



INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to Unmanned Aerial Vehicle flights. Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (or “UAV”), as used in this policy, means any device used, intended to be used, or designed to fly in the air, which is operated without the possibility of direct physical human intervention from within or on the device. UAVs include but are not limited to model aircraft, drones, unmanned aircraft systems (or “UAS”), rockets, and weather balloons, but do not include satellites.

In pursuing the University’s mission to promote the public welfare, advance knowledge, and train its students, the University’s faculty, students, and administrators may seek to utilize UAVs. UAVs may enable faster, more effective, less costly, and safer scientific data gathering, and because of their versatility, may serve as useful learning tools for students. At the same time, these vehicles present unique issues to environmental health, safety, regulatory compliance, and privacy, and these issues must be balanced with the University’s other missions

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy prohibits Third Party flights from within or above University lands, premises or facilities, wherever located (“University Property”). For the purposes of this policy, current faculty, students, staff, or other persons acting on behalf of the University pursuant to an approved agreement (“Approved Vendors”) are not “Third Parties,” and may fly UAVs pursuant to this Policy on the same terms and conditions as Harvard faculty, staff, students, and administrators. All other persons or entities are Third Parties and are prohibited from flying UAVs from within or above University Property.

This policy also sets forth procedures for registration of UAV flights by faculty, students, staff, and other persons acting on behalf of the University, at any location, if they are undertaken in the course of teaching, research, or other University functions. Such registration is required for UAV flights from within or above University Property and encouraged for UAV flights elsewhere.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to the following individuals or entities:

Third Parties operating or intending to operate UAVs on or above University Property, including hobbyist, recreational, or aerial photography flights. Such flights are prohibited by this policy.



Faculty, students, staff, or Approved Vendors flying UAVs on or above University Property, or **on behalf of the University at any location**. Thus, for example, the policy applies to faculty, students, or staff seeking to pursue the following activities:

- Research and development or data collection by flying UAVs in the pursuit of their University duties, whether on or off University Property;
- UAV flight as a part of their University courses, or research activities, whether on or off University Property;
- Agreements or other arrangements for Approved Vendors and other persons to fly UAVs on behalf of the University (such as for aerial photography, or for any of the reasons above), whether on or off University Property; and
- Model aircraft or other UAV flight from within or above University Property for recreational or hobby purposes (which will require membership in a University sanctioned hobbyist club).

This policy does not apply to:

- Anyone flying UAVs if such flight is (1) unrelated to University coursework, research, or employment or other University activities **and** (2) such flight is not from within or above University Property.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. THIRD PARTIES

UAVs may not be flown from within or above University Property by Third Parties.

2. HARVARD FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS AND APPROVED VENDORS

UAVs may be flown by faculty, students, staff, and Approved Vendors **if and only if** the flight (i) is compliant with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations; (ii) is registered with the University's UAV Committee in addition to any other applicable entities within the University, (iii) has a nexus to the University's mission or community, and (iv) adheres to any limits prescribed by the UAV Committee to protect the safety, privacy, and other rights and interests of the University and the surrounding population.

Operation of UAVs by the Harvard University Police Department (HUPD) or its partnering agencies for law enforcement and security purposes may be exempt from the registration requirement described above if circumstances dictate. HUPD will, however, endeavor to share



information about its UAV operations with the community to the extent that time, safety, and security permit.

3. UAV COMMITTEE

The UAV Committee will be responsible for reviewing and registering all UAV flights by or on behalf of faculty, students, and staff.

The UAV Committee is appointed by the Vice Provost for Research and comprises faculty and staff representatives from the Schools interested in the use of UAV and the University's Central offices. The UAV Committee may also consult with other University offices or departments as necessary.

4. LOCAL FACILITIES

The owner or manager of any local facility may, in consultation with the UAV Committee, develop and implement additional, more restrictive, policies appropriate to their specific location and circumstances.

PROCEDURES

UAV flights may require Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approvals and/or permissions from local authorities, other regulatory agencies, or private parties. Certain FAA approvals take several months to seek and obtain. Further, in some cases, the UAV Committee may need to refer issues to impacted Harvard University offices and departments.

In light of these constraints, the UAV Committee must be notified, using the form at <https://vpr.harvard.edu/unmanned-aerial-vehicles-committee>, at the earliest possible time of a proposed UAV flight or project governed by this policy. For flights involving hobbyist or recreational activities, refer to the streamlined procedures provided in the linked form. In all other cases, the notification should be submitted no fewer than 10 business days before the envisioned

1. flight,
2. relevant commitment of funds or resources for the flight, or
3. binding commitment or proposal relevant to the flight,

whichever is earliest.

For flights posing new or significant risks or novel questions, additional review time or multiple meetings may be beneficial, and requesters are advised to submit the notification well in advance



to permit the Committee to offer the fullest and most helpful advice and support, and to notify affected schools and units.

The UAV Committee will keep a record of the proposed UAV flight, and share that record with HUPD and other campus safety and security officials. It will also share with the operator information about the applicable laws, regulations and policies, as well as best practices in the field. It will also serve as a resource with which the operator may discuss any issues or challenges unique to the proposed flight. If the Committee is aware that the proposed UAV flight would take place in a time, place, or manner that is prohibited by law or local policy, the Committee will inform the operator of that fact.

SUBMISSION

The registration form can be found on the website of the Office of the Vice Provost for Research at <https://vpr.harvard.edu/unmanned-aerial-vehicles-committee>.

Supplementary information on Harvard UAV policy and procedures can be found at <https://vpr.harvard.edu/unmanned-aerial-vehicles-committee> under *Frequently Asked Questions*.

CONTACTS AND SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

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