

# Drone Policy

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the appropriate use of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS), also known as “drones,” at Soka University of America in Aliso Viejo, California.

## Terms and Definitions

**FAA. Federal Aviation Administration.** The U.S. government agency under the Department of Transportation, which regulates civil aviation including unmanned aircraft systems.

**No Drone Zone.** An area over which unmanned aircraft are not allowed to fly.

**sUAS. Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems.** An unmanned controlled aircraft of a weight up to fifty-five (55) pounds, any size or design, and all associated support and control equipment, such as communications, telemetry, and navigational equipment intended to fly in the national airspace system. sUAS may also be referred to as a drone or model aircraft.

**sUAS Operator(s).** Person(s) seeking to operate the sUAS, each of whom is responsible for maintaining control of the sUAS throughout the flight.

## Statement of Policy

Soka University of America recognizes that sUAS may offer significant contributions to the teaching and research endeavors of University faculty, researchers, and students, and may also offer opportunities for University administrative offices in carrying out their functions. The use of sUAS, however, is regulated by law and can pose significant safety, security, and privacy risks to the University community.

All activities involving the use of sUAS shall be conducted in compliance with the applicable federal, state, and local laws, statutes, and regulations and in compliance with Soka University policies and procedures. Regulations in Aliso Viejo, California, restrict an individual from takeoff, landing, or operating a sUAS:

- Within 25 feet of another individual, except the operator or the operator’s designee
- Without the consent of the property owner,
- Within 1,500 horizontal feet of any aircraft
- With any type of weapon attached to it.
- Within 500 feet of any emergency vehicle that is operating with lights and/or sirens
- Within 500 feet of any active law enforcement or emergency response incident
- In violation of any temporary flight restriction or notice to airmen issued by the FAA
- In a manner that delays, obstructs, or impedes any peace officer, firefighter, emergency rescue personnel, or emergency medical technician in the discharge or attempt to discharge the duty of their office or employment
- In a manner that harasses an individual, intrudes upon an individual’s privacy, or comes within 10 feet of a person not participating in the operation.

All sUAS must be registered with the FAA. Owners must carry proof of the FAA registration when using the sUAS and drones must carry a mark with the registration number

## Statement of Requirements

All students, staff, and faculty seeking to operate a sUAS on the Soka University of America campus must submit an application for use thirty (30) days in advance of the requested use. Applications will be reviewed for

- Compliance with applicable federal, state, local, and university laws, statutes, regulations, and policies,
- Impacts to public safety,
- Impacts to privacy,
- Impacts to civil rights and civil liberties,
- Compliance with insurance requirements

The following are prohibited uses of sUAS on the Soka University of America campus:

- Operation of sUAS by a member of the general public on the Soka University campus, for any purpose
- Operation of sUAS inside any University building for hobby purposes
- Operation of sUAS by a Soka University of America student, staff or faculty without prior approval from the entity listed in the Statement of Procedures.
- Operation of sUAS to monitor or record areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy in accordance with accepted social norms and legal requirements (such as recording individuals inside a Residence Hall room through windows)
- Use of sUAS to monitor or record inside of University facilities without prior approval
- Use of sUAS in a No Drone Zone or any location on University property where there is a significant safety, security, or privacy risk to the University community.

#### **Statement of Procedures**

Individuals who wish to use sUAS on the Soka campus should adhere to the following procedures:

Soka University of America students, staff, or faculty seeking to use sUAS for teaching, research, or any other valid educational purpose must submit an application to the Dean of Faculty for review and approval. An application should be submitted at least thirty (30) days prior to intended use.

- Authorization for research purposes should be sought prior to submission of any proposal or the acceptance of any award for each project that necessitates the use of an sUAS on the Soka campus.
- The Dean of Faculty will ensure the application for operation of sUAS complies with all federal, state, and local ordinances, as well as SUA policy.

Soka University of America staff, or faculty seeking to use sUAS for university-sponsored activities including, but not limited to, marketing, film-making, and publicity, must submit an application to the Executive Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications. An application should be submitted at least thirty (30) days prior to intended use.

- Authorization for university-sponsored activities should be sought prior to finalizing any contract with third-party vendors.
- The Executive Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications will ensure the application for operation of sUAS complies with all federal, state, and local ordinances, as well as SUA policy.

Soka University of America students seeking to use sUAS for university-sponsored activities including, but not limited to, club activities or university sponsored events must submit an application to the Dean of Students. An application should be submitted at least thirty (30) days prior to intended use.

- Authorization for university-sponsored activities should be sought prior to finalizing any contract with third-party vendors.
- The Dean of Students will ensure the application for operation of sUAS complies with all federal, state, and local ordinances, as well as SUA policy.