



## **Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS)**

**Responsible Department:** Institutional Compliance & Risk Management (ICRM)

**Responsible Administrator:** Director, ICRM

**Effective Date:** February 10, 2023

**Reviewed/Updated Date:** February 2023

**Date of Scheduled Review:** February 2027

### **I. PURPOSE**

The health, safety, and privacy of Abilene Christian University (ACU) students, employees, affiliates, and visitors are of the utmost importance. ACU recognizes the use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) on University Property may pose a threat to the community and disturb the educational goals and responsibilities preserved by ACU if risks are not appropriately managed. ACU prohibits the use of any UAS on University property or off-campus while conducting university-sponsored activities, except as required by law or pursuant to the authorization process provided by this policy.

Any authorized use of a UAS on University property or off campus while conducting university-sponsored activities must be in accordance with the rules and regulations promulgated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and other federal, state, and local regulations or ordinances.

### **II. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all students, employees, affiliates, contractors, vendors, or any other individual or entity, including but not limited to, filmmakers or photographers who wish to use a UAS on University property or while conducting university-sponsored activities off campus.

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

Authorized User - An operator of a UAS that has been granted approval to operate a UAS on University Property or university-sponsored activities. An Authorized User does not have to seek future approvals of operation upon being designated as an Authorized User.

University Property - Any property owned, leased, managed, or controlled by ACU, including the air space above the property.

Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) - Any unmanned aircraft or device and any associated elements that are required for the pilot in command to operate safely and efficiently in the national airspace system. Associated elements may include, but are not limited to,

control links, communication links, payloads, support equipment, and launch/recovery equipment.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) - Any aircraft or device operated without human intervention from within or on the aircraft or device. These types of aircrafts or devices may include, but are not limited to, quad-copters, remote controlled (RC) planes, any aircraft or device commonly referred to as “drones”.

For the purposes of this policy, UAS and UAV may be used interchangeably.

## **IV. PROCEDURE**

### **A. Use of Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS)**

The operation of a UAS is prohibited on University Property or university-sponsored activities except as required by law or as authorized by the Office of Institutional Compliance & Risk Management.

An operator of a UAS may request temporary authorization to operate a UAS on University Property by following the procedures as outlined within this policy.

An operator of a UAS that has been purchased or has been acquired by ACU is eligible to become an Authorized User, which provides exemption from some of the required authorization procedures.

Questions or concerns regarding the operation, purchasing, or acquisition of a UAV or UAS must be directed to the Office of Institutional Compliance & Risk Management at [risk@acu.edu](mailto:risk@acu.edu).

### **B. Authorization Procedures**

#### **a. Authorization**

The Office of Institutional Compliance & Risk Management is responsible for authorizing any operation of a UAS on University Property or university-sponsored activities.

In addition to any ACU authorized operation of a UAS, all flights are required to be authorized per [LAANC](#) procedures with the FAA prior to operation.

#### **b. Application**

Any individual who wishes to use a UAS on University property or university-sponsored activities must complete and submit an [Unmanned Aircraft System \(UAS\) Request Form](#). This application must be approved by the Office of Institutional Compliance & Risk Management prior to the

operation of a UAS.

**c. Application Review**

The Office of Institutional Compliance & Risk Management will review all completed Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Request Forms that are submitted.

Requests for the operation of a UAS should be submitted at least 14 days prior to the requested date of operation to allow sufficient time for review of the application.

**d. Approval**

Upon review, the Office of Institutional Compliance & Risk Management may provide recommendations or information applicable to the application, and will approve or deny the request of operation of a UAS. The Office of Institutional Compliance & Risk Management will provide notification to the applicant if an approval, conditional approval, or if a request is denied.

ACU reserves the right to modify, reschedule, or cancel any approved or conditionally approved requests of operation of a UAS.

All approved requests to operate a UAS on University Property or university-sponsored activities are for a single use of operation for the duration of time indicated on the request form. Any approved request will expire upon the end of the time indicated on the request form. A new completed Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Request Form must be submitted and approved prior to any future operations of a UAS.

No request for multiple days of operation of a UAS will be accepted.

All international travel or shipment of a UAS must be approved by the Office of Institutional Compliance & Risk Management due to federal export control restrictions.

**e. Authorized User**

An affiliate of the University (e.g. Staff, Faculty) who is an operator of a UAS that has been purchased or acquired by ACU is eligible to become an Authorized User, which provides exemption from the application approval process and procedures for each use of a UAS on University Property or university-sponsored activities..

Any individual who wishes to become an Authorized User must submit a completed [Unmanned Aircraft System \(UAS\) Request Form](#) and select "Yes" to the question "Is this a request to become an Authorized User?" as part of their application. The Office of Institutional Compliance & Risk

Management will review the request and will approve or deny the request for Authorized User privileges. The Office of Institutional Compliance & Risk Management will provide the applicant notification of any decision made regarding the request.

Once an Authorized User has been approved, they no longer need to have approval of the operation of a ACU owned or acquired UAS on University Property or university-sponsored activities. However, all current Authorized Users must still complete a [Unmanned Aircraft System \(UAS\) Request Form](#) prior to each operation of a UAS on University Property or university-sponsored events for informational purposes. This information allows the University to mitigate unauthorized use of a UAS on University Property or university-sponsored activities.

Non-University affiliated individuals (e.g., Contractors, Vendors) are not eligible to become Authorized Users.

#### **f. Responsibilities**

##### **i. Notice**

Upon approval of the operation of a UAS, the applicant agrees to comply with the rules and procedures of this policy, any applicable federal, state, or local laws or regulations, and will collaborate with the University to provide notice to any parties who may be affected by the use of a UAS. This notice must include the time, place, and purpose of the use of a UAS.

##### **ii. Damage**

Any applicant who has been granted approval for the operation of a UAV or UAS on University Property or at university-sponsored activities is responsible for any damage or injury resulting from the operation of a UAV or UAS. If the applicant is a University employee or department, using a third-party contractor to operate a UAV or UAS, liability for damage must be otherwise assigned contractually to this third party. Damage to University property or any injury to an individual(s) resulting from the operation of a UAV or UAS will be considered a violation of this policy.

#### **C. Insurance Requirements**

Have a signed contract with ACU covering the operation of a UAS on University property that: (a) holds the University harmless from any resulting claims or harm to individuals and damage to University property, (b) provides liability (general liability or aircraft hull liability) coverage with a \$1 million per occurrence limit, and (c) adds "Trustees of Abilene Christian University, its officers, employees,

students and agents” as an additional insured. Any modification or deviation from these insurance requirements will require review and approval by Risk Management.

#### **D. Registration & Licensing Requirements**

Any UAS owned or acquired by ACU must be registered in accordance with [FAA requirements](#).

Any UAS operated by an affiliate of ACU (e.g. Staff, Faculty), contractor, or vendor must have an appropriate FFA licensing in accordance with [14 CFR Part 107](#).

#### **E. Exceptions**

Use of a UAS on University property without prior authorization is permitted if the use of a UAS is performed by emergency responders or emergency personnel acting under the authority of applicable law.

### **V. COMPLIANCE**

Failure to comply with this policy or the laws and regulations referenced within this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Any violations of this policy must be reported to the Office of Institutional Compliance & Risk Management at [risk@acu.edu](mailto:risk@acu.edu).