



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## *News Release*

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### **Astronaut brings otherworldly experience to summer school**

Gifted pupils are taking the chance to learn from an astronaut and NASA experts at a summer school taking place this week.

Students from across the UK will study the origins of life on Earth and whether life might exist on other worlds at the Astrobiology Summer Academy.

The event in Edinburgh will give 20 pupils aged 16-18 the chance to work with researchers and learn about key scientific challenges.

Those taking part will hear from European Space Agency astronaut Major Tim Peake, who will discuss how he trained for his International Space Station mission.

They will also hear from two PhD students at NASA about life in some of the most extreme environments on Earth and in other worlds.

Students will learn about various aspects of astrobiology – which focuses on the origins and the limits of life. Topics will include how planets form, and how life survives at extreme conditions.

Pupils will also gain insight into whether life exists on other planets, and the likelihood of human bases being established on other planets and moons. Students will end their week-long academy by giving a public presentation at Our Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh on Friday.

The summer school, held at the University of Edinburgh, is run by researchers at the UK Centre for Astrobiology (UKCA). It will seek to give students opportunities for personal development, including team-working, critical thinking and collaboration.

Professor Charles Cockell, head of the UKCA, said: “We hope our summer students will enjoy hearing first-hand about some of the challenges – and the wonders – of space science.”

The second summer academy, from 7-11 July, is supported by the Royal Astronomical Society, the UK Space Agency, and Zetland Educational Trust. Participants will stay in student accommodation, free of charge, with meals and travel expenses provided.

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