

Questions presented at the COE UAS Public Meeting

Newly Posted: July 21, 2014

- Q45 [How much and in what ways will ATC automation systems need to be changed or modified to enable UAS integration?](#)
- Q46 [How are you capturing what requirements will need to be made to NextGen ATC/ATM systems in order to have them developed in a timely manner?](#)
- Q47 [What thoughts can you provide to applicants about a "Stop-Gap" requirement list that would govern flight ops in public airspace by rapidly growing commercial UAS market?](#)
- Q48 [The COE Draft Solicitation currently does not discuss much on the characterization of risk that the UAS brings to the NAS. Would it be appropriate for the COE to conduct research on risk scenarios, models, etc. in order to better understand risk issues?](#)
- Q49 [The small UAS rules should allow operational altitudes \(more than 400 ft. AGL\) that are more consistent with demonstrated efficiencies of many commercially viable imaging systems. Will the UAS rules allow operations above 400 ft AGL?](#)
- Q50 [What type of license will a drone pilot be required to hold? How many hours will be required?](#)
- Q51 [What is the Testing process? Will a medical certification be required?](#)
- Q52 [Will Drone Instructors be required to hold a CFI?](#)
- Q53 [Will a drone mechanic be required to possess an A&P?](#)
- Q54 [Pilot training support? Will they be restricted to VFR flight \(since no pilot aboard, meaning line of sight? Or will they be permitted to fly IFR?](#)
- Q55 [Will they be required to have Mode S Transponders installed?](#)
- Q56 [What are your top three most pressing Human Factors research topics for UAS integration into the NAS?](#)
- Q57 [NASA, FAA UAS test sites and the FAA COE for UAS seem to be paralleling efforts in areas such as Sense and Avoid, Human Factors and UAS performance standards. What are the FAA's plans to coordinate these efforts and reduce cost by data sharing and communication?](#)
- Q58 [Will FAA COE, FAA UAS test sites or NASA be designated as the POC for the research objectives?](#)
- Q59 [How does the FAA envision model \(hobbyist\) aircraft should be considered by COE researchers, if at all? i.e.: moving/debris \(non-cooperative\), regulate as needed \(size, airspace,](#)

etc.), challenges: define new policy & enforcement mechanism?

- Q60 Flight under the COA system and/or Part 333 (industry collaboration) may provide economic advantage, especially for those who are not in proximity to a test site. What guidance should COE teams use to prepare competitive proposals with respect to this challenge?
- Q61 How much funding will be allocated annually for the COE? There seems to be different amounts reflected in the Q&A and the presentations, and FAA is silent on this commitment in the solicitation, not usually the case. What dollar amounts are most likely and should we plan for annually in our proposal?
- Q62 How much funding is initially available from the FAA?
 1. Will this amount reflect only what Congress dictates?
 2. Will this amount be the required match a team should plan to provide each year or the minimum match?

Q63 Generally a COE is created with a statement from a sponsor that makes a commitment of funds. Are we to understand that there is currently no sponsor making this commitment beyond Congress? Is it fair to interpret that the UAS office is making no independent commitment?

Q64 Would a potential conflict of interest exist if an existing test site also were selected for a COE award? (Historically, testing is performed by an independent entity.)

Q65 I was previously advised that there was no connection between the COE effort and the test sites as their statutory authority was different. Should the FAA ultimately include the "ability to partner with existing test sites" as a factor, I strongly suggest that the word "existing" be dropped. Also, you may want to include an explanatory clause or sentence to the effect that "such test sites are not limited to the six sites selected pursuant to the FAA modernization and reform act of 2012" to be perfectly clear. Is this possible?

Public Meeting

- Q43 Could you please make the list of attendees at the public meeting available?(July 11, 2014)
- Q26 Will the slide presentations be made available electronically, if so, how and when?(June 11, 2014)

Roles

- Q40 How do you see the role of the Air Transportation Centers of Excellence (COE) in relations with stakeholders?
Suggestion: The COE should not only be a supplier of general directions and a facilitator for the stakeholders, but should also actively promote the work of participants showing progressive

results. Periodic reports and presentations to COE and FAA will ensure that progress is on schedule. The COE should approve the near-term, intermediate, and long-term milestones set by industry. The milestones must be objectively measurable.(July 3, 2014)

- Q39 What is the most effective way to organizing a diverse group of stakeholders for developing such technical parameters?
Suggestion: For achieving effective results, we must organize a diverse group of stakeholders. Participation from the general public should be encouraged via mediums of publication that do not merely attract large companies that may have an interest in maintaining the status quo. Experts with knowledge in every field and subfield regardless should participate to ensure that the solution reached truly does consider the full extent and capabilities of modern technology and future growth in technology.(July 3, 2014)
- Q36 Can a university be an affiliate on one team that submits a proposal, and also be listed as a core member on another team proposal?(June 27, 2014)
- Q31 Once selected, does the FAA expect members of the COE to work on projects in teams?(June 20, 2014)
- Q30 If the FAA prefers to work with each individual university member on the selected team, why do you expect a lead university to be designated during the proposal phase?(June 20, 2014)
- Q29 If the FAA expects the lead university to continue to serve the team as a 'lead' after the COE is selected, what role would that university play if it is not serving as the prime for each award?(June 20, 2014)
- Q28 When the FAA issues a cooperative agreement or grant to a 'core' university does the 'lead' university have any liability on that award?(June 20, 2014)
- Q27 When the FAA issues a contract award to a core university within the COE, does the lead university who signed the COE award with the FAA have any liability on the contract to their core team members?(June 20, 2014)
- Q18 Can industry partners be on more than one COE team?(June 11, 2014)
- Q17 Can universities be on more than one COE team?(June 11, 2014)
- Q16 Can a University currently serving as a COE Lead propose serving on the new COE for UAS at the same time? (May 30, 2014)
- Q15 Should a team propose an Advisory Board in response to the COE UAS solicitation, would FAA employees be available to serve on such a group? (May 30, 2014)

