



2024 Space4Youth Competition Call for Abstracts and Essays

Description

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and the Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC) are launching the fifth edition of the Space4Youth Essay Competition, targeting students and young professionals with the aim to highlight **governance practices** and experiences on **the sustainable use of outer space** to address the **needs of the present** in a manner that **protects the interests of future generations**. UNOOSA is the only United Nations Office entirely dedicated to outer space activities and works to strengthen international cooperation in space activities and in the use of space science and technology for achieving sustainable development. The Space Generation Advisory Council in support of the United Nations Programme on Space applications is a global non-governmental, non-profit organization and network representing university students and young space professionals to the United Nations, space agencies, industry, and academia.

Context

As mentioned in the "Space2030" Agenda (RES 76/3), *space science and technology are now intrinsic to our daily lives and bring an abundance of unique and fundamental benefits to Earth*. Space exploration propels technological progress, frequently yielding practical applications on Earth and fostering innovations across diverse domains, including communications, medical imaging, and materials science. Satellite data and images enable scientists to monitor weather patterns, variations in temperature and coastal changes, providing valuable insights that inform energy and climate policy decisions and contributing to more effective disaster risk management and emergency response. Communication networks increasingly depend on access to space-based assets, and, alongside global navigation satellite systems, they play a crucial role as enablers of global and economic development. These benefits showcase the multifaceted impact of outer space activities on human society, spanning scientific, technological, economic, and societal domains.

However, with the recent surge in space activities, a vast set of challenges have emerged. Published in May 2023 by the United Nations Secretary-General, the **Policy Brief "For All Humanity - the Future of Outer Space Governance"** identifies three key indicators that highlight this unprecedented shift: the exponential increase of objects launched into orbit; the swift escalation in private sector participation; and the pledges made by both public and private entities to venture into deep space. In addition to that, the global space community acknowledges that the long-term sustainability of space activities is influenced not only by this growing number of space activities but also by factors such as the escalating space debris, the rising complexity of space operations, the emergence of large constellations, and the heightened risks of collision and interference with the operation of space objects.

Such challenges demand careful consideration to ensure the sustainable use and preservation of outer space. Earth's orbits and celestial bodies are finite resources, and responsible stewardship is essential to prevent irreversible damage and depletion. Striking a balance between innovation and conservation is key to unlocking the full potential of outer space while safeguarding the celestial realms for future generations.



The **Summit of the Future** is a high-level event hosted by the United Nations General Assembly which will take place in New York on 22-23 September 2024. The result of the summit will be the **Pact for the Future**, a document that will include specific recommendations to address present and future challenges, including the sustainability of outer space. The document will focus on actionable measures and will be negotiated by world leaders.

Topic of the Competition

Through the creativity and energy of the youth and sustainable practices, we can navigate the challenges and embrace the vast opportunities that the cosmos offers. In this context, the Space4Youth Essay Competition will have the following theme:

Governance of outer space activities: securing space sustainability for future generations

The essay competition has a precise ask for applicants:

“Governance of outer space activities: what idea do you have that would unite world leaders to agree on a common approach to make space sustainable for future generations?”.

Applicants are asked to submit an abstract to present their own idea.

If selected, the applicant will submit an essay. The proposed idea should be presented thoroughly, assessing strengths, weaknesses and feasibility.

How to participate in the essay competition?

The competition is structured in 2 phases:

1. Applicants must fill in the **online application form** and submit an **abstract** of **maximum 100 words**.
2. If the abstract is positively evaluated, the applicant will be asked to submit an **essay** of **maximum 1,000 words**, to be based on the previously submitted abstract.

Application

- To apply, please register and submit the abstract through the [Space for Youth Competition Form](#) by **11 February 2024, 23:59 CET**.
- Please note that you will have to insert your abstract directly in the online form. We suggest you prepare the abstract ahead of completing the application form.
- Results of the abstracts selection will be communicated to successful candidates by **23 February 2024, 23:59 CET**.
- Successful candidates shall submit their essay. The deadline is **15 March 2024, 23:59 CET**.

