



Drone Camera Operators

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Prepared by the Los Angeles/Orange County Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research

Program Recommendation

The Los Angeles/Orange County Center of Excellence compiled this report to provide regional labor market data for the program recommendation of drone camera operator. This report intends to determine whether there is demand in the local labor market that is not being met by the supply from programs of study.

Because drone camera operator is an emerging program area at community colleges, at this time it is difficult to determine the actual demand for related occupations, as well as the number of students who are being trained to fill these positions, from our current data sources. Below are a few important notations:

- There were 12 online job postings for drone camera operators during 2017 in Los Angeles and Orange counties, which may not signal that this occupation is in high-demand.
- One college in the region (Cypress) has implemented new programs that study the operation of unmanned aircraft systems, and award data is not yet available for program exiters.

Occupation Codes and Descriptions

According to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) are used in many different industries and for a variety of applications, including **aerial photography**, construction, industrial, and utility inspection, real estate and agriculture. The FAA issued the Small UAS Rule in 2016, which regulates the operation of small unmanned aircrafts within the National Airspace System. Based on registration trends, the FAA is anticipating growth within this sector, both for hobby aircraft and non-hobby or commercial aircraft.¹

Currently, there are no occupations in the standard occupational classification (SOC) system directly related to working with drones. Therefore, traditional labor market data and forecasting cannot be accurately used to predict future job change in the two-county region. However, real-time labor market information can be used to provide a nuanced view of the current job market, as it captures job advertisements for occupations relevant to the field of study. Employer job postings are consulted to understand who is employing jobs related to drones, and what they are looking for in potential candidates. To identify job postings related to drones, the following keywords/search terms were used:

¹https://www.faa.gov/data_research/aviation/aerospace_forecasts/media/Unmanned_Aircraft_Systems.pdf

- unmanned aircraft system* operator/pilot,
- UAS operator/pilot,
- unmanned aerial vehicle operator/pilot,
- UAV operator/pilot,
- drone operator/pilot,
- unmanned aerial system* operator/pilot,
- remote pilot/operator,
- autonomous pilot, and
- photo*, camera*, video* or cinema*

In 2017, there were twelve job postings for drone camera operators in Los Angeles and Orange counties. Data on these job postings is included in Exhibits 1 and 2 of this data brief.

Top Titles

During 2017, there were twelve job postings related to drone camera operators in Los Angeles and Orange counties. The top job titles for employers posting ads for drone operators are listed in exhibit 1. Drone repair technician was mentioned as the job title in 25% of all relevant job postings (3 postings).

Exhibit 1 –Job titles (n=12)

Title	Job Postings, Full Year 2017
Drone Repair Technician	3
Photographer	2
Aerial Cinematographer/Operator	1
Camera Operator	1
Drone Enthusiast	1
Drone Operator	1
Drone Owner	1
Drone Robotics/Aerial Cinematography Intern	1
Drone Pilot	1

Source: Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Top Employers and Locations

Exhibit 2 lists some of the employers hiring drone camera operators. Only three job postings included the name of the employer. The top worksite cities in the region for these occupations were Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Malibu. Orange County had no job postings for this time period.

Exhibit 2 – Top employers (n=3) and worksite cities (n=12)

Employer	Job Postings, Full Year 2017	Location	Job Postings, Full Year 2017
LA Drones LLC	1	Los Angeles	8
Legal Sales Associates	1	Long Beach	3
PlanOmatic	1	Malibu	1

Source: Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Certifications and Skills

There were no specific certifications listed on any of the twelve job postings in 2017. Job-specific skills desired by employers are teamwork/collaboration, photography, repair, photo editing and cinematography.

Education and Training

Currently, there is one community college in the two-county region that trains students in programs related to drones. Cypress College began offering three certificates related to UAV/UAS, and one degree beginning in Fall 2016. Since these are new programs, there is not yet completion or exit data available. Exhibit 3 shows the TOP codes, program titles, award types and number of units for each program award.

Exhibit 3 – CCC Student Awards (by TOP and College)

TOP Code	Program	Award Type	# of Units
1012.00	UAV/UAS Drone Photography and Video	Certificate	15
	UAV/UAS Basic	Certificate	16
3020.20	UAV/UAS Advanced	Certificate	35 (Basic Certificate + 19 Units)
	UAV/UAS	AS	60 (Advanced Certificate + GE)

Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart

Sources

Federal Aviation Administration, Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass), and California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS) Data Mart

Notes

Data included in this analysis represents the labor market demand for positions most closely related to drone camera operators. Real-time labor market information captures job post advertisements for occupations relevant to the field of study and should not be used to establish current job openings, because the numbers may include duplicate job postings or postings intended to gather a pool of applicants. Real-time labor market information can signal demand and show what employers are looking for in potential employees, but is not a perfect measure of the quantity of open positions.