

Stuart A. Smith

MSc SPACE EXPLORATION SYSTEMS · BSc PLANETARY SCIENCE WITH ASTRONOMY

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Professional Summary

Motivated and disciplined individual, with special research interest in Light Curve Analysis, AI for Exoplanet Detection and Atmospheric Categorisation, Instrumentation Design, and the Interstellar Medium. An Armed Forces Veteran, I excel under pressure, bringing strong analytical, problem-solving, and teamwork skills. I am eager to leverage my research expertise in a doctoral program, and my practical skills in an industry environment.

Education

University of Leicester

MSc SPACE EXPLORATION SYSTEMS

Leicester, United Kingdom

Sep. 2024 - Sep. 2025

- **Project:** Mission Concept focussed on investigating the plasma processes and boundary dynamics of the heliosphere, and its interaction with the Local Interstellar Medium. This project was split between the University of Leicester, and the University of Dayton, Ohio, in conjunction with the Jet Propulsion Laboratory - California Institute of Technology. I oversaw the mission's instrumentation, holding responsibility for designing and selecting the appropriate payload packages for the spacecraft. I modelled the magnetic field of the spacecraft, unlocking issues surrounding magnetometer boom length and mass.
- Industry-led MSc covering robotic and human space exploration. Developing expertise in space systems engineering, astrodynamics, instrumentation, mission design, and power systems (including nuclear). Gaining hands-on experience in end-to-end space system development and working across academic and industrial sectors. Introduction to key analysis tools such as Geant4 (GRAS) for radiation modelling, Siemens NX for CAD design, and programming languages such as Python and MATLAB. Gaining interdisciplinary skills that bridge systems engineering and planetary science, and preparing for roles in the global space industry.

Birkbeck, University of London

BSc PLANETARY SCIENCE WITH ASTRONOMY

London, United Kingdom

Sep. 2020 - Sep. 2024

- Degree Awarded: **Second Class, Upper Division** (2:1)
- **Dissertation:** *"Chasing Shadows: Identifying Undiscovered Exoplanets in Kepler's Historical Data"*
- A reanalysis of Kepler/K2 Light Curves, in a research area with little establishment support. My research was reliant on my own ability to set up such a project from scratch. This involved pitching a unique research topic to the School, networking to source the most relevant supervisor, learning how to process large data sets, selecting a relevant analysis tool, and processing results.
- Despite the conclusion of the program, I am now trying to verify the presence of a binary star system that I detected in this research in conjunction with the Mikulski Archive for Space Telescopes (MAST). This has exposed me to new techniques such as analysing Target Pixel Files (TPF's) and coding through Python to identify and model these TPF's.

Skills

Technical Skills	Light Curve Analysis, Geant4 (GRAS) Modelling, Astrodynamics, Data Analysis, Operation of Spacecraft Systems, CAD Design, Mission Planning, Individual Research, Supervised Research, ISO 6 Clean Room Trained, Magnetic Field Modelling
Programming	Python, MATLAB, LaTeX
Soft Skills	Team Collaboration, Presenting, Exemplary Communication Skills, Time Management, Data Entry
Leadership	Cadet Forces Instructor, RAF Veteran
Languages	English (Fluent), German (Basic), Arabic (Basic)

References

Prof. Nigel Bannister

MSc Project Supervisor

University of Leicester

✉ nigel.bannister@leicester.ac.uk

Dr. Tim Trent

MSc Personal Tutor

University of Leicester

✉ t.trent@leicester.ac.uk

Dr. Andrew Rushby

BSc Project Supervisor

Birkbeck, University of London

✉ a.rushby@bbk.ac.uk

Awards & Attendance

GRANTS

2025	Turing Scheme , Funding for international placement to work on an Interstellar Medium mission concept. Placement was located at the University of Dayton, Ohio, U.S.A.	£1853.80
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CONFERENCES

2024	Sagan Summer Workshop , Advances in Direct Imaging: From Young Jupiter's to Habitable Earths. NASA Exoplanet Science Institute	Virtual
2025	Astrobiology Spectral Database Workshop , USRA - Lunar and Planetary Institute	Virtual
2025	Sagan Summer Workshop , Exoplanet Demographics. NASA Exoplanet Science Institute	Virtual
2025	International Workshop on Instrumentation for Planetary Missions 6 , Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics, University of Colorado	Virtual

MEMBERSHIPS

2025	Member of the Institute of Physics , Institute of Physics	Present
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Work Experience

University of Leicester

PAYROLL AND PENSIONS ADMINISTRATOR	Leicester, United Kingdom
	Nov. 2022 - Sep. 2024, Sep. 2025 - Present

Buckinghamshire New University

PAYROLL AND PENSIONS ADMINISTRATOR	High Wycombe, United Kingdom
	Jul. 2022 - Nov. 2022

Civil Service

PROJECT SUPPORT OFFICER	High Wycombe, United Kingdom
	Feb. 2022 - Jul. 2022

Royal Air Force

CLERK (PERSONNEL SUPPORT)	London, United Kingdom
	Feb. 2018 - Feb. 2022

Tesco

CUSTOMER ASSISTANT	Locks Heath, United Kingdom
	Apr. 2016 - Jan. 2018

Primark

RETAIL OPERATIVE	Southampton, United Kingdom
	May. 2015 - Apr. 2016

Full details of each role are available on request.

Additional Experience

Royal Air Force Air Cadets

CIVILIAN INSTRUCTOR	Leicester, United Kingdom
	Nov. 2023 - PRESENT

- Teaching and overseeing the delivery of the Air Cadets Cyber and Space programmes, giving opportunity for 12 - 18 year olds to get unique access to STEM topics.

Research Interests

My research interests span a wide range of astrophysical and observational topics, with a particular focus on binary star system detection, exoplanet detection and categorization, and the modelling of atmospheric conditions in both terrestrial and exoplanetary environments. I am deeply engaged in studying stellar system structures and mapping, as well as utilising advanced observational techniques with instruments such as JWST, PLATO, and the Roman Telescope. Additionally, I have a strong interest in instrumentation design and the innovative use of CubeSats for exoplanet detection, contributing to the development of next-generation space-based observational capabilities.