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# Media Release



## Space Academy Competition Winners Announced

The first prize was won by Ryan MacDonald, a Year 12 student from Bilborough College in Nottingham. Ryan's prize is a fully funded place on the European Space Camp (ESC) in Northern Norway. ESC is a week long experience, supported by the European Space Agency, where students build a sounding rocket to collect scientific data and manage the launch campaign. The rocket achieves speeds in excess of three times the speed of sound and will reach heights over 10km.

Five East Midlands students have been selected as the 2010 Post-16 Space Academy competition winners to receive a fully funded place at Space School UK, a residential summer school that will allow the winners to spend a week with some of the UK's leading rocket scientists, participate in elements of astronaut training and work with some of the worlds largest companies in the space industry.

Five runners up from the East Midlands have won places on Senior Space School UK run at the University of Leicester over the summer holidays.

Entries were received all covering the required theme "Mars – The Destiny of Humankind" The competition brief also asked for the projects to be linked with the science the students are studying at school. Detailed explanations were produced on the surface conditions of Mars and how they have changed over the lifetime of the planet. Good discussions were written on the theories of *Terraforming* Mars and turning it into a permanent home for Humanity.

The competition was held as part of the East Midlands Development Agency (*emda*) funded *Space Academy* programme. *Space Academy* is a partnership led by the National Space Centre and including the University of Leicester, University of Nottingham, Science Learning Centre East Midlands and STEMNET.

Space School UK includes lectures and workshops by some of the world's leading space scientists. It also offers the chance to build and launch high-speed rockets, as well as to take part in telescope observing sessions, simulated space missions, SCUBA diving, flying in the Airkix vertical windtunnel and visiting the laboratories where Europe's ExoMars rover is being built. It's a packed programme designed to inspire as well as to help students in their understanding of space science.

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**Editor's Notes**

**THE NATIONAL SPACE CENTRE** has pioneered the use of space in science education since opening in 2001 with over 50 000 school children and 2000 teachers annually undertaking short education visits to the Centre. The Space Academy will build on these existing programmes by providing progressive, sustained curriculum support for 14-19 year olds and their teachers whilst sharing with them the excitement and discoveries of space scientists from our region's world leading space universities.

Other leading institutions in the Space Academy Partnership include:

**EAST MIDLANDS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**- Funding support of £990K over three years -Space Academy is a major plank in the Agency's wider Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) agenda.

- *emda* is one of nine Regional Development Agencies in England, set up in 1999 to bring a regional focus to economic development.
- Ten years on, independent evaluation shows *emda* has:
  - Had a significant impact on the region's economy
  - Generated economic benefits that substantially outweigh its overall costs
  - Put back over £9 of economic output (or GVA) into the regional economy for every £1 it spends
  - Produced more than £1 billion in economic benefits per year
  - A wider impact on people, places and businesses in the East Midlands that cannot be captured by figures alone.
- *emda* is committed to supporting the region through the current downturn and has put in place a range of measures to provide real help during these challenging times.
- Over the long term, *emda*'s aim is to deliver the 2006 Regional Economic Strategy (RES) by working in partnership with public, private and voluntary organisations. The RES highlights the themes of productivity, sustainability and equality and sets out key priorities until 2020 to ensure the vision for 'a flourishing region' can be achieved.
- For more details visit [www.emda.org.uk](http://www.emda.org.uk)

#### **UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER**

- *A member of the 1994 Group of universities that share a commitment to research excellence, high quality teaching and an outstanding student experience.*

- Winner of Outstanding Student Support award, Times Higher 2009/10
- Named University of the Year by Times Higher (2008/9) Shortlisted (2006, 2005) and by the Sunday Times (2007)
- Ranked top with Cambridge for student satisfaction amongst full time students taught at mainstream universities in England
- Ranked as a Top 20 UK university by the Sunday Times, Guardian, Times and UK Complete University Guide, published in The Independent
- Ranked in world's top 3% of universities by Shanghai Jiao Tong International Index, 2005-08 and the Times Higher Education-QS World University Rankings
- Students' Union of the Year award 2005, short listed 2006 and 2007

**UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM** - The University of Nottingham is Britain's University of the Year (The Times Higher Awards 2006). It undertakes world-changing research, provides innovative teaching and a student experience of the highest quality. Ranked by Newsweek in the world's Top 75 universities, its

academics have won two Nobel Prizes since 2003. The University is an international institution with campuses in the United Kingdom, Malaysia and China.

**SCIENCE LEARNING CENTRE EAST MIDLANDS** – based at the School of Education, University of Leicester, the Centre provides a programme of innovative Continuing Professional Development for all those involved in science education including primary, secondary and FE teachers as well as technicians and classroom assistants. The courses are presented by leading academics, scientists and educationalists who set out to bring cutting-edge research and innovative pedagogy into schools.

### **STEMNET**

STEMNET creates opportunities to inspire young people in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). This enables young people to develop their creativity, problem-solving and employability skills, widens their choices and supports the UK's future competitiveness. STEMNET helps encourage young people to be well informed about STEM, able to engage fully in debate, and make decisions about STEM related issues.

- **Working with young people and teachers**

STEMNET works primarily with schools and colleges, helping young people and their teachers access a range of STEM Enhancement & Enrichment opportunities including STEM Clubs, links with STEM Ambassadors and activities featured in the STEM Directories.

- **Employers inspiring young people**

Employers can help schools and colleges bring STEM to life for their students, through involvement in classroom projects, talks, visits, work placements or helping with STEM Clubs.

For further information, images, interviews or media opportunities  
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