

CALS Support for Federal-Compliant UAS/drones for Federal Research

February 10, 2026

Purpose

This program is meant to assist with the costs of meeting the recent [Federal prohibition](#) on unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) manufactured or assembled outside of the USA, with federal-compliant platforms to ensure continuity of research activities and alignment with current sponsor and institutional requirements.

Who Should Apply

Faculty or research staff who currently rely on non-compliant UAS for research and require federal-compliant systems to continue their work. Collaborative and shared-use requests are strongly encouraged.

Allowable Requests

Funds may be used for federal-compliant UAS, batteries, controllers, cases, and other accessories necessary for safe and compliant research operations. All purchases must follow institutional procurement, compliance, and UW policies.

Application Format

Applicants should submit via email to trunge@wisc.edu a single PDF generated from the attached form (maximum two pages total) by March 2. The application is intentionally brief to reduce administrative burden.

Review and Allocation

Applications will be reviewed by a subset of the ARS Committee with UAS expertise. This group will evaluate research need, compliance risk, and opportunities for shared use, and will recommend an equitable distribution of the drone replacement funds across applicants based on needs. Due to limited funds, awards may not accommodate all requests. Due to limited funds and expected needs, either (A) 50% cost-sharing or (B) partnership (see #4 below) will be required for awarded requests. We will also make attempt to coordinate purchasing of new equipment to allow for volume discounts and reduced purchasing compliance burdens.

Application Form: Federal-Compliant UAV Replacement

1. Applicant Information

PI Name:

Department:

Email:

Other Faculty Partners (if any):

2. Non-Compliant Drones to Be Replaced

List current non-compliant UAVs and critical accessories (make/model and primary research use):

Planned disposition of non-compliant drones after replacement:

3. Requested Federal-Compliant Replacement

Briefly describe the requested drone platform(s), if applicable, and costs. If there are multiple options, please list with preference rankings along with costs.

4. Cost-Share and/or Partnership

Option A – Cost-Share (targeted 50% amount)

Amount: \$_____ Source: _____

Option B – Partnership (replacing non-compliant drones in multiple labs with a single shared drone eliminates need for cost-share):

Faculty/labs sharing the UAV and how it will be managed:

5. Research Impact

In 3–5 sentences, describe why UAV access is important for your research and specify any grants, proposals, or students that depend on this capability. Include plans for your research if requested funds are not provided.