Status **Active** PolicyStat ID **21004077**

Last Approved	09/2026
Next Review	09/2029
Liaison	Kevin Leach: Campus Safety Director
Area	AP>University Operations
Responsible Executives	Vice President for Campus Operations

Unmanned Aircraft Systems Policy

COPY

Introduction:

This policy governs the operation and procedures of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS, commonly known as "drones") on property owned, leased, or controlled by the University of Oklahoma for all non-research, University-related purposes. It establishes the UAS Review Committee, the application and approval process, the safety and privacy guidelines applicable to UAS operations, and violations and accountability. The policy is intended to promote the safe, lawful, and responsible use of UAS in a manner consistent with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations while protecting the safety, privacy, and property of the campus community.

Definitions:

1. **Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS):** Any remotely operated or controlled aircraft, commonly referred to as a "drone," intended to operate within the National Airspace System or inside University-owned or controlled buildings, including all associated communications, support, and navigational equipment. FAA regulations apply to all UAS regardless of weight or size.
2. **Remote Pilot in Command (RPIC):** The individual who holds the appropriate FAA license and is directly responsible for, and is the final authority over, the operation of a UAS.
3. **Visual Observer (VO):** A person designated by the RPIC to assist in maintaining visual line of sight with the UAS throughout the operation.
4. **Low Altitude Authorization and Notification Capability (LAANC):** The FAA system, connected to the airport tower, that provides UAS operators with authorization to access controlled

Copyright © 2026 University of Oklahoma

airspace and supports UAS integration into the airspace.

5. **Non-Research Flight:** Any UAS flight conducted over campus property for University-related business that is not conducted for research purposes. Research flights are governed separately through the Office of the Vice President for Research.
6. **University Property:** Any land, grounds, buildings, or facilities owned, leased, or used by the University of Oklahoma, including University-owned streets, sidewalks, and bike paths.
7. **University-Sponsored Event:** Any University-sanctioned, hosted, or controlled event, including but not limited to academic meetings, athletic events, commencement, and University promotional gatherings.

Policy:

1. **General Prohibition.** The University prohibits the unauthorized operation of unmanned aircraft systems ("UAS," commonly "drones") on University property. Non-Researchers, including students, faculty, staff, and third parties, who will be conducting commercial flights for the purpose of promoting the University, operating as part of an authorized educational curriculum pursuit, or assessing property damage may apply for authorization to operate UAS through the Department of Campus Safety (https://www.ou.edu/campussafety) for Norman or through the Office of Enterprise Risk Management (https://risk.ouhsc.edu/Policies-and-Forms/Additional-Resources-Policies) for Health Campus and Tulsa Campus.
    a. The operation of UAS by the OU Police Department (OUPD) and/or other authorized public-safety response personnel may be exempt from this policy based on the determination of operational needs. During such operations, OUPD and partner law enforcement agencies will follow internal department protocols as well as all FAA, federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
2. **Purpose.** The purpose of the policy is to promote public safety for proposed UAS operations over campus that further the University's mission.
3. **Applicability.** This policy applies to all "Non-Research" based UAS flights over campus property for University-related business. This policy and procedure does not apply to indoor flights that have been approved for university related educational purposes or research. Any UAS flights that will be operated for research purposes on the Norman Campus must apply through the Office of the Vice President for Research ("VPR") (https://vpr-norman.ou.edu/policies/coa), or by reaching out to OUHC Enterprise Risk Management (risk-management@ouhsc.edu) for Health Campus and Tulsa Campus.
4. **UAS Review Committee.** The UAS Review Committee is a multidisciplinary committee of representatives from each of the following areas: Department of Campus Safety, School of Aviation, Max Westheimer Airport, OUPD, Enterprise Risk Management, Marketing & Communications, the Office of the VPR, and Legal Counsel. The UAS Review Committee is tasked with approving or denying UAS flight requests, and establishing and periodically reviewing UAS operations guidelines designed to reduce safety risks to people and property on campus.
5. **Procedures for Obtaining Approval.** Students, faculty, staff, and third party entities wishing to

