

UK candidates make it through to next round of European Space Agency's astronaut call

Press release

The latest figures from the European Space Agency (ESA) show more than 160 applicants from the UK have made it through to the next round of their astronaut call.



Credit: ESA/NASA

The window to apply for ESA's astronaut vacancy opened on 31 March 2021 and closed 18 June. This is the first call for new astronauts in over 10 years and the first-time candidates with a physical disability had been invited to apply.

Of the 22,523 valid astronaut applications received by ESA, 2,000 of these were from the UK.

Following a comprehensive screening phase, 1,361 people were invited to phase two of ESA's astronaut selection. This is a full day of psychological performance testing at a facility in Europe. Of these, 166 were from the UK, comprising 89 men and 77 women.

The UK had the third highest number making it through to phase two of all the member states, behind only France, with 404, and Germany, with 194.

Sue Horne, Head of Space Exploration at the UK Space Agency, said:

It's exciting to see so many UK candidates making it through to the next phase of ESA's astronaut selection and the number shows the high calibre of our applications. Those who make it through the round of psychometric and psychological tests will be invited to further testing at the European Astronaut Centre in Germany.

The UK space sector continues to grow and, while being an astronaut is a dream for many people, there are a range of potential career paths out there to explore.

In total 530 women and 831 men have made it through to phase two, with at least three candidates from every Member State. In addition, 27 candidates who applied for the parastronaut vacancy have been invited to phase two.

Candidates who are successful at phase two will go on to participate in a set of psychological interviews and group tests ahead of medical testing. Those who successfully pass each of these selection stages will be invited to recruitment interviews. ESA's new class of astronauts and reserve astronauts is expected to be announced in autumn 2022.

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