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## Surrey Launches New Space Institute to Strengthen U.K. Satellite Sector

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The University of Surrey has launched a new space-focused institute aimed at expanding Britain's small satellite capabilities, addressing critical skill shortages, and bolstering the U.K.'s global standing in the fast-growing space economy.

The newly established Surrey Space Institute will serve as a national hub for research, innovation, and workforce development in the satellite industry. With the United Kingdom's

space economy valued at nearly £19 billion and growing rapidly, the sector faces mounting demand for technical expertise and end-to-end mission capability. More than half of the nation's space organisations report serious shortages in essential skills, particularly in software engineering, artificial intelligence, systems integration, and data analysis. The Institute aims to close this gap by training a significant portion of the next-generation space workforce through hands-on missions, postgraduate education, and professional development programs.

The Surrey Space Institute builds on the legacy of the university's 45-year leadership in small satellite research and development, originally driven by the pioneering work of Professor Sir Martin Sweeting. Sir Martin's efforts at the Surrey Space Centre led to the founding of Surrey Satellite Technology Limited (SSTL), a commercial spin-out that revolutionised satellite design and has since generated over £1 billion in exports for the U.K..

Under the direction of Professor Adam Amara, who also serves as Chief Scientist at the United Kingdom Space Agency, the Institute will focus on three mission-critical areas: Earth-based climate and water management, strengthening space infrastructure such as communications and cybersecurity, and creating the frameworks needed for long-term sustainable exploration beyond Earth. Professor Bob Nichol, a noted astrophysicist, and Pro-Vice-Chancellor, played a central role in shaping the vision behind the Institute, emphasising its interdisciplinary approach.

Importantly, the Institute aims not just to build hardware but to develop full-scale operational capability, combining science, technology, law, and policy to deliver space missions with real-world relevance. It also plans to assist small space-focused enterprises in scaling up, contributing to a more self-reliant and competitive British space industry.

With the United Kingdom's space sector contributing £7.2 billion directly to the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) and supporting over 52,000 highly skilled jobs, investments like this are essential. The sector continues to outpace wider economic growth, with a notable £1 billion directed toward research and development in the 2021/22 fiscal year alone.

The launch of the Surrey Space Institute comes at a time when bolstering sovereign capability, innovation, and national resilience in high-tech sectors is more crucial than ever.

By converting academic excellence into mission-ready applications, the Institute positions the U.K. as a forward-thinking leader in space technology.