I. PURPOSE & INTENT:

The University of South Florida System (“USF System”) seeks to create effective administrative, technical, and physical safeguards for the safe and lawful operation of unmanned aircraft systems (“UAS”) in connection with USF System Business and/or on USF System Property (as defined herein).

II. STATEMENT OF POLICY:

This Policy establishes the administrative and operational requirements necessary to ensure that all unmanned aircraft systems owned/registered to the USF System and/or operated on USF System Property or used in connection with USF System Business are conducted in accordance with applicable federal (including rules & regulations issued by the National Parks Service or U.S. Forest Service), state, and local laws (including the respective laws of foreign nation), and Federal Aviation Administration (“FAA”) rules and regulations. Any use of an unmanned aircraft system in connection with USF System Business or on USF System Property is strictly prohibited unless authorized in accordance with this Policy.

III. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS:

1. Approving Responsible Office: The respective office with authority to approve operations pursuant to Section 9, 10, or 11 of this Policy.

2. Certificate of Authorization (“COA”): Authorization issued by the Air Traffic Organization to a public operator for a specific UAS activity. After a complete application is submitted, FAA conducts a comprehensive operational and technical review. If necessary, provisions or limitations may be imposed as part of the approval to ensure the UAS can operate safely with other airspace users. In most cases, FAA will provide a formal response within 60 days from the time a completed
application is submitted. An abbreviated COA is issued with a Section 333 exemption. The full COA is issued for public UAS operation in accordance with Section 334 and is reserved for governmental functions, as defined in 49 U.S.C. § 40125(a)(2), performed through the use of public aircraft, as defined in 49 U.S.C. § 40102(a)(41). University research will rarely, if ever, meet the definition of a governmental function.

3. **Day**: Defined as official sunrise until official sunset.

4. **Model Aircraft**: A UAS used for hobby or recreational use, and not used for business purposes. Use of UAS related to USF System Business or curriculum does not qualify as model aircraft regulations. Model aircraft must be kept within visual sightline of the operator, and should weigh under 55 pounds unless certified by an aeromodelling community-based organization. Model aircraft must be flown a sufficient distance from populated areas.

5. **Part 107**: refers to Part 107 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (see 14 C.F.R. part 107 (2016) and 81 Fed. Reg. 42064, 42209-42213 (June 28, 2016))


9. **Statute Mile**: refers to a unit of measurement equivalent to 5,280 feet.

10. **UAS**: An unmanned aircraft system including all of the associated support equipment, control station, data links, telemetry, communications and navigation equipment, etc., necessary to operate the unmanned aircraft. A UAS may have a variety of names including quadcopter, quadrotor, fixed-wing unmanned aircraft, rotary-wing unmanned aircraft, drone, etc.

11. **USF System Business**: Any official or unofficial business, without regard to who is tasked with completing the business, done in furtherance of any project, research, task, goal, event, or endeavor undertaken by the USF System. USF System Business also includes any teaching, testing, project, assignment, demonstration, research, or otherwise done in connection with any class or course offered by the USF System.
curriculum as well as any extracurricular or co-curricular offerings by the USF System.

12. **USF System Property**: Buildings, grounds, and land that are owned or controlled by the USF System, or any of its direct-support organizations, via leases or other formal contractual arrangements, to house USF System operations. Further, USF System Property shall mean the airspace above any buildings, grounds, or land up to and including 400 feet above ground level.

**IV. PROCESS STEPS:**

1. All members of the USF System community, including faculty, staff, employees, students, visitors, and contractors, are personally responsible for complying with all applicable FAA regulations (including any temporary flight restrictions), federal, state, and local laws (including the respective of a foreign nation), and University policies related to the operation of UAS on USF System Property or in connection with USF System Business.

2. UAS operation other than as specifically authorized by this Policy is strictly prohibited.

3. No one may operate a UAS on USF System Property located at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg due to its proximity to Albert Whitted Airport (KSPG).

4. No one may operate a UAS on USF System Property located at the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee due to its proximity to Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport (KSRQ).

5. All UAS operators must obtain permission in accordance with the applicable procedure prior to using a UAS on USF System Property.

6. UAS operators of UAS owned by and/or registered to USF System must obtain permission, in accordance with the applicable procedure, prior to any operation of the UAS regardless of whether the operation is conducted on USF System Property or elsewhere.

