

Interim Policy on the Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (“Drones”)

The use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (“drones”) is primarily regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration, which is currently considering a regulatory framework for drones. Therefore, the University has issued this policy on an interim basis and will modify it as needed consistent with applicable legal developments. The University’s goal is to facilitate the use of drones for legitimate research and business purposes and satisfy the University’s evolving legal obligations. This policy applies to all commercial and noncommercial users of drones, including but not limited to students, faculty and other academic appointees, staff employees, post-doctoral researchers, contractors, employees of affiliates, volunteers, and visitors.

Until further notice, the use of drones on University property or property owned, leased or controlled by the University without prior written permission from the University Department of Safety and Security is prohibited. Any drone use off University property by students, faculty and other academic appointees, staff employees, post-doctoral researchers, contractors, employees of affiliates, volunteers, or visitors that creates a hazard to University property is also prohibited. In addition, authorized drones must be operated in a way that complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and federal guidelines, and does not disrupt University operations or disturb the environment of people in the vicinity. Students, faculty and other academic appointees, staff employees, post-doctoral researchers, contractors, employees of affiliates, volunteers, and visitors who violate this policy will be subject to discipline under the applicable University disciplinary processes, may be held responsible for damages, and may be banned from campus, and may also be subject to fines or other penalties under applicable federal, state, or local law.

For inquiries regarding the use of drones for research purposes, please contact Michael Ludwig, Associate Vice President for Research Administration and Director of University Research Administration, at mrludwig@uchicago.edu. For inquiries regarding the use of drones for other University business, please contact Eric M. Heath, Associate Vice President for Safety & Security at emheath@uchicago.edu.