What is an unmanned aircraft system (UAS)?
An unmanned aircraft system is the aircraft (model airplane, helicopter, quadcopter, etc.), platform, payload and the autopilot, the communications, avionics (the on-board intelligence, communications, radio transmissions), and the human pilot.

Why does the university use the term “UAS” and not “drone”? 
The term UAS, or unmanned aircraft system, is in line with the industry standard. The term “drone” is typically associated with just the aircraft and is not an accurate reflection of the capabilities employed on high technology systems. Also, a “drone” is sometimes used by hobbyists to generically refer to a radio-controlled quadcopter (a helicopter with four rotors). These are actually just one type of unmanned aircraft.

Do I need approval from the university to use a UAS on university property or at a university-sponsored event?
Yes. The University of Toledo has implemented an unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) Policy to mitigate risks to individuals and organizations potentially affected by UAS operations; to comply with federal, state, and local laws, as well as regulations and contracts; and to enable scholarship.

The UAS policy ensures that the university has clear lines of authority and well-defined internal processes to identify, manage, and mitigate risk, and for safe and legal operation of UAS in furtherance of its institutional goals and objectives.

Please note that operation of a UAS is also regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and by federal, state, and local laws. Anyone who seeks permission from the university to operate a UAS on University of Toledo property or at any university-sponsored event must receive approval from all appropriate agencies (if necessary) in advance of requesting such approval.

What should I do to obtain permission from the university to operate a UAS on university property or a university-sponsored event?
Refer to the “PROCEDURES” section of the university’s unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) Policy and follow the appropriate procedures. The procedures can be found on the University of Toledo Police website under the UAS link.

There is a set of procedures for faculty, staff, graduate associates, or students wishing to use a UAS for research or educational purposes. There are additional procedures for contractors or third party operators wishing to use a UAS for a university activity or operate a UAS on university property. Finally, there are procedures for individuals wishing to use a model aircraft for hobby or recreational purposes on university property.

Note that all UAS requests require specific periods of advance notice for approval to be considered by the UAS Committee.

Are there any other approvals required outside of the UAS Committee?
Depending on your intended use and activities associated with the use of your UAS, there may be other university approvals required before you can operate your UAS on university property or at university events. These approvals will be coordinated by the UAS Committee before your Request is approved or denied. Once the UAS Committee grants approval, you are good to move ahead with your UAS operation.

For example, any videography, photography or recording to be obtained through the approved use of a UAS must also have the planned videography, photography or recording approved through the Office of Marketing & Communications. The Office of Research Compliance may also conduct an Export Review of a UAS request before final approval is granted. Guidance for this process may be found in the UAS Policy.
Who does the university’s UAS Policy apply to?
The policy applies to faculty, staff, graduate students, student employees, students, volunteers, visitors, vendors/contractors, and all third party operators working with a specific unit within the university who acquire or seek to operate a UAS on any university property or at any university-sponsored event.

Is there an exemption to FAA regulations when using a UAS for teaching or research purposes?
Students can fly as hobbyists (without express FAA approval) for student activities and in course work for credit, provided they do not receive compensation for the flights (apart from financial aid, work study, etc.). Student hobbyists must still register with FAA and provide a registration number.

Faculty can assist in the flights above, and that does not change the hobbyist nature of the flight.

However, faculty conducting research or other activities pursuant to professional responsibilities would still need to follow the FAA’s guidelines for those types of flights.

While there may be exceptions to FAA’s approval requirements, anyone operating a UAS on university property or at a university-sponsored event must follow the university’s UAS approval process.

Why is the university’s UAS policy necessary?
Because unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) are becoming an important tool for many different types of research and businesses, and are becoming more popular as a hobby, it was necessary for The University of Toledo to formalize a policy and a permission process to manage UAS operations on university property and university-sponsored events.

The University of Toledo is committed to providing an academically vigorous, safe, and secure environment for all individuals and organizations. Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) offer opportunities for teaching and research and provide the university community with valuable experiences in a wide range of academic disciplines.

What UAS activities are permitted under the University of Toledo UAS policy?
With university permission, common uses of UAS permitted on university property and at university-sponsored events include, but are not limited to, research, teaching, hobby, recreation, advertising, and commercial/business ventures.

What UAS activities are not permitted under the University of Toledo UAS policy?
Generally speaking, the following activities not permitted on university owned property or at a university activity include, but are not limited to:

- a UAS may not be used to monitor or record activities where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy on university property or at university-sponsored events. (Examples include, but are not limited to, restrooms, locker rooms, residence halls, medical facilities, etc.)
- a UAS may not be flown in a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) area nor in “No Drone Zones” on university property or at university-sponsored events.
- any operation of aircraft that endangers public safety – either on the ground or in the air. This is also prohibited by the FAA and violations carry very stiff federal penalties.

What is a UAS platform?
Platform is a generic term for UAS that developed from the context of the aircraft being used as a “platform” to hold a sensor. The platform, or unmanned aircraft vehicle (UAV), is often chosen by what type of information will be collected during the mission and other performance parameters such as range, altitude, and endurance.

What is a UAS payload?
It is any device that is part of the aircraft that is used to gather or collect data external to the aircraft. A payload can consist of a camera; there are numerous types of cameras that capture standard visual images (called electro-optical) or different wavelengths, such as infrared, near-infrared, multispectral, hyperspectral. Payloads can also be radars, air sampling sensors, radiation detectors, and many more.
What if I’d rather operate my UAS off-campus on non-university property or at a non-university sponsored event?
The university's policy would not apply if a UAS is operated on property not owned by the university or at an activity that is not sponsored by the university. However, operation of UAS is still regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and by federal, state, and local laws. Anyone who seeks to operate UAS on non-university property or a non-university event must still comply with all appropriate federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

What about model aircraft flown for hobby or recreational purposes on university property or at university-sponsored events?
Model aircraft is defined as an unmanned aircraft system (UAS) that is (1) flown for hobby or recreational purposes, per section 336(c) of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012; (2) capable of sustained flight in the atmosphere; and (3) flown within visual line of sight of the aircraft operator. The model aircraft must not exceed a weight of 55 pounds. This type of UAS does not require FAA approval but model aircraft flights are still subject to the FAA’s registration process and the university policy on unmanned aircraft systems & model aircraft.

What is the FAA’s role in unmanned aircraft systems (UAS)?
The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has jurisdiction over all navigable airspace in the United States. Also, all aircraft – whether manned or unmanned – are subject to FAA rules and regulations. The FAA’s primary mission is to ensure the safe and efficient oversight and management of the national airspace system (NAS).

The FAA sets the rules for operation of all manned and unmanned aircraft, including model aircraft being flown for hobby or recreational purposes weighing less than 55 pounds. These rules are found in Section 333 of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (FMRA). The FAA also has the authority to grant Exemptions from Section 333 of FMRA and Certificates of Authorization (COAs) for systems using a UAS (other than systems using model aircraft weighing less than 55 pounds flown for hobby or recreational purposes).

Why do I need to register my UAS?
Federal law requires that all aircraft (which includes UAS and radio/remote controlled aircraft) flown outdoors must be registered with the FAA and marked with a registration number. UAS weighing more than 0.55 pounds and less than 55 pounds may register online

https://registermyuas.faa.gov/

How do I know where it is OK to fly and where it is not OK to fly?
The FAA has developed a mobile app called B4UFLY to help recreational UAS operators know whether there are any restrictions or requirements where they want to fly. Additional guidance is also available in the "Where to Fly" section of this website