Funding

- Q14 Who can apply for the COE and receive funds? (May 30, 2014)

- Q13 [How does the FAA intend to fund the UAS COE in FY15 and FY16? The Congressionally mandated \\$1.1M for UAS start up is hardly adequate to initiate a research initiative. Are we to conclude the start-up money is for administrative costs and travel only? At what level has the FAA committed funds for the research activities? Pulling together a proposal is costly for all involved. If research funding is so low does this indicate the FAA's level of commitment? Funding at the \\$1M annually level will not give the FAA the results requested on your announcement.](#)
(May 30, 2014)

Matching Funds/Cost Sharing

- Q25 [Can new or ongoing STEM programs relevant to UAS operated by a COE team member count as a match, such as HS programs, summer camps, etc.](#)(June 11, 2014)
- Q24 [Was it stated at the meeting that matching contributions could be spread out over the initial 5-year cooperative agreement if permitted by the educational institution?](#)(June 11, 2014)
- Q23 [Does each individual university within a team have to match dollar-for-dollar or does just the team as a whole have to provide match?](#)(June 11, 2014)
- Q22 [Can \\$:\\$ matching be in-kind \(e.g. materials, services\)?](#)(June 11, 2014)
- Q21 [Does \\$:\\$ matching apply to IDIQ tasks? It seems unfair to make industry pay for FAA-required deliverables.](#)(June 11, 2014)
- Q20 [Given the high costs of proposal development \(especially for industrial partners dedicating human resources to the effort\). can the funds spent in proposal development by industry partners be counted as an in-kind match contribution?](#)(June 11, 2014)
- Q19 [Does it matter whether the matching funds come from industry or state/local governments – will they be weighted differently?](#)(June 11, 2014)

Proposal Evaluation/Selection

- Q32 [Does the selection process in any way favor teams whose members currently receive less FAA funding? Does the FAA try to spread funding equally at the University level once a COE is selected?](#)(June 20, 2014)
- Q12 [Who will make the final COE selection?](#) (May 30, 2014)

COE Management/Administration

- Q11 [How long will the COE continue for?](#) (May 30, 2014)

Test Sites and the COE

- Q33 [Please provide clarification between the presentation at the public meeting indicating the COE must use the six test sites vs the language in the Draft Solicitation.](#)(June 27, 2014)

- Q10 [What is the difference between the work at the Test Sites and the COE?](#) (May 30, 2014)
- Q9 [Are universities excluded from joining a team that is preparing to participate in the COE competition if they are part of the six recently selected test sites?](#) (May 30, 2014)
- Q8 [Will universities who participated in successful test site applications have an advantage or a disadvantage in the COE selection?](#) (May 30, 2014)
- Q7 [Will the FAA give more consideration to universities who partner with unsuccessful test site applicants over those who were on selected teams?](#) (May 30, 2014)
- Q6 [Can a university participate in test site operations and be a COE member?](#) (May 30, 2014)
- Q5 [How will the selected test site operations play a role with the new COE members and affiliates?](#) (May 30, 2014)
- Q4 [How will the COE research differ from activities conducted at the test sites?](#) (May 30, 2014)
- Q3 [Is a university that is already the lead institution for one of the test sites, precluded from being the lead university on a COE proposal effort?](#) (May 30, 2014)

Industry

- Q2 [Would the FAA be willing to host a separate session during the public meeting to discuss with the industry representatives how we could help enable rapid testing and deployment of UAS?](#) (May 30, 2014)

Research Areas

- Q34 [I have reviewed the "Integration of Civil Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(UAS\) in the National Airspace System \(NAS\) Roadmap" \(First Edition - 2013\), but did not see any time schedules. Are there PERT charts or similar available?](#)(June 27, 2014)
- Q1 [Has the FAA identified any COE research areas of interest?](#) (May 30, 2014)

Solicitation/Proposals

- Q44 [We are in the process of preparing our proposal and team for the Center of Excellence for UAS solicitation. We want to know if you can give us a website and/or contact person where we can access or have a copy of previous proposals to review.](#)(July 11, 2014)
- Q42 [How many COE will be established in this call? Is this mostly aimed at a single winning team or is the FAA expected to award several COE.](#)(July 11, 2014)
- Q37 [I represent a Flight Test Institute which is the academic and research wing of the National Test Pilot School \(NTPS\), a licensed not-for-profit civilian educational institute. Our master's degree program is also accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET. We](#)

would like to participate in the FAA COE for UAS but our research institute does not have the capacity to function independently as a COE. I do however believe that we would be able to contribute significantly in the fields of flight testing and certification of the research areas listed in the draft solicitation dated May 27, 2014. NTPS operates a remotely piloted C150 (OPA) that has been approved by the FAA for academic research and education, and has been included in our professional test pilot/flight test engineer and master's degree programs. We believe that this asset as well as the knowledge of our test pilot and flight test engineer faculty would be extremely beneficial to the FAA COE UAS program.

