

Irish stars shine bright at the European Space Agency ^[1]

NOTE: This item has expired and will soon be unavailable for viewing.

– Minister Halligan congratulates the two winners of the Irish Research Council's national competition to train at the European Space Agency –

The Irish Research Council today (26.10.17) announced that two Irish scientists have won a national competition to train at the renowned European Space Agency. This opportunity will see them contributing to the development of cutting-edge research in the areas of space science, exploration and technology.

In 2016, the Irish Research Council and the European Space Agency announced a new partnership to give Irish-based science and engineering graduates a chance to make their mark in the field of space exploration. This collaboration supports the Government's commitment to actively participate in the international research programmes of the European Space Agency as set out in Innovation 2020, Ireland's strategy for research and development, science and technology.

Under this partnership, the European Space Agency will host Irish trainees in its centres across Europe, providing opportunities to work on projects covering topics such as human spaceflight, the launch and operation of unmanned exploration missions to other planets, Earth observation, science and telecommunication, and designing launch vehicles.

Following a competitive process, the two top-ranking candidates took up traineeship opportunities at the European Space Research and Technology Centre in the Netherlands this month. They are:

- Kim Heary, originally from Clondalkin in Dublin, has a master's degree in experimental physics from the National University of Ireland, Galway. The project that Kim will work on investigates the effects of atomic oxygen on external space optics. This will help to ensure that spacecraft can withstand the harsh conditions of space during their whole service life.

- Stephen O'Connor, also from Clondalkin, has a master's degree in space and science technology from University College Dublin. Stephen will work on a project that investigates the relationship between molecular contamination and wavelength optics. Some of the work he will undertake may contribute to future space missions such as Plato or Euclid.



Commenting today, Minister of State for Training, Skills and Innovation, John Halligan TD, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for both Kim and Stephen to be involved in cutting-edge projects at the European Space Agency. It will be hugely important to them both for their own development and future career opportunities.

"Partnerships like this between the Irish Research Council and European Space Agency are vital to ensure that we continue to support a pipeline of skilled talent to take Ireland forward in its contribution to space research, development and innovation".

Also commenting today, Peter Brown, Director of the Irish Research Council said: "The Irish Research Council-European Space Agency Traineeships offer graduates the life-changing opportunity to pursue a career in what is Europe's gateway to space.

"The Council is committed to supporting the development of Europe's space capability and ensuring that investment in

space continues to deliver benefits to the citizens of Europe and the world. We look forward to many productive years of working with the European Space Agency on this important initiative.”

Further information about the Irish Research Council is available at www.research.ie ^[2]

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