

# Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre Invites Schools to be part of the First Arab Emirati Astronaut Mission to ISS

**AlShaibani: “For the first time, students will have the opportunity to learn about the experiences that will be part of the astronaut's mission and conduct them on-ground”**

**Dubai, UAE, 3 April 2019:** To support its efforts to empower and encourage youth to take an interest in space science, The Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) launched the ‘Science in Space’ competition, in coordination with [NanoRacks LLC](#). This initiative is under the umbrella of the UAE Astronaut Programme, where schools can apply to participate in conducting scientific experiments to study the impact of microgravity.

MBRSC will choose 15 schools based on their efforts to promote the study of STEM fields and the reasons for participating in this competition. The winning schools will be able to nominate students to attend and participate in workshops organised by MBRSC to conduct 15 scientific experiences, where students can learn how to prepare scientific experiments and its phases. The same experiments will be part of the scientific mission of the first Emirati astronaut who will travel to the International Space Station (ISS) in September this year.

The results from ISS, launched and returned by NanoRacks, will then be compared with those done on Earth. Schools wishing to participate can learn more about the competition and the terms and conditions from: [www.mbrsc.ae/science](http://www.mbrsc.ae/science). Last chance to participate is on 18th April 2019.

His Excellency, Yousuf Hamad AlShaibani, Director General of MBRSC, said, “The mission of the first Emirati astronaut to ISS will be a historic event for the UAE's space industry, and for the first time, students have the opportunity to learn about the experiences that will be part of the astronaut's mission and conduct them on-ground”.

“At MBRSC, we are committed to involving different sectors, most notably the education sector in space programmes, to inspire Emirati students to be more interested in the space sector and encourage them to study scientific disciplines so we contribute to empowering the next generation in STEM fields,” added AlShaibani.

Salem AlMarri, Assistant Director General for Science and Technology Sector, Head of UAE Astronaut Programme, said: “MBRSC aims to diversify the scientific studies conducted by the first Emirati Astronaut in his 8 day mission aboard the International Space Station to enrich human knowledge and derive a database that can be shared with different scientific organisations locally and internationally. “Science in Space” competition

is set to encourage the study of space sciences through involving students in the scientific mission of the first Emirati astronaut scheduled to be in ISS on the 25th September.”

AlMarri added that other than these 15 scientific studies, the Emirati astronaut will be studying the reaction of vital indicators of the human body aboard the ISS, in comparison with Earth, before and after the trip. This is the first time this kind of research will be done on an astronaut from the Arab region. The results of this study will later be compared with research conducted on astronauts from other regions.

AlMarri highlighted that the competition is open to students, (from fifth grade), from public and private schools, across the UAE. Following the selection of the schools, MBRSC will organise a workshop for students to conduct their experiments and train them to use test tubes and petri dishes, supplied by the commercial space station company NanoRacks. The studies will be conducted by the first Emirati astronaut on the ISS, and the results of the two environments will later be compared. The experiments include the effect of zero gravity on cell growth, microorganisms, genes, grass seed germination rates, fungi and algae, the effect of antibiotics on bacteria, basic chemical reactions in space, and other physical, biological and chemical experiments.

The UAE Astronaut Programme is funded by the ICT fund of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA). Launched in 2007, this fund, which is the first of its kind in the Arab world, aims towards supporting research and development within the ICT sector in the UAE, helping it to grow into a nationally significant industry with a leading place in the world.

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