We would like to partner w academic / research organizations who intend to submit a proposal for the FAA COE UAS. How can I contact these individuals to explore such an option?(June 27, 2014)

- Q38 Is the COE UAS start-up schedule as discussed at the COE public meeting realistic? Is the COE Program Office likely to adhere to the stated goal of proposal submissions due by mid-September with the expectation that the COE for UAS will be fully operational by summer or fall of 2015?(June 27, 2014)
- Q35 I have seen conflicting dates concerning the deadline for public comments. Can you clarify?(June 27, 2014)

General

- Q41 I have reviewed the Q&A section of the UAS COE website and I seem to remember other questions from the Public Meeting that don't appear to have been posted. Are there remaining questions that need answers and when might the answers be posted? Any feedback would be appreciated.(July 11, 2014)

July 21, 2014

Q 45 – How much and in what ways will ATC automation systems need to be changed or modified to enable UAS integration?

A – Changes to automation systems to support UAS operations may include enhancements to the FAA's flight planning, separation management, traffic flow management, spectrum management, and information systems. The volume and nature of these changes will be determined in the future as part of the FAA's concept engineering, investment analysis, and implementation activities.

Q 46 – How are you capturing what requirements will need to be made to NextGen ATC/ATM systems in order to have them developed in a timely manner?

A – Per established policies and guidelines, the FAA will develop requirements in collaboration with stakeholders and by applying systems engineering best practices.

Q 47 – What thoughts can you provide to applicants about a "Stop-Gap" requirement list that would govern flight ops in public airspace by rapidly growing commercial UAS market?

A – Section 333 of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act, "Special Rules for Certain Unmanned Aircraft Systems," allows the Secretary of Transportation to grant airworthiness exemptions that allow for specific, limited, low-risk commercial operations in advance of the small UAS rule. Business expected to benefit from these exemptions include precision agriculture, movie making, flare stack inspection, and oil and gas industries. Section 333 Petitions for Exemption are currently being accepted.

Q 48 – The COE Draft Solicitation currently does not discuss much on the characterization of risk that the UAS brings to the NAS. Would it be appropriate for the COE to conduct research on risk scenarios, models, etc. in order to better understand risk issues?

A – The solicitation does not emphasize risk analysis as a separate research topic area, but risk analyses may be included under specific research topic areas included in the COE.

Q 49 – The small UAS rules should allow operational altitudes (more than 400 ft. AGL) that are more consistent with demonstrated efficiencies of many commercially viable imaging systems. Will the UAS rules allow operations above 400 ft AGL?

A – The FAA expects to release the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) for the small UAS rule for public comment by the end of 2014. Due to Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 11 "ex parte" communication restrictions, the FAA cannot discuss the details of the NPRM prior to this release.

Q 50 – What type of license will a drone pilot be required to hold? How many hours will be required?

A – Currently, UAS pilots must fulfill the same licensing requirements as pilots of manned aircraft, as defined in Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 6. Changes to this requirement may be addressed by the small UAS rule. The FAA expects to release the small UAS Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) for public comment by the end of 2014. However, due to Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 11 "ex parte" communications - the FAA is restricted from discussing the details of the NPRM prior to its release.

Q 51 – What is the Testing process? Will a medical certification be required?

A – Currently, UAS pilots must fulfill the same licensing, testing and medical requirements as pilots of manned aircraft, as defined in Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 6. Changes to this requirement may be addressed by the small UAS rule. The FAA expects to release the small UAS Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) for public comment by the end of 2014. However, due to Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 11 "ex parte" communications - the FAA is restricted from discussing the details of the NPRM prior to its release.

Q 52 – Will Drone Instructors be required to hold a CFI?

A – Currently, UAS pilots must fulfill the same licensing, testing and medical requirements as pilots of

manned aircraft, as defined in Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 6. Changes to this requirement may be addressed by the small UAS rule. The FAA expects to release the small UAS Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) for public comment by the end of 2011. However, due to Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 11 "ex parte" communications - the FAA is restricted from discussing the details of the NPRM prior to its release.

Q 53 – Will a drone mechanic be required to possess an A&P?

A – Currently UAS mechanics must fulfill the same requirements as mechanics of manned aircraft. This requirement may be addressed by the small UAS rule. The FAA expects to release the small UAS Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) for public comment by the end of 2011. However, due to Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 11 "ex parte" communications - the FAA is restricted from discussing the details of the NPRM prior to its release.

Q 54 – Pilot training support? Will they be restricted to VFR flight (since no pilot aboard, meaning line of sight)? Or will they be permitted to fly IFR?

A – The FAA expects all flight operations required for the COE to be conducted at one of the six Test Sites, following their procedures.

Q 55 – Will they be required to have Mode S Transponders installed?