7. All operators of non-USF System UAS with permission to operate on USF System Property must carry comprehensive general liability insurance, that includes coverage for UAS operation, with minimum limits per occurrence of $500,000 and $2,000,000 in aggregate and must name the University of South Florida Board of Trustees as a certificate holder and additional insured. The operator must provide the USF System with the properly endorsed insurance certificate prior to operating a UAS on USF System Property.
8. All approved UAS operation in accordance with Section 9, 10, or 11 of this Policy must comply with the following in addition to all other operational restrictions established by the USF System and the FAA (unless operating pursuant to an applicable waiver from the FAA and express written permission of the USF System where noted below):

a. Each UAS must be registered with the FAA and the registration number must be affixed to the UAS in accordance with FAA requirements;

b. Each UAS must have an identification plate with the name, addresses, and phone number of the UAS's owner or a point of contact if the UAS is owned or registered to the USF System;

c. The operator must have acceptable proof of UAS registration in their physical possession while operating the UAS (i.e. the registration card);

d. Where applicable, the operator must have acceptable proof of their remote pilot certification in their physical possession while operating the UAS (i.e. pilot license);

e. Prior to operating a UAS on USF System Property located on or within 1000 feet of the Tampa institution, the UAS operator must notify USF Police as to the time and place where the UAS will be operated by calling (813) 974-2628;

f. UAS may not operate in poor visibility (i.e. when visibility is less than 3 miles) and must remain clear of clouds, except when operating pursuant to an FAA waiver and the express written permission of the Approving Responsible Office.

g. UAS may not be operated inside any occupied or covered facility unless such facility is designated, either full-time or part-time, for the specific purpose of operating or testing UAS or the operator has express written permission of the facility manager;

h. UAS may not be operated within 75 feet of a residence hall, paved roadway, or parking structure and cannot otherwise interfere with the designated use of USF System Property or facilities without the express written permission of USF Administrative Services;

i. UAS shall not be operated within 300 feet of any concert, festival, or other outdoor event or at any athletic facility that is part of USF System Property, without the express written permission of USF Administrative Services;

j. UAS must not be used to take photos or videos of persons without express written permission the persons involved, or, when applicable, the USF System. Except when given express written permission by the facility owner or manager
and the person to be monitored (with the exception of official law enforcement operations), UAS shall not be used to monitor or record in or near sensitive areas or areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. These areas can include, but are not limited to, restrooms, locker or changing rooms, dormitory rooms or apartments, child care centers, and medical treatment facilities;

k. UAS may not be used to take photos or videos of any workout, practice, or competition of any USF System intercollegiate sports team without the express written permission of the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics or his or her designee. Any such approved use must be in compliance with all other provisions of this Policy;

l. No operation from a moving aircraft except when operating pursuant to an FAA waiver and the express written permission of the Approving Responsible Office;

m. No operation from a moving vehicle except when operating over a sparsely populated area or pursuant to an FAA waiver and the express written permission of the Approving Responsible Office;

n. No operation over any person who is not directly participating in the operation of the UAS except when operating pursuant to an FAA waiver and the express written permission of the Approving Responsible Office;

o. Yield right of way to manned aircraft;

p. No careless or reckless operations;

q. No carriage of hazardous materials;

r. No carriage of any nonhazardous materials or payload without the express written permission of the Approving Responsible Office;

s. Use cannot violate state, federal, or local law (including the respective laws of a foreign nation), USF regulations and policies, and cannot unlawfully interfere with or violate an individual’s constitutional rights (including, but not limited to, those protected by the First and Fourth Amendment);

t. No one may operate a UAS under the influence of alcohol or drugs pursuant to 14 C.F.R. § 91.17;

u. The UAS operator has the sole obligation to determine if the UAS operations will be conducted within five (5) Statute Miles of any airport, and if so, to notify the airport operator and air traffic control tower of the UAS operation. When operating with approval in accordance with this Policy on USF System Property located at or near the Tampa institution, the UAS operator is required to provide
prior notice to Tampa Executive Airport (KVDF) air traffic control by completing the UAS Notification Form located at http://www.tampaairport.com/UAS; and

v. All UAS operations must be in compliance with Export Administration Act of 1979 and Arms Export Control Act and all approvals for UAS operations are subject to prior approval of the USF Office of Export Controls.

w. No UAS may be operated on USF System Property or in connection with USF System Business unless it is equipped to return to a pre-defined point (i.e. launch point) in the event of a signal loss or control failure without the express written permission of the Approving Responsible Office. In the event of such failure, the UAS operator is responsible for immediately notifying the nearest air traffic control authority and the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the area of the UAS’s last known location.

