

Unmanned Aircraft Systems

Light UAS Operator Certificate Policy Concept

CAP 3222

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The latest version of this document is available in electronic format at: www.caa.co.uk

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Foreword

Purpose

This policy concept sets out the approach for organisations intending to apply and that may participate in a trial to obtain a Light UAS Operator Certificate (LUC) for authorising their own operations in the Specific Category. Only a limited number of organisations will be selected as part of the trial while broader policy objectives and guidance are developed.

This policy concept is available to those organisations who have successfully applied to be part of this trial. Applications for the trial will be open from 26 February 2026 to 26 March 2026, further information can be found on our [website](#).

Availability

The latest version of CAP3222 can be found within the [publications](#) section of the CAA website.

Updated information can be found within the [latest updates](#) section of the CAA website's UAS webpages.

The CAA also provides a more general aviation update service via the [SkyWise system](#), which can be filtered by subject matter for relevant UAS related information.

Point of Contact

Unless otherwise stated, all enquiries relating to CAP3222 must be made to:

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Abbreviations and Glossary of Terms

The definitive list of abbreviations and terms/definitions that are relevant to UAS operations within the UK are centralised within CAP 722D UAS Definitions and Glossary (www.caa.co.uk/cap722d).

Chapter 1

Introduction

As the UK's aviation regulator, the CAA ensures a high standard of safety in civil aviation activities.

This document sets out the approach the CAA intends to take to UAS operations conducted under an LUC approval, to ensure they are conducted safely, with appropriate oversight and assurance. It introduces a policy position that provides an alternative pathway for eligible organisations to operate under CAA oversight without the need for case-by-case approvals for UAS activities in the Specific Category.

This policy introduces a 12-month trial of the LUC concept for eligible UAS operators. The trial will allow the CAA to assess safety performance, compliance, and oversight effectiveness before considering wider adoption or integration with UK Specific Operations Risk Assessment (SORA) methodology.

Objectives

This document explains the LUC concept and provides an alternative way for UAS operators to be subject to CAA oversight without needing a case-by-case UK SORA based Operational Authorisation (OA).

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Give suitable UAS operators a means of authorising their operations without submitting individual SORA applications for every UAS activity.
- Ensure that all operations remain within agreed limits by using existing organisational systems and competence.
- Allow the CAA to carry out oversight and assurance in a way that is proportionate and practical, while supporting operational flexibility.

Background

Currently, UAS operations in the Specific Category require an OA. OAs issued under the SORA framework provide a structured approach to risk assessment but are subject to evaluation on an operation-by-operation basis.

The LUC is an operational certificate which, if obtained, grants some privileges to its holder. It will allow the operator to undertake certain operations in the Specific Category without needing an OA issued by the CAA.

Chapter 2

LUC Policy Concept

Eligibility

To apply for an LUC under this pathway, an operator should have made a successful application for the LUC trial, via the CAA [website](#).

LUC Requirements

Operators using this pathway must comply with:

- Part C of UK Regulation (EU) 2019/947, which defines the requirements for holding and maintaining a Light UAS Operator Certificate.
- Article 11 of UK Regulation (EU) 2019/947, which includes identifying hazards, assessing severity and likelihood, and implementing mitigations.

This ensures that all activities under the LUC pathway meet the necessary regulatory standards for safety and risk management.

Risk Management Approach

Operators may choose to base their risk assessment on the SORA methodology, which is widely recognised and can significantly reduce the time required for the LUC assessment process completed by the CAA.

As part of this trial, the CAA would like to understand whether alternative methodologies within the LUC construct are viable, and if so, under what circumstances should they be used, or whether UK SORA should always be used within the LUC framework. Some organisations may prefer to apply their existing risk methodologies within their Safety Management System (SMS), provided the approach meets the requirements of Article 11 of UK Regulation (EU) 2019/947. This flexibility ensures that organisations can select the most appropriate method for their operational context whilst maintaining compliance and safety standards.

Terms of the LUC Approval

The CAA will assess the operator's compliance with the requirements set out in UAS.LUC.020, UAS.LUC.030 and UAS.LUC.040 of Part C of UK Regulation (EU) 2019/947. The CAA shall issue a LUC only once it is satisfied that the operator complies with these requirements.

The certificate will include the operator's identification, details of their privileges, the authorised type or types of operation, the designated area or class of airspace for those operations (where applicable), and any special limitations or conditions that may apply

(e.g., geographic restrictions, operational conditions). The privileges and limitations of the LUC will be determined as part of the assessment for obtaining the certificate, and may vary between operators.

The LUC will be issued as a separate approval, distinct from an operator's AOC, but it will leverage the governance and compliance structures already in place under the AOC.

Regulatory Oversight

The intent of this policy is to enable operators to manage their UAS activities with greater independence, with the CAA providing direct oversight through existing processes. This accelerates delivery and demonstrates a modern, enabling regulatory mindset. The first audit will be conducted as soon as the operator has self-authorised an operation, and a second audit will be planned halfway through the trial. This approach allows the CAA to evaluate its effectiveness and gather insights for future policy development.

Duration of Approval

An LUC issued under this policy will be granted for the duration of the 12-month trial period. This approval is temporary and intended to enable the CAA to evaluate the effectiveness of the LUC framework for operators.

There is no guarantee that the LUC will be renewed or extended beyond the trial period. Any future continuation or broader roll-out will depend on the findings of the review of the trial and may involve changes to the approval conditions.

Review

The CAA will monitor compliance and review safety performance. A review will evaluate how well the process worked, identify lessons learned, and decide if changes to the policy are required.

This review will include feedback from stakeholders, risk assessment results, and an analysis of regulatory impacts to make sure the policy continues to balance safety, efficiency and flexibility.

How to apply?

If your organisation meets the desireables for the LUC trial listed in the Call for Interest, you can begin the process by responding to a Call for Interest, which is published online at [Light UAS Operator Certificate Trial - Civil Aviation Authority - Citizen Space](#). Further details, including timelines and submission requirements, will be outlined in the published call.