A – The FAA expects all flight operations required for the COE to be conducted at one of the six Test Sites, following their procedures.

Q 56 – What are your top three most pressing Human Factors research topics for UAS integration into the NAS?

A – Minimum standards for UAS control stations, characteristics and operational performance of detect and avoid technologies, and air traffic controller interface with UAS operations are among the key human factors topics the FAA is researching.

Q 57 – NASA, FAA UAS test sites and the FAA COE for UAS seem to be paralleling efforts in areas such as Sense and Avoid, Human Factors and UAS performance standards. What are the FAA's plans to coordinate these efforts and reduce cost by data sharing and communication?

A – Currently, the FAA coordinates UAS integration research efforts with NASA and DoD. In addition to coordination with NASA and DoD, the FAA will work with both the COE and the UAS Test Sites to promote awareness of the FAA's UAS research and development needs in these specific areas and to minimize duplication of efforts.

Q 58 – Will FAA COE, FAA UAS test sites or NASA be designated as the POC for the research objectives?

A – The FAA is responsible for the safe integration of UAS into the national airspace system. As a result, research on key objectives must satisfy FAA integration-related requirements.

Q 59 – How does the FAA envision model (hobbyist) aircraft should be considered by COE researchers, if at all? i.e.: moving/debris (non-cooperative), regulate as needed (size, airspace, etc.), challenges: define new policy & enforcement mechanism?

A – The FAA does not currently have research requirement(s) for model aircraft, except for the potential damage that could be caused to manned aircraft in a collision with a model aircraft.

Q 60 – Flight under the COA system and/or Part 333 (industry collaboration) may provide economic advantage, especially for those who are not in proximity to a test site. What guidance should COE teams use to prepare competitive proposals with respect to this challenge?

A – The FAA cannot advise on what to put in a proposal; COE flight tests must have the ability to partner with existing UAS test sites, as stated in the COE solicitation.

Q 61 – How much funding will be allocated annually for the COE? There seems to be different amounts reflected in the Q&A and the presentations, and FAA is silent on this commitment in the solicitation, not usually the case. What dollar amounts are most likely and should we plan for annually in our proposal?

A – The FAA has not yet defined specific UAS COE research initiatives for FY15 & FY16 and the associated level of required funding. The minimum level guaranteed to the COE is \$500,000 per year.

Q 62 – How much funding is initially available from the FAA?

1. Will this amount reflect only what Congress dictates?
2. Will this amount be the required match a team should plan to provide each year or the minimum match?

A – The FAA has not yet defined specific UAS COE research initiatives for FY15 & FY16 and the associated level of required funding.

Q 63 – Generally a COE is created with a statement from a sponsor that makes a commitment of funds. Are we to understand that there is currently no sponsor making this commitment beyond Congress? Is it fair to interpret that the UAS office is making no independent commitment?

A – The FAA considers the COE to be a valued research provider and partner in our UAS research and development portfolio. We anticipate COE-managed research will be sponsored by FAA in the future. However, the FAA has not yet defined specific UAS COE research initiatives for FY15 & FY16 and the associated level of required funding. The minimum level guaranteed to the COE is \$500,000 per year.

Q 64 – Would a potential conflict of interest exist if an existing test site also were selected for a COE award? (Historically, testing is performed by an independent entity.)

A – There would be no conflict of interest as existing UAS test sites are not precluded from competing for the COE designation.

Q 65 – I was previously advised that there was no connection between the COE effort and the test sites

as their statutory authority was different. Should the FAA ultimately include the "ability to partner with existing test sites" as a factor, I strongly suggest that the word "existing" be dropped. Also, you may want to include an explanatory clause or sentence to the effect that "such test sites are not limited to the six sites selected pursuant to the FAA modernization and reform act of 2012" to be perfectly clear. Is this possible?

A – The FAA will review this request in preparation for the COE Final Solicitation.

[Back to Questions](#)

Public Meeting

Q 43 – Could you please make the list of attendees at the public meeting available?

A – The COE meeting attendees are being posted on our COE website. We encourage all interested parties to check the site regularly for Q&A updates and announcements.

Q 26 – Will the slide presentations be made available electronically, if so, how and when?

A – The COE public meeting slide presentations are available for download on this official COE website under the tab entitled "Public Meeting Presentations" in their respective time slots on the Agenda:

www.faa.gov/go/coe

[Back to Questions](#)

Roles

Q 40 – How do you see the role of the Air Transportation Centers of Excellence (COE) in relations with stakeholders?

Suggestion: The COE should not only be a supplier of general directions and a facilitator for the stakeholders, but should also actively promote the work of participants showing progressive results. Periodic reports and presentations to COE and FAA will ensure that progress is on schedule. The COE should approve the near-term, intermediate, and long-term milestones set by industry. The milestones must be objectively measurable.

A – The FAA views the COE as a research partner as we fund half the work. The center members are required to generate dollar-for-dollar matching contributions from non-federal sources to augment FAA COE efforts and to solidify the partnership. These contributions may be applied to an individual task, the COE for UAS or the COE Program overall. With concurrence from their Fiscal Officers, some COE universities pool excess match and are able to share match across the member universities as needed.

