

# Unmanned Aircraft Systems Policy

Policy 303.26

## 1 Introduction

1.1 Appalachian State University (“Appalachian” or “the University”) encourages the use of innovative forms of technology such as Unmanned Aircraft Systems (“UAS”) to achieve the University’s goals, consistent with its mission, of effective education, research, communication, and operations. Appalachian is also committed to complying with laws and regulations applicable to this evolving technology and to the safety and privacy of its students, faculty, staff, and visitors. This policy seeks to ensure the safe and lawful operation of UAS for the benefit of people and University property.

## 2 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all affiliated members of the Appalachian State University community including faculty, staff, and students, as well as University authorized contractors or other third parties, on University property.

2.2 This policy does not apply to anyone flying UAS if such flight is:

1. unrelated to University coursework, research, or employment and
2. such flight is not from within or above University-owned or University-controlled property.

2.3 Notwithstanding any other provision in this policy to the contrary, the University’s Chief of Police, Director of EHS&EM, his/her/their designee, may authorize the use of UAS, consistent with federal and state law, for any Public Safety Purpose as defined in this policy.

## 3 Definitions

### 3.1 Model Aircraft

Aircraft that is mechanically driven or launched into flight and is flown solely for hobby or recreation purposes and is not used for payment or benefit, directly or indirectly, by any person for the use of the aircraft or any media produced by the aircraft.

### 3.2 Public Safety Purpose

Related to the welfare and protection of the University community. For purposes of this policy, Public Safety Purposes include but are not limited to facilities and maintenance work carried out to inspect, secure, maintain, repair or improve university property and buildings in a safe condition.

### 3.3 Recreational (Hobby) Use

Recreational or hobby UAS use is flying for enjoyment and not for a University related activity, work, business, or for compensation or hire.

### 3.4 University (or Appalachian)

Appalachian State University, a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina, with its main campus located in Boone, North Carolina. This includes any and all property owned or controlled by the University.

### 3.5 Unmanned Aircraft System (“UAS”)

Commonly known as drones, aircraft that are operated without the possibility of human intervention from within or on the aircraft, and the systems accompanying such aircraft. For purposes of this policy, UAS also include Model Aircraft. The term UAS, as opposed to drone, is used throughout this policy as that term is used in state and federal laws and regulations. Weather balloons are not considered UAS for purposes of this policy.

## 4 Policy and Procedure Statements

### 4.1 UAS Use on or off University Property for University Purposes

4.1.1 The University requires all users of UAS to comply with the operating requirements set forth by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT).

4.1.2 No UAS may be flown unless the user has the appropriate permits as required by the FAA and NCDOT, as well as signed permission from the University's UAS Committee Coordinator. Approved flights will be restricted to uses that

1. meet the University's academic mission and/or
2. serve the University's business needs or duties, as determined by University officials.

4.1.3 Recreational or "hobby" use of UAS is not permitted over or from University property, even if otherwise legal under state and federal rules.

4.1.4 Unaffiliated persons may operate UAS over or from University property only if (i) the unaffiliated person is sponsored by or becomes affiliated with the University and (ii) is approved by the University pursuant to this policy. In addition to approval as set forth in this policy, the University generally requires third parties to enter into a contract, signed by an authorized University official, and to provide proof of insurance coverage in a form and amounts as may be specified by the University from time to time.

4.1.5 Any users of UAS, affiliated or unaffiliated may be asked to stop the UAS flight and/or leave University property if, in the sole discretion of authorized University officials, they (i) violate state or federal law, (ii) do not comply with this policy or (iii) otherwise engage in conduct that is considered harmful or dangerous to the University or persons on University property.

## 4.2 UAS Approval Process

4.2.1 Individuals seeking approval to operate UAS are required to complete the UAS Approval Form. Individuals will also need to submit their (i) FAA license and (ii) NCDOT UAS Commercial Operators Permit by attaching those documents to the Approval Form.

4.2.2 Appalachian's UAS guidelines and Approval Form are available at [\[Unmanned Aircraft Systems\]](#)

4.2.2.1 The Approval Form must be submitted at least ten (10) days prior to the anticipated flight date.

4.2.3 Upon receiving the application, the University's UAS Committee Coordinator will facilitate the approval process with the UAS Approval Committee. The UAS Approval Committee consists of:

The Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Communications Officer  
The Director of Environmental Health, Safety, and Emergency Management  
The Director of Public Safety and Chief of Police or designee

4.2.4 The University's Committee Coordinator may request the applicant to provide additional information if the Committee determines that such information is necessary to complete its review.

4.2.5 The UAS Approval Committee may confer with other University departments, supervisors, or offices when conducting its review, including, but not limited to, the Office of Research, the Office of the Provost, the Office of Student Affairs, the Office of Student Research, and the Office of Business Affairs.

4.2.6 Upon approval, the UAS Committee Coordinator will sign the Approval Form, attaching additional notes or instructions as necessary, and return it to the UAS operator. The operator must have this signed Approval Form, in addition to necessary permits, in their possession during all flight activities.

4.2.7 The UAS Committee Coordinator shall notify the UAS Approval Committee and affected campus constituents of approved flights.

## 4.3 Flight Standards

4.3.1 All UAS users authorized under this policy are expected to comply with all applicable laws and all regulations and best practices promulgated by the FAA and NCDOT.

4.3.2 UAS users must adhere to the flight plan as described on the UAS Approval Form that was approved by the UAS Approval Committee.

4.3.3 UAS users must comply with all laws and regulations promulgated by the FAA and the NCDOT, including, but not limited to,

1. No flying over people. (Note: this severely limits UAS flights on campus.)

2. No flying above 400 feet.
3. No flying outside daytime hours, defined as 30 minutes before official sunrise to 30 minutes after official sunset.
4. No flying in an unsafe manner.
5. No flying beyond the operator's ability to see the aircraft.
6. No flying while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
7. No flying in a manner that interferes with air traffic.
8. No flying close to another aircraft as to create a collision hazard.
9. No photography of spaces where an individual has a reasonable expectation of privacy.

## 4.4 Compliance

4.4.1 Improper use of UAS may result in the violation of federal or state laws.

4.4.2 Improper use of UAS may result in disciplinary action for any affiliated members of the University as outlined in applicable University policies.

4.4.3 Affiliated and unaffiliated users of UAS violating this policy or associated laws may be subject to removal from campus.

4.4.4 The Appalachian Police Department is responsible for compliance and enforcement of this policy. However, all complaints should be directed to the Appalachian State non-emergency dispatch line at (828) 262-2150.

## 5 Additional References

### 5.1 Resources

5.1.1 Federal:

[Unmanned Aircraft Systems - Federal Aviation Administration](#)  
[Federal Aviation Administration Small Unmanned Aircraft System \(sUAS\) Registration Service](#)  
[Federal Aviation Administration - Fly For Work/Business](#)  
[Federal Aviation Administration - Becoming A Pilot](#)

5.1.2 State:

[NC Department of Transportation Operating Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(UAS\) in North Carolina](#)  
[Connect NCDOT Aviation Division Resources Site](#)

5.1.3 University:

[Appalachian Office of Trademarks and Licensing](#)

## 6 Authority

[The UNC Policy Manual, Chapter 100.1, The Code, Section 502.](#)

## 7 Contact Information

[University Communications](#), Phone: (828) 262-6156, Email: [uas@appstate.edu](mailto:uas@appstate.edu)

## 8 Original Effective Date

June 21, 2017

## 9 Revision Dates

August 30, 2021