9. Upon receiving prior approval in accordance with procedures established by the Provost, UAS that meets the definition of a Model Aircraft may be operated by students and employees of the USF System in the course of academic study or instruction under the following conditions if such use meets the requirements of Section 8 above and Section 336. In summary:

a. Total weight of UAS, including payload, does not exceed 55 pounds;

b. Operation must be during the Day;

c. Operator does not receive any form of direct or incidental compensation (e.g. salary, honorarium, research grants etc.);

d. Faculty use is limited only to operation that is secondary to the student’s primary purpose for taking the course taught by the faculty member (e.g. faculty member can fly UAS to test a UAS created by a student as part of a course with a primary purpose of designing & constructing a UAS)

e. UAS is not indirectly operated for a business or other commercial purpose; and

f. Students operating UAS, regardless of whether the UAS is owned by the USF System, on USF System Property in connection with USF System Business must operate with the approval of an authorized employee of the USF System.

10. Upon receiving prior approval in accordance with procedures established by USF Research & Innovation, UAS may be operated by students, employees, and contractors of the USF System in the course of conducting research if they meet one of the following in addition to the requirements of Section 8 above:
a. The use of the UAS meets the requirements of Part 107 (absent an applicable waiver from FAA and USF System). In summary the UAS may only operate:

i. in Class G airspace;

ii. in sight (visual line-of-sight);

iii. under 400 feet;

iv. during the Day; and

v. at or below 100 mph (86.9 kt).

b. The use is pursuant to a COA issued by the FAA under Section 333 or Section 334 (including operation of a UAS that exceeds 55 pounds).

11. USF System employees, when performing USF System Business, and contracted vendors, who are providing commercial services on USF System Property, and any other person or entity whose operation, as determined by USF Environmental Health & Safety in its sole discretion, provides a substantial benefit to the USF System that outweighs the potential risk associated with such operation, may operate a UAS upon receiving prior approval in accordance with procedures established by USF Environmental Health & Safety and, in the case of a contracted vendor, in accordance with the terms of the vendor’s contract with USF so long as they meet one of the following in addition to the requirements of Section 8 above:

a. The use of the UAS meets the requirements of Part 107 (absent an applicable waiver from FAA and USF System). In summary the UAS may only operate:

i. in Class G airspace;

ii. in sight (visual line-of-sight);

iii. under 400 feet;

iv. during the Day; and

v. at or below 100 mph (86.9 kt).

b. The use is pursuant to a COA issued by the FAA under Section 333 or Section 334 (including operation of a UAS that exceeds 55 pounds).

V. EXEMPTION: Official law enforcement operations conducted by a state or federal law enforcement agency with proper jurisdiction are exempt from the requirements of this Policy.
VI. **ENFORCEMENT:** All violations of this policy may be enforced by University Police in addition to the Responsible Offices. University Police are authorized to issue a no trespass order to anyone in violation of this policy as deemed appropriate in their discretion in accordance with USF Regulation [USF4.0140](#). Any violation of this policy may subject the violator to immediate revocation of operating privileges, fines, and additional civil or criminal penalties up to and including, arrest and/or referral to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities or Human Resources for further disciplinary action.

VII. **RELATED INFORMATION:**

- Federal Aviation Administration - [https://www.faa.gov/uas/](https://www.faa.gov/uas/)
- [https://www.nps.gov/orgs/aviationprogram/unmanned-aircraft-systems.htm](https://www.nps.gov/orgs/aviationprogram/unmanned-aircraft-systems.htm)
- U.S. Forest Service - [https://www.fs.fed.us/science-technology/fire/unmanned-aircraft-systems](https://www.fs.fed.us/science-technology/fire/unmanned-aircraft-systems)
- Tampa Executive Airport - [http://www.tampaairport.com/UAS](http://www.tampaairport.com/UAS)

**Current Responsible Office***: Administrative Services, Academic Affairs, and Research & Innovation

*Refer to the appropriate Responsible Office website for a current name of the Vice President or other Responsible Officer.

*History: New 6-15-17, 8-30-18 (technical).*