COE Establishment / Year 1 -

1. Cooperative Agreements / Funding: Once the COE selection is made and announced, the FAA enters into a cooperative agreement with each core university. The cooperative agreements enable the government to have a close working relationship with each core

member, and to fund the COE universities through matching grants which are awarded for public purpose. Those organizations providing additional matching funds may choose to augment FAA research activities or expand the research agenda to more closely align with their own interests.

2. Quarterly Meetings - The FAA also requires the newly selected COE to meet quarterly during the first year. This facilitates initial introductions between the team members and the FAA and other potential sponsors of research and related COE activities. Additionally, these meetings enable the universities to make known to the various sponsors the capabilities of their team and the specific resources that will be made available during start-up and over the life of the COE. These meetings also provide the agency an opportunity to discuss our research requirements and to work with the COE team to develop our initial research agenda.

COE Activities / Year 2+ -

3. The sponsor has expressed an interest in awarding an indefinite delivery indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract to the COE members. These contract tasks are not subject to 1:1 match and the FAA is able to require deliverables under this vehicle for the benefit of the government. Others may also contract directly with the COE at any time to augment research efforts and increase the body of knowledge in the field. Under the IDIQ contract, the COE develops and reports semi-annually the near-term, intermediate, and long-term milestones which are objectively measurable.
4. The FAA COE Program Office requires the COE to submit various standardized reports each year, and requires research reports quarterly throughout the life of the center. The COE Program Office requires the COE to conduct meetings semi-annually to report progress on each task and to plan for the next year with the FAA and other stakeholders. Prior to the close of each cooperative agreement, the FAA also requires each COE to conduct a major symposium for a broad audience to highlight their research results. Additionally, a COE evaluation will be conducted, matching contributions will be reconciled and audited, and the COE cooperative agreements will be renewed pending the evaluation results of Phase I research, management, fiscal and related COE activities.

COE Reports -

In addition to other elements, the COE Lead and core universities are responsible for tracking and reporting quarterly to the FAA COE Program Office all: 1) grant and contract funds received and matched; 2) sources of funds and in-kind contributions; 3) funds expended; 4) sub award amounts, sub award recipients and tasks; and the 5) progress being made specific to each task.

Q 39 – What is the most effective way to organizing a diverse group of stakeholders for developing such technical parameters?

Suggestion: For achieving effective results, we must organize a diverse group of stakeholders. Participation from the general public should be encouraged via mediums of publication that do not merely attract large companies that may have an interest in maintaining the status quo. Experts with knowledge in every field and subfield regardless should participate to ensure that the solution reached truly does consider the full extent and capabilities of modern technology and future growth in technology.

A – The FAA COEs have found it beneficial to form Advisory Boards to assure that stakeholders have a formal mechanism in place that facilitates participation in COE meetings and technical discussions. Members of such groups also may contribute to matching requirements if they represent non-federal entities. Advisory Board members are generally from other federal and local government organizations, industry - large and small, and also represent other groups and individuals who wish to contribute to COE efforts and formally engage in meaningful dialogue with COE members and affiliates. In addition to participating in the ongoing discussions, both federal and non-federal organizations may fund COE research specific to their own needs and interests throughout the life of the center.

Congress also requires COEs to engage in information dissemination activities which can take many forms. Such efforts may include: the formation of an active Advisory Board and routine meetings with the members; open meetings with various groups; publications; presentations at conferences; the conduct of workshops, courses, etc.

As you suggest, collaboration and coordination across organizations are key concepts within the COEs and serve to augment FAA sponsored research, education and training, avoid duplication of effort, and generate matching contributions.

Q 36 – Can a university be an affiliate on one team that submits a proposal, and also be listed as a core member on another team proposal?

A – Yes.

Q 31 – Once selected, does the FAA expect members of the COE to work on projects in teams?

A – FAA sponsors have addressed this concept individually as requirements have been defined. Unless a university could justify conducting the research alone, some sponsors have required teaming. Where requirements could benefit from a joint approach, the COE would generally propose to use their best resources and team members to conduct the research.

Q 30 – If the FAA prefers to work with each individual university member on the selected team, why do you expect a lead university to be designated during the proposal phase?

A – Generally, the lead university serves to facilitate the team discussions during the proposal writing period and will most often finalize the submission and submit it to the FAA on behalf of the team.

Q 29 – If the FAA expects the lead university to continue to serve the team as a 'lead' after the COE is selected, what role would that university play if it is not serving as the prime for each award?

A – The FAA does want a direct relationship with each COE university member as we have found this model to be more effective and efficient, and most COE universities agree. When a university agrees to serve as a 'prime,' it is ultimately responsible for providing all members' matching requirements, should these requirements not be met. With no prime, each individual COE university is fully responsible for providing matching contributions unless an agreement has been reached in advance with a member university that would be willing to share excess matching contributions. This would be done on a case-by-case basis.

In your proposal, the COE itself is expected to define roles for an administrative and/or technical lead. This individual would serve to provide overall management, and fiscal and technical oversight of COE activities. The role(s) may be combined or not, rotated or not.

Q 28 – When the FAA issues a cooperative agreement or grant to a 'core' university does the 'lead' university have any liability on that award?