The results of the competition will be announced **by 29 March**.

Please note that if you have not been contacted within these dates, you have not been selected.

Eligibility criteria

- The competition is open to all students and young professionals from any Member State of the United Nations.
- All participants shall be of the age **between 18 to 35** inclusive (up to the day of their 36th birthday) on 31 March 2024.
- The competition is open to individuals - no team submission is allowed.
- Competition organizers and judges are not eligible for the competition.
- The United Nations encourages all qualified applicants, regardless of gender, disability, sexual orientation, cultural or religious backgrounds, to apply.



- Winners of the previous Space4Youth competitions are not eligible.

Opportunities/award for authors of best essays

- The U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna will support this year's Space4Youth competition by providing the authors of the best 3 essays with a trip to the United States to meet with representatives of the U.S. space sector and attend an Adult Space Camp at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama¹.
- The 3 best essays will be uploaded on the UNOOSA "Space for Youth" webpage.
- The authors of the best 3 essays may be invited to attend other international events.
- Priority will be given to participants from developing countries.

Requirements for the submission

- Any submissions after the deadline will not be considered. In case of lack of quality of submissions, the Selection Committee reserves the right to extend and, or cancel the competition.
- The abstract will be submitted through the [Space for Youth Competition Form](#).
- The essay should be submitted as a PDF document under 5 MB. The name of the file should be "*Name_Surname_Space4Youth Competition*". Please make sure the title of the file includes your name and surname.
- The abstracts and the essay must be written in English.
- The abstract and essay should include a title.
- The abstract should **not** exceed **100 words**.
- The essay should **not** exceed **1,000 words**, bibliography **excluded**.
- If you use images or graphics, please give credit and add a title and a caption. These images and graphics should be added to the relevant section(s) of the essay. Also reference them from the text.
- The font used should be Times New Roman with a 12-font size.
- For references, please use the Chicago referencing style. Copying the work of others without appropriate attribution to its source will result in the loss of points and/or disqualification. Failure to properly acknowledge sources may constitute plagiarism. Provide links for researched information and facts that you include. Bibliography does not count in the 1,000 words.
- The use of any sort of AI tool is strictly forbidden.
- The text may draw examples from organizations, companies or other entities, but it cannot promote or advertise them.
- Provide definitions for technical terms you use.

Tips for abstract and essay preparation

Aim for consistent, clear, concise, and comprehensive writing in simple English. As you write, keep these helpful tips in mind.

- If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
- Do not use a long word when a short one will do.
- Use the active voice rather than the passive voice as it is more engaging and easier for readers to understand. It is better to avoid the passive continuous construction ("a conference is being organized").
- Write simple and avoid complicated sentence structures and keep in mind what you're trying to express.

You can use short and relevant subheadings to break up longer text for easier reading.

¹ Confirmation and satisfaction of U.S. visa approval will be required. Expenses will be covered by the U.S. Mission to the International Organizations in Vienna.



Use concrete facts, data, and numbers, rather than generalizations wherever possible: "the chlorophyll concentration has increased by 20%" is more interesting and credible than "the chlorophyll concentration has significantly increased." Indicate the source of the figure, whether internal or external. Ideally, provide a link to this source. E.g., "According to the European Commission concentration in the Eastern Bering Sea has increased by XX% from 2000 to 2001 [LINK TO SOURCE]."

Finally, read through your article several times and edit duplications of the same message.

Structure

- Introduction: set the ground and main thesis
- Main body: justify the idea and practical solution you are proposing
- Conclusions: reiterate your idea and potentially identify future developments

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria of the abstract/essay are:

- Relevance of topic
- Coherent and sound reasoning
- Clear structure
- Grammar and sentence structure
- Feasibility of idea
- Originality of idea

For any questions, please contact space4youth@un.org