

Queen's scientists' 'space mission' to unlock secrets of the Universe

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Scientists at Queen's University have won almost £2 million in grants for a range of world-leading projects to unlock the secrets of the Universe.

The astronomers – who are all based in the University's Astrophysics Research Centre (ARC) – have been awarded £1.8 million from the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC).

The funding is for research ranging from the search for new planets to probing the mysteries of dark matter and dark energy, thought to account for much of the Universe, to enhancing our understanding of the Sun – the most important astronomical object for humankind.

The work includes the identification of exploding stars (called supernovae) using the Pan-STARRS Survey telescope in Hawaii, which is generating the largest ever multi-colour survey of the cosmos.

It also involves observations using the Queen's Rapid Oscillations in the Solar Atmosphere (ROSA) instrument, installed on the Dunn Solar Telescope in New Mexico, the prime US facility for ground-based solar observations.

The Head of the University's School of Mathematics and Physics, Professor Francis Keenan, is Principal Investigator for the STFC funding package.

He said: "At a time when resources from the STFC and other research

councils are very limited, these grants acknowledge the world-leading work being carried out by astrophysicists at Queen's.

"Many of our research programmes involve international collaborations with a range of world-class universities and research organisations, such as Harvard University, Vanderbilt University and the US National Solar Observatory. This funding will allow us to build upon our reputation for ground-breaking fundamental research and to continue to contribute to the global studies under way in these areas."

More information: Further information on Queen's Astrophysics Research Centre is available online at star.pst.qub.ac.uk/

Provided by Queen's University Belfast

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