



Dr Dirk Froebrich - Higher Education Award

Dr Dirk Froebrich is a published researcher and reader in Astronomy at the University of Kent.

In 2015, due to the lack of observing capability at the only higher education institution teaching astronomy in Kent, Dr Froebrich created a new observing facility on campus in Canterbury - the Beacon Observatory. This is now used by undergraduate and graduate students, supporting PhD and MSc research projects.

Since 2018, Beacon data has also been used in the University of Kent's undergraduate computing course, extending its original intended use. Beacon Observatory is now fully controllable remotely, and pre-programmable throughout the night. Its data has appeared in over ten journal papers.

The Hunting Outbursting Young Stars (HOYS) citizen science project is led by Dr Froebrich, where over 100 international amateurs supply astronomical data. Beacon Observatory plays a leading role in this project having delivered approximately ten percent of all HOYS images, meaning that student observing serves a scientifically rigorous and purposeful activity.

He is also passionate about outreach, with hundreds of school students and their teachers conducting Beacon observing sessions, in addition to well attended public observing sessions.

Dr Froebrich's dedication to Beacon Observatory has made a significant contribution to the enrichment of the undergraduate and postgraduate study at Kent, in addition to ensuring Beacon's leading role in outreach, both locally and internationally.