A – All COE core members will enter into a cooperative agreement with the FAA and be responsible to adhere to the terms and conditions of each. The members serving on the 'research team' prosing to conduct specific research are responsible to the FAA for the work as proposed and agreed upon. The lead university is responsible for the work it proposes and has been funded to conduct. The lead or administrative lead university is generally responsible for collecting, reviewing and submitting the standardized university reports that are required by the COE Program Office, and the technical and other reports as required by the research sponsors.

Q 27 – When the FAA issues a contract award to a core university within the COE, does the lead university who signed the COE award with the FAA have any liability on the contract to their core team members?

A – When the FAA issues a contract to a COE member university, the recipients of the task award are responsible for providing the services, conducting the activities, and providing the deliverables to the FAA for FAA purpose as defined in the award. If the lead university has accepted a contract task, the lead university is responsible for performing in accordance with the terms and conditions of the specific award.

Q 18 – Can industry partners be on more than one COE team?

A – Yes

Q 17 – Can universities be on more than one COE team?

A – Yes

Q 16 – Can a University currently serving as a COE Lead propose serving on the new COE for UAS at the same time?

A – Although there is no FAA policy specifically addressing this, COE enabling language, PL 101-508, has

mandated "geographic equity" in the distribution of funds and the location of COEs. Therefore, in order to comply with what has been understood by the FAA to be Congressional intent, to date, the FAA has not supported a university to lead more than one COE at the same time. The FAA has discouraged COE university teams from proposing a "lead university" that would serve on a new team at the same time the same university serves as a lead on a mature COE. However, an individual university may serve as a core or second tier member concurrently on multiple COE teams.

Q 15 – Should a team propose an Advisory Board in response to the COE UAS solicitation, would FAA employees be available to serve on such a group?

A – No, although other government entities may be called upon to serve as members on a COE Advisory Board, FAA employees are prohibited from serving in a capacity where we might be perceived as advising ourselves or be in a position to influence those who do advise us.

Invitations to attend such meetings, however, would be permitted as necessary.

[Back to Questions](#)

Funding

Q 14 – Who can apply for the COE and receive funds?

A – U.S. colleges and universities may submit proposals in response to the Final Solicitation. Their proposals will include industry and other affiliates expected to support and serve on the COE team. The universities will be required to match federal grants, dollar for dollar, from nonfederal sources; therefore, the industry and nonfederal affiliates are an important component of the proposed team. Although only the COE universities are eligible to enter into cooperative agreements and receive funding through an FAA grant or contract award, in accordance with Public Law 101-508, the COE may also contract with and sub-award research and other tasks to others as appropriate (partners and affiliates).

Q 13 – How does the FAA intend to fund the UAS COE in FY15 and FY16? The Congressionally mandated \$1.1M for UAS start up is hardly adequate to initiate a research initiative. Are we to conclude the start-up money is for administrative costs and travel only? At what level has the FAA committed funds for the research activities? Pulling together a proposal is costly for all involved. If research funding is so low does this indicate the FAA's level of commitment? Funding at the \$1M annually level will not give the FAA the results requested on your announcement.

A – Congress has appropriated funds in FY 14 for FAA to complete the establishment of the COE for UAS, and the sponsoring organization is finalizing a list of topic areas that the FAA is expecting to address with COE university partners and affiliates. At this time, the FAA is committing the \$1.144M to cover the first 2 years of research and related activities which will be conducted during FY 15 and FY16. Future FAA requirements and Congressional funding is both unknown at this time. The FAA plans to request additional funds in the FY 17 budget. The anticipated COE level of effort and annual commitment will be formally stated in the Draft Solicitation which will be issued prior to the public meeting.

The FAA COE sponsor makes adequate funds available to satisfy administrative costs and to meet the requirements of the COE Program during start up. This would include support to oversee and track COE activities, establish a university COE program office, as well as the travel funds needed by the COE core members to attend the required: four meetings during the first year, and the two meetings each year thereafter.

[Back to Questions](#)

Matching Funds/Cost Sharing

Q 25 – Can new or ongoing STEM programs relevant to UAS operated by a COE team member count as a match, such as HS programs, summer camps, etc.

A – Yes, STEM efforts associated with the COE - UAS can be documented and submitted toward matching contributions.

Q 24 – Was it stated at the meeting that matching contributions could be spread out over the initial 5-year cooperative agreement if permitted by the educational institution?

A – Yes, the FAA encourages matching on a task-by-task basis and some education institutions require that matching plans accompany each proposal. However, the FAA will audit the actual contributions during year 4, and all obligations must be satisfied by the end of year 5, prior to the expiration of the initial cooperative agreement.

Q 23 – Does each individual university within a team have to match dollar-for-dollar or does just the team as a whole have to provide match?

A –

5. Each individual university team member should be willing and able to generate matching contributions to assure that this responsibility is equally assumed by all.
6. The FAA does allow the team to pool matching contributions.
 - However, how, when and if matching contributions are shared by the COE members, are determinations made first by each individual COE University Fiscal Officer.

Q 22 – Can \$:\$ matching be in-kind (e.g. materials, services)?

A – Yes, matching may be in-kind in keeping with the OMB guidance posted on this site.

