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Oakland University partners with DCT Aviation for sUAS Remote Pilot Certification Program

In response to new federal guidelines regarding routine commercial use of small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS or “drones”), Oakland University’s **School of Engineering**, in collaboration with **Professional and Continuing Education (PACE)**, has partnered with **DCT Aviation** of Waterford, Mich. to develop a new, two-course sUAS Remote Pilot Certificate Program.

The new rules, which took effect in late August, offer safety regulations for unmanned aircraft drones weighing less than 55 pounds that are conducting non-hobbyist operations with provisions designed to minimize risks to other aircraft and people and property on the ground.

The guidelines also require pilots to keep an unmanned aircraft within visual line of sight, and allow operations during daylight and during twilight if the drone has anti-collision lights. In addition, the new regulations also address height and speed restrictions and other operational limits, such as prohibiting flights over unprotected people on the ground who are not directly participating in the sUAS operation.



Oakland University has partnered with DCT Aviation to develop a new, two-course sUAS Remote Pilot Certificate Program.

“As sUAS take off in popularity, economic opportunities and safety issues associated with drones are also on the rise,” said **Ka C. Cheok**, Ph.D, a professor of engineering at Oakland University who helped to put the program together.

“Our courses, taught by practicing professionals and educators, are designed to provide students hands-on lessons on safety and aptitude for operating sUAS, along with application potentials.”

The two-course program is specifically designed to provide both basic airman knowledge, hands-on flying skill, and preparation to apply for and pass the Federal Aviation Administration’s sUAS Remote Pilot Certification Test. Students will be required to demonstrate proficiency in knowledge and operations of an sUAS through both written and flying skill tests throughout the program.

“Certifications are growing in popularity for today’s fast-paced professionals, allowing them to achieve high-quality, targeted and practical curriculum that is recognized in the workplace,” said **Lori Crose**, director of PACE. “OU has been a leader in developing and offering progressive and innovative professional development programming and certifications that have been recognized nationally.”

Because the FAA’s sUAS Remote Pilot Certification Test is required for commercial operation, the program is ideal for individuals that will be taking on the responsibility for sUAS operation on behalf of their company or for those individuals interested in starting up their own sUAS related business.

“Specific courses within this program are also perfect for people that want to learn the skills and knowledge for safe sUAS use, even if it is your hobby,” Crose said.

A PACE Certificate of Achievement will be issued to participants who pass both courses (CEEN 10101 and CEEN 10201) and the FAA administered exam.

“We are part of a new era in innovation, and the potential for unmanned aircraft will make it safer and easier to do certain jobs, gather information, and deploy disaster relief,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. “We look forward to working with the aviation community to support innovation, while maintaining our standards as the safest and most complex airspace in the world.”

Courses run quarterly starting in January 2017. Instructors are engineered professors and either certified pilots or remote pilots. Course participants are required to sign a waiver, be at least 16 years old, and be insured.

Registration information, cost, insurance, waivers and detailed course descriptions can be found online at www.Oakland.edu/pace under the “Engineering Programs” side tab.



New federal guidelines offer safety regulations for small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS), which are sometimes referred to as "drones."

For more information, email oupace@oakland.edu.