COPY

Copyright © 2026 University of Oklahoma

operate UAS in conjunction with University-related job duties or educational activities should submit an application to the UAS Review Committee a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the scheduled flight. Flight applications, including the flight plan, copies of UAS registration with the FAA, copies of the RPIC license, and insurance coverage, shall be submitted to uasflight@ou.edu for Norman Campus or to risk-management@ouhsc.edu for Health Campus and Tulsa Campus.

a. The UAS Review Committee may approve an application as submitted, request additional information or clarification, or approve an application subject to conditions or limitations as necessary to protect the privacy or safety of the campus community.

b. Approval may be revoked at any time prior to flight if necessary to protect the privacy and safety of the campus community.

c. During the flight, a copy of the UAS Review Committee's approval confirmation, as well as their FAA Part 107 license, should be in the operator's possession and available for inspection.

6. **Violations and Accountability.** Any individual or organization found to be operating a UAS on University property or at a University-sponsored event in violation of their FAA-approved status, any federal, state, or local laws or regulations, or any applicable University policy may be directed by authorized University representatives to cease operation of the UAS immediately, unless or until approval is obtained. Violations will be referred to the appropriate University disciplinary process and will be considered in connection with any future UAS requests.

a. Individuals violating this policy will be held accountable for their actions, which may include, but are not limited to, the following:

i. Members of the University community operating UAS without approval of the UAS Review Committee or outside the scope of these guidelines may be subject to discipline and/or reported to law enforcement or the FAA for investigation and corrective action, whether functioning as a pilot or as an observer.

ii. Students are subject to the University's Code of Student Conduct.

iii. Faculty, staff, and student employees are subject to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

iv. Non-University employees or students, and non-complying third parties, are subject to loss of privileges, or other corrective action deemed appropriate by the UAS Committee, to operate on any University property and may be trespassed from campus and/or reported to local law enforcement or the FAA for investigation and corrective action.

v. Other legal entities may be prohibited from future operations on University property.

COPY

Copyright © 2026 University of Oklahoma

b. The University is not responsible for any damage resulting from a UAS operated by a non-authorized operator. The operator will be responsible for any property damage or losses resulting from the operation of a UAS.

c. Nothing in this policy limits the right of the OU Police Department (OUPD) of any campus or the appropriate law enforcement agency to secure events and issue trespass.

7. **UAS Review**

Flight Application Review Process: The UAS Review Committee will consider each application to operate UAS on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the purpose of the flight, the benefit to the University, and all relevant risk factors, including, but not limited to, the type of UAS, the location of the proposed operations, and the time of day/week of the proposed operations. Applicants should ensure the proposed UAS operations comport with the requirements set forth below.

a. **Requirements for Air Safety.**

i. All UAS operations must comply with current federal and state laws regarding UAS, including FAA regulations. It is the responsibility of both the applicant and the Remote Pilot in Command (RPIC) to know the limitations and restrictions of any particular flight operation. This includes Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR's).

ii. All UAS must comply with the FCC equipment authorization for drones.

iii. UAS operating under the University's authority must meet the University's operating requirements for aircraft maintenance and pre-flight and post-flight inspections.

iv. The University's Norman campus is located almost entirely within five (5) miles of Max Westheimer Airport. The RPIC must obtain approval from the airport through the Low Altitude Authorization and Notification Capability (LAANC), which directly connects to the airport tower supporting UAS integration into the airspace. The RPIC must comply with all FAA altitude limitations per the flight location, as well as LAANC/airport directives, throughout the flight.

v. The University's Health Campus is within the air space of Mediflight for the nearby hospitals. Once approved for a flight by the University a drone operator must contact OU Med Comm at 405-271-3431 (alt 405-213-1561) to advise of the date, time frame, and location of the drone in the area.

vi. UAS may not interfere with manned aircraft.

vii. The RPIC is required to comply with the manufacturer's requirements for maintenance, upkeep, and operation of the UAS.

