



Astronauts4Hire

Your Spaceflight Crew Solution

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Astronauts4Hire Announces its Commercial Astronaut Training Programs

Palo Alto, California – After more than a year of development, Astronauts for Hire (A4H) is proud to announce its proposed training programs for Research Specialist Astronauts and Operations Specialist Astronauts. These programs, which were developed by the nonprofit in close consultation with former NASA astronauts and astronaut instructors, are the most comprehensive commercial scientist-astronaut training guidelines available in the world.

“Astronauts for Hire is proud to have integrated the expertise of experienced spaceflight professionals and top-notch training providers into a comprehensive, yet cost-effective, training program that will produce the world’s best-prepared commercial scientist-astronauts,” remarked A4H Chief Operating Officer Dr. Jason Reimuller. “We will publish a full description of the training qualifications in a peer-reviewed journal and thorough training manual later this year.” Interested reviewers of the draft manuscripts are encouraged to contact A4H by April 2012.

A4H Training Officer Dr. Erik Seedhouse, who has authored books on astronaut training, led the collaborative initiative to develop A4H’s training program. “Space is a dangerous and extreme environment that leaves little to no room for error, or time to correct for mistakes,” said Seedhouse. “To test how quickly and creatively our astronauts can think and work with others under life-threatening conditions, they must train across multiple realistic environments.”

A4H astronaut candidates follow a progressive, integrated training program, conducted in safe analog environments that emphasize the ability to perform missions effectively during all phases of flight as well as in emergency contingencies. Those selected as A4H astronaut candidates possess a unique combination of established scientific expertise, broad technical and operational skills, a history showing adaptability in challenging environments. Individuals then qualified as A4H astronauts are fully trained to meet the needs of the research and education market.

Research Specialist Astronauts are trained to be effective payload operators. They must hold a Masters degree or equivalent from an accredited institution in a relevant field of science or engineering. Training elements include centrifuge training to prepare for launch and reentry, microgravity training on parabolic flights, high altitude training to identify personal hypoxia symptoms, distraction avoidance training, unusual attitude training using aerobatic aircraft to develop spatial awareness in flight, emergency egress training to prepare for an off-nominal landing, a personal space motion sickness assessment, basic SCUBA certification for experience in a space analog environment, and completion of academic modules covering the space environment, human performance, life support systems, and spacecraft systems engineering.

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Operations Specialist Astronauts will be qualified to support a wide range of mission objectives beyond payload operation. They will manage and oversee mission operations, prioritize operational and research objectives, help operate spacecraft systems, handle emergencies, and ensure the overall success of a mission and the safety of those on board. Operations Specialist candidates undergo a much broader training program compared with Research Specialists. In addition to meeting all Research Specialist requirements, the candidate must earn a Private Pilot certificate, complete aerobatic training geared around adaptability to rapidly changing G-environments, train for land and sea survival, earn advanced SCUBA certification at the Master Diver level or equivalent, obtain space motion sickness desensitization training, maintain current emergency first responder certification or equivalent, and complete a comprehensive selection of academic modules focusing on a wide breadth of knowledge including crew management, mission planning and operations, science applications, spacecraft subsystems, and navigation.

A4H Flight Members completing either training program will earn silver A4H wings corresponding to the appropriate qualification, which will be upgraded to gold wings upon the completion of their first space flights. Any person who completes all A4H training elements and has not been formally selected as an A4H Flight Member may petition for recognition of the training, which will result in the awarding of bronze wings. The first class of A4H astronaut candidates underwent training in July 2011, and those qualified as Research Specialist Astronauts will be announced by Summer 2012.

About Astronauts4Hire:

Astronauts for Hire, Inc. (A4H) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation whose objectives are to provide opportunities for students and professionals to develop and refine the skills necessary to become commercial astronauts and to assist these qualified candidates with networking opportunities in the space research community. A4H's commercial astronaut candidates are accomplished scientists and engineers who can support a wide variety of payloads. They are available today for contract and consulting work with researchers to design and conduct experiments on microgravity, suborbital, and orbital missions. For more information, please visit www.Astronauts4Hire.org or contact Public Relations Officer Ben Corbin at media@astronauts4hire.org or at (850) 685-2218.

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