Q 21 – Does \$:\$ matching apply to IDIQ tasks? It seems unfair to make industry pay for FAA-required deliverables.

A – Rather than a required dollar for dollar match, contributions are negotiable when tasks are funded through the contract.

Q 20 – Given the high costs of proposal development (especially for industrial partners dedicating human resources to the effort). can the funds spent in proposal development by industry partners be counted as an in-kind match contribution?

A – After a team is selected, the 'announcement' date is stated on the cooperative agreements. On that date, team members and affiliates may begin capturing contributions toward their matching obligations.

Q 19 – Does it matter whether the matching funds come from industry or state/local governments – will they be weighted differently?

A – The matching contributions must be generated from a non-federal source and will not be weighted differently during the evaluation process.

[Back to Questions](#)

Proposal Evaluation/Selection

Q 32 – Does the selection process in any way favor teams whose members currently receive less FAA funding? Does the FAA try to spread funding equally at the University level once a COE is selected?

A – The FAA evaluation process is based on standardized selection criteria defined within the COE enabling legislation, Public Law 101-508, and the factors stated in the Final Solicitation. The COE university team members must demonstrate superior capabilities and resources available to meet or exceed the stated overall selection criteria and the technical factors. Once selected, many COE sponsors attempt to involve the full team in initial research activities, to the extent possible, in order to comply with Congressional language that references the geographic equity in the distribution of funds. Thereafter, however, funding is generally based on FAA needs as they relate to the capabilities of individual members.

Q 12 – Who will make the final COE selection?

A – Following a rigorous technical evaluation by a team of subject-matter-experts and a management and fiscal review, the FAA Administrator will select the COE team in collaboration with the Secretary of Transportation.

[Back to Questions](#)

COE Management/Administration

Q 11 – How long will the COE continue for?

A – The COE Program Office enters into two 5-year cooperative agreements with each COE core member university.

[Back to Questions](#)

Test Sites and the COE

Q 33 – Please provide clarification between the presentation at the public meeting indicating the COE must use the six test sites vs the language in the Draft Solicitation.

A – The Solicitation issued by the FAA COE Program Office is the official document and is reviewed by FAA Legal staff with full concurrence by FAA senior management prior to publication. This document provides the guidance that should be used during proposal preparation at this time.

Q 10 – What is the difference between the work at the Test Sites and the COE?

A – Test Sites: Public airfield and associated airspace and facilities available for flight and ground testing. There is no FAA base funding for the sites selected.

Centers of Excellence: A COE can be a team of private and public U.S. colleges and universities that will conduct basic and applied research, education, training and related activities and includes shared resources, facilities, and other assets. The FAA will provide a commitment for annual base funding to support the research and related activities that the COE universities will conduct. In order to satisfy the Congressional mandate specified in the enabling legislation, COE universities must match, dollar for dollar from non-federal sources, grant funding provided by the FAA.

The COE and the Test Site selection arise from different statutory authorities. The work conducted by the COE and at the test sites will depend on what they themselves propose. There is potential for collaboration, but that will depend on the members of the COE and the test sites.

Q 9 – Are universities excluded from joining a team that is preparing to participate in the COE competition if they are part of the six recently selected test sites?

A – No

Q 8 – Will universities who participated in successful test site applications have an advantage or a disadvantage in the COE selection?

A – Only universities may submit proposals in response to the COE Final Solicitation, and their involvement with the selected test sites will be a neutral factor in the evaluation process.

Q 7 – Will the FAA give more consideration to universities who partner with unsuccessful test site applicants over those who were on selected teams?

A – No. Universities not represented on test site teams will be given no special consideration.

Q 6 – Can a university participate in test site operations and be a COE member?

A – Yes.

Q 5 – How will the selected test site operations play a role with the new COE members and affiliates?

A – The research agenda for the COE universities and activities to be conducted at the six test site have not been defined, therefore, we do not know at this time. Following the Administrator's selection, the

COE research plan will be developed with the COE team members. Therefore, the specific research tasks to be funded will not be known until the new COE members have met to discuss their capabilities and available resources with the FAA. These meetings with the COE members and affiliates are expected to take place next year.

Q 4 – How will the COE research differ from activities conducted at the test sites?

A – The test site operational activities and the specific research tasks conducted at the COE have not been defined. The research sponsors and the COE members will develop a research plan jointly following the Administrator's selection of the university team.

Q 3 – Is a university that is already the lead institution for one of the test sites, precluded from being the lead university on a COE proposal effort?

A – Legal counsel has advised that test site selection is a neutral factor in the COE competitive process.

[Back to Questions](#)

Industry

Q 2 – Would the FAA be willing to host a separate session during the public meeting to discuss with the industry representatives how we could help enable rapid testing and deployment of UAS?

A – The primary purpose of the FAA COE Public Meeting is to inform all those who might be interested in joining a proposed team to fully understand the FAA COE congressional mandates and our technical requirements. This is also the opportunity for the proposing universities to form a strong group of experts who will partner with the government to focus on the subject topic area over the next decade. Additional time that might be necessary during the public meeting would most likely be dedicated to the universities, as they are responsible for forming their own teams, and writing and submitting the proposals.