COPY

Copyright © 2026 University of Oklahoma

viii. All UAS must be registered with the FAA and operated by an appropriately licensed RPIC. The license must be in the RPIC's possession and available for inspection at the time of the flight.

ix. The RPIC, or a designated visual observer ("VO"), must maintain a visual line of sight with the UAS at all times.

x. UAS operations must follow the prescribed LAANC altitude for the area where the flight will occur.

b. **Requirements for Safety to Protect People and Property.**

i. UAS must weigh less than fifty-five (55) pounds.

ii. Applicants must submit evidence of the RPIC's proficiency with the make/model of the UAS proposed to be used, unless the UAS weighs less than five (5) pounds. To be considered proficient in the operation of a particular make/model of UAS, the RPIC must have logged evidence of a minimum of five (5) hours of flight time using that make/model and have logged at least three (3) take-offs and landings. RPICs who are otherwise qualified but lack evidence of proficiency with a particular make/model may make arrangements to practice at a safe location until proficiency can be demonstrated. Contact the School of Aviation, OU Aviation Safety Committee Faculty Lead (kencarson@ou.edu) for more information about UAS weighing over five (5) pounds.

iii. UAS operations may not take place within 500 feet of non-participating people unless adequate safety measures have been undertaken to protect them. This requirement may be waived for good cause shown; it is the applicant's responsibility to demonstrate that waiver of this requirement is essential for the operation and that the flight is designed to ensure the safety of people and property.

iv. UAS operations may not generally take place within 400 feet of a building, structure, or vehicle unless adequate safety measures have been undertaken to protect them and the executive officer with authority over the building/structure agrees to the operation.

v. UAS operations must take place in daylight. Operations must cease immediately if severe weather or high winds threaten the integrity of the operation. UAS operations may occur at night provided the RPIC has received the appropriate training and the UAS has anti-collision navigation lights that are visible from at least three (3) nautical miles.

vi. UAS operations must be conducted at safe speeds (which may vary based on location and other factors; however, the speed shall never exceed 100 mph) and may not be operated in a reckless manner.

COPY

Copyright © 2026 University of Oklahoma

vii. UAS operations are prohibited on home football game days and special event days (e.g., commencement). The UAS Review Committee may consider exceptions to this restriction on a case-by-case basis.

viii. UAS operations should be scheduled, when possible, at times when the risk of non-participating persons coming within range of the UAS is minimized (e.g., weekends, before/after business hours).

ix. All UAS should be fitted with prop guards. The UAS Review Committee may require prop guards depending on flight plan risk.

c. **Requirements for Protecting Privacy and Intellectual Property.**

i. UAS operations over property belonging to any party other than the University of Oklahoma will not be approved without the express written permission of the owner(s)/occupant(s) of the property.

ii. UAS may not be used for the purpose of surveillance, eavesdropping, or monitoring any person without his or her express written knowledge and consent, or for any other purpose that would tend to breach a person's reasonable expectation of privacy.

iii. UAS may not be used for the purpose of recording artistic, academic, or athletic rehearsals, practices, drills, scrimmages, performances, or contests unless specifically authorized by an executive officer of the University who is over the department or event.

iv. UAS may not record in or near residence halls, locker rooms, dressing rooms, restrooms, health treatment rooms, or childcare facilities on campus.

v. UAS may not record near areas deemed research secure without obtaining approval from the office of the Vice President for Research.

vi. Except by approval of the executive officer of the University with authority over the facility, UAS may not record over any athletic facility, performing arts facility, security center, or utility center.

vii. While incidental photography or video of people on campus may occur, operators may not use, publish, or disseminate images in which a person's likeness is reasonably identifiable without his or her written consent.

viii. UAS may not record images of people for academic purposes without approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). See compliance.ou.edu for more information about the IRB.

