Florida Institute of Technology

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones and Model Aircraft)

Procedure Statement and Purpose

The operation of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) including drones and model aircraft, is regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and relevant state law. Florida Institute of Technology seeks to permit an UAS to be utilized productively in a manner that fully meets safety requirements and ethical responsibilities for the institution. Operation of a UAS on or over university property, and the use of university owned UAS, will comply with this procedure.

Definitions

Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS): Any remotely operated or controlled aircraft intended to fly within the National Airspace System. Includes devices commonly referred to as drones and may also include communications, support, and navigational equipment. FAA regulations apply to all types of UAS regardless of weight or size.

University Property: Buildings, grounds, and land that are owned by Florida Institute of Technology, or controlled by Florida Institute of Technology via lease or other contractual agreement.

Educational Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems: A student may conduct model aircraft operations in furtherance of his/her aviation-related education at an accredited educational institution. Faculty teaching aviation-related courses at accredited educational institutions may assist students operating model aircraft such that the faculty member’s manipulations of the model aircraft’s controls are secondary and incidental to those of the student. (Reference section 336 of FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012. Unmanned aircraft not flown under section 336 must be registered under part 107.)

Student use of UAS: This must be in relation to coursework and student must meet federal guidelines required for lawful model aircraft operations pursuant to sections 336 of the FMRA or under FAA Part 107, including not receiving compensation directly or indirectly to his/her operation of the model aircraft. Students assisting faculty in research renders it non recreational.

Faculty Use of UAS: The faculty member of an accredited institution that teaches a course or conducts research that engages the use of a UAS (thus part of professional duties for which he/she is paid) is not engaging in recreational or hobby use. Faculty may assist students with model aircraft operations under 336 or Part 107, provided this is to teach curricula to students enrolled in those courses, and the faculty member’s participation is limited to de minimis level.

Scope

This procedure applies to:

(1) Employees and students operating UAS in any location as part of their university employment or as part of university academic/research program;

(2) The operation by any person of UAS on or above Florida Institute of Technology property;
(3) The purchase and operation of UAS with funding through the university, including grants and 3-fund accounts; and

(4) The hiring or contracting for any UAS services with an outside vendor.

This policy does not apply to use by law enforcement in the scope of their duties.

**Procedure**

UAS use for the purpose of this policy will fall under the most current guidelines of the FAA.

The following requirements govern the use of UAS within the scope identified in this policy.

(1) Any individual or group, including employees, students and contracted vendors, seeking to operate a UAS on university property, or anywhere on behalf of Florida Institute of Technology, is responsible for obtaining all required documentation and approvals for compliance with FAA regulations, federal and state laws, and university policies.

(2) The university’s Office of Risk Management, in conjunction with the Offices of Security and Environmental and Health Services, shall be responsible for university policy, approvals, and instructions regarding UAS use on or above University property, and for UAS use pursuant to university employment and academic/research programs.

(3) Individual Recreational/Hobbyist use of UAS and model aircraft on or above university property **is not permitted**.

(4) All UAS use on or above university property, or elsewhere on behalf of the university, must be approved in advance through the Office of Risk Management to ensure compliance and insurance coverage.

(5) UAS shall be operated in a responsible manner and shall not create a hazard to university property, the university community, or the public at any time.

(6) In operating a UAS for purposes of recording or transmitting visual images, operators must take all reasonable measures to avoid violations of areas normally considered private, and the unauthorized interception or recordings of images, electronic communications, and electronic data.

**Violation and accountability**

Individuals that violate this policy will be subject to corrective action procedures as defined in the appropriate employee handbook, student code of conduct, contract and/or federal, state, and local laws.