Rather than to meet with the FAA, industry would be encouraged to align with the university team(s) during the public meeting and to send a letter of commitment to the COE Program Office expressing your willingness to participate and the resources that might be made available to the government and the selected team. This letter would be made available to the lead university serving on the selected team.

[Back to Questions](#)

Research Areas

Q 34 – I have reviewed the "Integration of Civil Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) in the National Airspace System (NAS) Roadmap" (First Edition - 2013), but did not see any time schedules. Are there PERT charts or similar available?

A – Appendix C of the UAS Integration of Civil Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) in the National Airspace

System (NAS) Roadmap contains Goals, Metrics and Target Dates. The Roadmap will be updated annually.

The Roadmap may be found online at:

http://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/uas/media/UAS_Roadmap_2013.pdf

Q 1 – Has the FAA identified any COE research areas of interest?

A – The FAA has identified initial COE research areas of interest. The FAA conducts research to inform and validate the UAS Roadmap and to support UAS integration. The research conducted by the COE should be consistent with this philosophy. The FAA will coordinate with the selected COE to ensure the research aligns with internal FAA systems engineering documents. It is anticipated the research areas will evolve to adapt to the needs of the NAS.

The Research Areas are:

7. Air Traffic Control Interoperability
8. Airport Ground Operations
9. Control and Communication
10. Detect and Avoid (DAA)
11. Human Factors
12. Spectrum Management
13. Unmanned Aircraft (UA) Pilot Training and Pilot Certification Including Other UA Crewmembers

[Back to Questions](#)

Solicitation/Proposals

Q 44 – We are in the process of preparing our proposal and team for the Center of Excellence for UAS solicitation. We want to know if you can give us a website and/or contact person where we can access or have a copy of previous proposals to review.

A – The lead universities are included in the COE briefing package from the public meeting, and they are also noted on our coe website: www.faa.gov/go/coe. Therefore, the requests for these documents may be sent directly to the COE Lead University which is the institution responsible for submitting the final proposal to the FAA in response to the solicitation. The FAA COE Program Office does not release proposals submitted in response to our COE solicitations.

Q 42 – How many COE will be established in this call? Is this mostly aimed at a single winning team or is the FAA expected to award several COE.

A – The Administrator is expected to select one COE team.

Q 38 – Is the COE UAS start-up schedule as discussed at the COE public meeting realistic? Is the COE Program Office likely to adhere to the stated goal of proposal submissions due by mid-September with the expectation that the COE for UAS will be fully operational by summer or fall of 2015?

A – The FAA is planning to adhere to the schedule discussed at the public meeting which would result in proposal submission mid-September, evaluations during October and November, possible selection and announcement early 2015, and the definition of the COE research agenda immediately thereafter. This schedule would enable the FAA to fund start up activities which could begin at/with the selected COE universities as early as the 2015 summer session or by next September at the latest.

Please note, the current schedule is based on the publication of a Final Solicitation within the next six weeks. If necessary, revisions to this schedule would be announced by early August and would likely result in a 2016 COE UAS start up at the earliest.

Q 37 – I represent a Flight Test Institute which is the academic and research wing of the National Test Pilot School (NTPS), a licensed not-for-profit civilian educational institute. Our master's degree program is also accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET. We would like to participate in the FAA COE for UAS but our research institute does not have the capacity to function independently as a COE. I do however believe that we would be able to contribute significantly in the fields of flight testing and certification of the research areas listed in the draft solicitation dated May 27, 2014. NTPS operates a remotely piloted C150 (OPA) that has been approved by the FAA for academic research and education, and has been included in our professional test pilot/flight test engineer and master's degree programs. We believe that this asset as well as the knowledge of our test pilot and flight test engineer faculty would be extremely beneficial to the FAA COE UAS program.

We would like to partner w academic / research organizations who intend to submit a proposal for the FAA COE UAS. How can I contact these individuals to explore such an option?

A – Once selected, you may contact the COE members directly to discuss potential involvement with the new team. Additionally, the list of COE UAS public meeting attendees is posted on this website. There will also be mailings to those who have requested to be on our mailing list and to the public meeting attendees who were agreeable to having their contact information made available. You may feel free to contact university representatives to determine the level of interest in having your Institute join in pre-proposal activities.

Q 35 – I have seen conflicting dates concerning the deadline for public comments. Can you clarify?

A – The period of public comment has been extended through July 9, 2014. The Q&A period will continue with a closing date that will be stated in the Final Solicitation

[Back to Questions](#)

General

Q 41 – I have reviewed the Q&A section of the UAS COE website and I seem to remember other questions from the Public Meeting that don't appear to have been posted. Are there remaining questions that need answers and when might the answers be posted? Any feedback would be appreciated.

A – The COE Program Office - attempts to respond to the questions received each week which are specific to COE Program matters in an attempt to provide clarity and guidance for universities preparing proposal submissions. However, the UAS technical questions, and all questions related to COE test site involvement, are sent to FAA headquarters where answers are developed with our sponsor / technical team and coordinated before being returned to the COE Program Office for posting. Many questions submitted to date address uas related areas that are complex and, although many are legitimate questions as posed, they pertain to areas that have not yet been solidified by the FAA; therefore, some of the uas specific questions cannot be answered at this time.