8. **Student Flight Applications (Non-Commercial).**

a. Students may operate as hobbyists or for recreational purposes pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 44809, including subsection (a)(1) and the related definitions addressing

COPY

Copyright © 2026 University of Oklahoma

institutions of higher education, educational or research purposes, and other academic activities approved by the institution.

b. Student flights must be part of an academic curriculum approved by the institution (endorsement from an instructor or professor).

c. The UAS Review Committee must determine that a student's flight request meets the intent of the educational purposes described in 49 U.S.C. § 44809.

d. A student must submit a flight application and flight plan to uasflight@ou.edu for Norman campus or to risk-management@ouhsc.edu for Health Campus and Tulsa Campus.

e. A student must hold a Part-107 pilot's license for purposes of validating proficiency for the University and must provide a copy of the license with the flight application.

f. A student's UAS must be registered with the FAA, and a copy of the registration must be submitted with the flight application.

g. A student must have liability insurance. The source of payment for the insurance does not matter as long as the coverage is for the student pilot. A certificate of insurance naming the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents as a certificate holder and evidencing sufficient liability insurance limits as determined by Enterprise Risk Management must be provided with the flight application.

h. A student operating on Norman Campus as a hobbyist under 49 U.S.C. § 44809 does not need airspace authorization; however, the student must contact Max Westheimer Air Traffic Control before any flights and must not interfere with manned aircraft. Students may notify Max Westheimer Air Traffic Control at KOUN ATC, 405-325-7233, or ouairport@ou.edu (http://www.ou.edu/airport/recreation-hobby-uas--drone--operations).

i. Although a student does not need an airspace waiver, the student operator/pilot must adhere to the governing FAA rules and operate in accordance with the University's UAS policy.

j. Students violating FAA rules or University best practices are subject to penalty, including the revoking of UAS flight privileges on campus and student conduct violations.

9. **Insurance Requirements.**

   a. UAS operated by third-party vendors and all non University owned drones must provide a certificate of insurance identifying the University of Oklahoma as a certificate holder and evidence of sufficient liability insurance limits as determined by Enterprise Risk Management.

10. **Reporting Requirements.**

    a. UAS operators must comply with FAA reporting requirements for incidents resulting

COPY

Copyright © 2026 University of Oklahoma

in injury to a person or damage to property. In addition, UAS operators must immediately report any incident resulting in injury to a person or damage to property to OU Enterprise Risk Management. As always, in an emergency, UAS operators should contact 911 for immediate assistance.

11. **Forms and Tools.**

    a. Department of Campus Safety: https://www.ou.edu/campussafety

    b. Research UAS / Certificate of Authorization (Office of the VPR): https://vpr-norman.ou.edu/policies/coa

    c. Norman student and non-research flight applications should be sent to: uasflight@ou.edu

    d. Max Westheimer Air Traffic Control (KOUN): 405-325-7233 | ouairport@ou.edu

    e. UAS Application form: https://www.ou.edu/campussafety/policy-and-procedures

    f. Department of Enterprise Risk Management for Health Campus and Tulsa Campus – risk-management@ouhsc.edu

Approval Authority:

Vice President for Campus Operations

Former Policy Number:

N/A

COPY

Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
Policy Office	Michelle Stephens: University Policy Director	09/2026
Responsible Executive	Brian Holderread: Vice President,Campus Ops	09/2026
OLC Review	Claire Kerr: University Counsel	08/2026
Stakeholders	Kevin Leach: Campus Safety Director	08/2026
Stakeholders	Jennie Robison: Dir of Enterprise Risk Mgmt	08/2026
Stakeholders	Derek Malone	08/2026

Copyright © 2026 University of Oklahoma

Stakeholders	Aaron Lindley	08/2026
Stakeholders	Lance Lamkin: Airport Administrator	08/2026
Stakeholders	Courtni Covington: Dir of Enterprise Risk Mgmt	08/2026
Stakeholders	Kenneth Carson	08/2026
Stakeholders	Kent Ray	08/2026
Stakeholders	Claire Kerr: University Counsel	08/2026
Stakeholders	Krystal Williams	08/2026
Liaison & OLC Review	Kevin Leach: Campus Safety Director	08/2026
Liaison & OLC Review	Kenneth Carson	07/2026
Liaison & OLC Review	Claire Kerr: University Counsel	07/2026
HC Stakeholders	Krystal Williams	07/2026
HC Stakeholders	Jennie Robison: Dir of Enterprise Risk Mgmt	07/2026
HC Stakeholders	Aaron Lindley	07/2026

COPY

Copyright © 2026 University of Oklahoma