

**Unoccupied Aircraft Systems (UAS)
Summary Report and Recommendations for Change
June 4, 2022**

Formulating a Process and Common Ground on UAS:

Multiple meetings were held in spring and summer 2022 and involved both Unoccupied Aircraft Systems (UAS) approver and researcher input. During these meetings, discussions ensued regarding changes that should be made to the current policy and procedures.

Common Ground:

- The overarching goal of NMSU UAS policies is to streamline and facilitate UAS utilization for research, education, and other purposes, while remaining consistent with relevant Federal, State and local regulations.
- UAS approvals will be centralized to Environmental, Health, Safety, and Risk Management (EHS&RM). Allocation of time and money is required for flight and documentation approver and this person should oversee training/skills development/assessments and the NMSU flight approvals process.
- An electronic flight and tracking management system must be secured to ease the paperwork and tracking burden.
- Pilots will continue to complete FAA Part 107. This is necessary for safety and insurance.
- Continue efforts to identify an UAS test flight area for safe practice.
- NMSU should implement a tiered approvals system, differentiating the approvals process for low risk UAS operations from UAS operations near people and/or buildings.

Key Policy Statements (procedures will be articulated for each of these areas):

1. UAS policies will follow applicable Federal, State, and local regulations.
2. NMSU UAS policies apply to all NMSU students, faculty, staff, and contractors.
3. Purchase of UAS must follow NMSU purchase procedures and meet requirements of contractual language, reviewed by Research Administrative Services (RAS) where applicable.
4. All UAS flights must be operated by or under the direct guidance/observation of an FAA certified pilot.
5. All pilots must complete an online NMSU UAS flight safety training provided by NMSU.
6. All NMSU UAS units must have FAA registration.
7. All UAS units and UAS pilots must be registered with EHS&RM for applicable insurance coverage.
8. Flight approvals will be required as designated in the UAS procedures.
9. Post-flight reporting will be required as designated in the UAS procedures.
10. This policy does not apply to UAS units greater than 55 lbs. Contact the UAS Flight Coordinator in EHS&RM for information on this type of UAS unit.

UAS Pilot Actions:

- Register the drone with the FAA (recommendations for drone purchase provided on website)
- Insure the drone (contact EHS&RM)

- Obtain Part 107 license
- Complete EHS&RM online training
- Flight skills demo and sign off by EHS&RM
- File for flight approval (hopefully the new tracking systems will integrate map capabilities).
- EHS&RM will ensure flight information is available to NMSU Public Safety Offices (as required).
- Access the training area on campus as needed.

Steps for Implementation of New Strategy:

Communicate the overall UAS strategy and plan with faculty, staff, departments, and colleges. Seek to understand what additional changes need to be made prior to July 31, 2022. Complete the necessary paperwork in the policy Hub (<https://policy.nmsu.edu/tools.html>), including the template at

<https://policy.nmsu.edu/resources/policy-draft-template.html>.

Cost Summary to Implement New Strategy:

We are in the process of reviewing potential tracking/approval management systems. Various options have different cost models with either a comprehensive annual fee or a fee per registered flight unit. It appears that the top end of cost will be \$10K annually plus an initial ~\$10K setup fee. The OVPR will cost share at 50%. The remainder of the costs will be shared with colleges per requested approvals during the previous calendar year.