must be in compliance with all FAA regulations.
2. Refer to the UAS website located on the Campus & Public Safety website here: <http://www.udel.edu/safety/policies/uas.html>
3. Review the UAS Frequently Asked Questions and UAS Policy here: <http://www.udel.edu/safety/policies/uas-policy.pdf> and ensure you understand all aspects of the Policy.
4. Complete the Application for Authorization to Use Unmanned Aircraft Systems here: (<https://www.udel.edu/safety/policies/uas-app.pdf>). Note that all UAS applications must be submitted to Campus & Public Safety for approval at least two weeks in advance and no exceptions will be permitted. Applications can be completed online and submitted electronically. Any use of a UAS on University property, or inside a building on University property, is strictly prohibited without prior written University authorization.

Are there any other approvals required outside of the UAS Advisory Committee established in the Policy?

No additional University approvals are needed for uses not prohibited by the University's UAS Policy. If you are part of a University affiliated research project, and need to use UAS for any use prohibited by the University's UAS policy, contact the Vice President of Research, Scholarship & Innovation. The Vice President of Research, Scholarship & Innovation may grant a waiver on a case by case basis if appropriate, after review and discussions with the requesting department or individual(s).

Who does the university's UAS Policy apply to?

Please refer to the UAS Policy. In general, the Policy applies to all University Personnel including faculty, staff, graduate associates, student employees, students, volunteers, vendors, and all visitors (invitees and licensees) who acquire or seek to operate a UAS on any University property or at any University-sponsored event.

Is there an exemption to FAA regulations when using a UAS for teaching or research purposes?

Sometimes. Please refer to the FAA memo on "Educational use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems" dated May 4, 2016.

Students can operate a UAS under Section 336 of the FMRA (hobbyist or recreational use not requiring prior FAA approval) for student activities and in course work for credit, provided they do not receive compensation directly or incidentally related to the operation of the UAS. Students

operating a UAS under Section 336 of the FMRA may still need to register with the FAA and provide a registration number.

Faculty can assist in the flights above as long as the student maintains operational control of the UAS and the faculty member's role is incidental and secondary to the student's. Faculty assistance subject to these conditions does not change the hobbyist nature of the flight.

While there may be exceptions to FAA's approval requirements, anyone operating a UAS on University property or at a University-sponsored event must follow the university's UAS approval process.

Why is the university UAS Policy necessary?

Please refer to UAS Policy Section I "Reason for Policy." Because unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) are becoming an important tool for many different types of research and businesses, and are becoming more popular as a hobby, it was necessary for University to formalize a Policy and an application process to manage UAS operations on University property and University-sponsored events.

The University is committed to providing an academically vigorous, safe, and secure environment for all individuals and organizations. UAS offer opportunities for teaching and research and provide the university community with valuable experiences in a wide range of academic disciplines.

What UAS activities are permitted under university UAS Policy?

Any use of a UAS on University property, or inside a building on University property, is strictly prohibited without prior written University authorization. With university permission, common uses of UAS permitted on university property and at university-sponsored events include, but are not limited to, research, teaching, student events, advertising, and commercial/business ventures.

What UAS activities are not permitted under university UAS Policy?

Please refer to Section IV C of the UAS Policy.

What if I'd rather operate my UAS off-campus on non-university property or at a non-university sponsored event?

The University's Policy would not apply if a UAS is operated on property not owned by the university if the activity is not sponsored by the University. However, operation of UAS is still regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and by federal, state, and local laws. Anyone who seeks to operate UAS on non-university property or a non-university event must still comply with all appropriate federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

What about model aircraft flown for hobby or recreational purposes on university property or at university- sponsored events?

Model Aircraft is considered a UAS under the University's UAS Policy. As stated in UAS Policy Section IV C. 1, hobby or recreational use of UAS is strictly prohibited on or above University Property, except as part of a course or University sanctioned educational program, or for an event organized by a student organization recognized by the University. Prior authorization shall be obtained in accordance with this Policy for any such uses.

What is the FAA's role in unmanned aircraft systems (UAS)?

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has jurisdiction over all navigable airspace in the United States. Also, all aircraft – whether manned or unmanned – are subject to FAA rules and regulations. The FAA's primary mission is to ensure the safe and efficient oversight and management of the national airspace system (NAS).

What is an Exemption from Section 333?

An FAA exemption under Section 333 (of FMRA) is one way for an individual or entity to operate a UAS for civil and non-governmental purposes and activities, other than for recreational or hobbyist activity.

Information on Section 333 and obtaining an exemption can be found online at:

https://www.faa.gov/uas/beyond_the_basics/section_333/

What is a Certificate of Authorization (COA)?

COA is an authorization issued by the Air Traffic Organization to a public operator for a specific UAS activity, after a comprehensive operational and technical review. See

https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ato/service_units/systemops/aaim/organizations/uas/coa/

A "Public Use" COA is granted to a public agency or organization to operate a specific aircraft (weighing more than 55 pounds) for a specific purpose in a specific location. A Public Use COA for a UAS is only issued by the FAA after the process of determining public status, government use, and an operational and technical review.

COA is also granted by the FAA under Section 333 of FMRA, which allows an entity to legally operate a specific UAS in a certain location for a specific purpose.

More information on COAs and Frequently Asked Questions can be found on the FAA website here:

<https://www.faa.gov/uas/faqs/>

How long does it take to obtain a Certificate of Authorization from the FAA?

According to the FAA, the public COA approval process takes approximately 60 to 90 days. Please allow additional time, as you are planning for UAS use, for university review and approval prior to submission of any public Certificate of Authorization (COA) application.

If I need additional information or have questions about UAS, who shall I contact?

The Office of Campus & Public Safety will be able to assist you with questions related to the application and the Policy. Refer to the UAS website located on the Campus & Public Safety website here: <http://www.udel.edu/safety/policies/uas.html>