



Press Release

May 13, 2026
ispace, inc.

ispace and University of Leicester Sign Payload Service Agreement for Lunar Raman Spectrometer Mission

TOKYO – May 13, 2026 – ispace, inc. (ispace) (TOKYO: 9348), a global lunar exploration company, and the University of Leicester (UoL) have signed a Payload Service Agreement (PSA) to deliver a Raman spectrometer payload to the lunar surface on a future ispace mission.

The payload is a Raman analytical spectroscopy instrument adapted from the original laser-based spectrometer developed for the ExoMars mission, and will be delivered by the University of Leicester, in collaboration with INTA (Madrid), the University of Aberdeen, RAL Space, and the University of Valladolid. The instrument will analyse the lunar surface to determine its molecular composition and identify resources that could support future human exploration missions. It is designed for integration with commercial small lunar landers and rovers that will explore the Moon's surface in support of future space resource utilisation.

The Raman Spectrometer project is funded under the UK Space Agency (UKSA) Science and Exploration Bilateral Fund and represents a key step in advancing scientific instrumentation for in-situ lunar analysis.

Under the agreement, ispace will provide payload transportation services through its Japanese entity aboard a future mission using its newly introduced ULTRA lunar lander. The specific mission assignment has not yet been determined.

Building upon the heritage of lunar lander's used for ispace's two previous lunar missions, ULTRA is based on the outstanding technologies developed by its entities in Japan and the United States. The larger lander is expected to deliver even higher quality to meet growing customers' demands in the fast-growing market.

To enable effective surface analysis, the Raman spectrometer must operate in very close proximity to, or in direct contact with, the lunar regolith. To achieve this, ispace and the University of Leicester are jointly developing a deployment mechanism that will allow the instrument to be positioned precisely on the lunar surface, supporting both lander- and rover-based operations.

Collaboration between ispace and the University of Leicester has been ongoing for several years. The partnership began with a Letter of Support in 2022, progressed to an Initial Payload Service Agreement (iPSA) in 2024, and has now advanced to a full Payload Service Agreement. The mission supports broader efforts to characterise lunar materials and enable future utilisation of space resources, contributing to the development of sustainable lunar exploration infrastructure.

Takeshi Hakamada, Founder & CEO of ispace “We are pleased to expand our collaboration with the University of Leicester through this Payload Service Agreement. By combining the University of Leicester’s expertise in Raman spectroscopy with ispace’s lunar transportation and surface mobility capabilities, we are helping lay the groundwork for future missions focused on understanding and utilising lunar resources.”

UK Space Minister Liz Lloyd said: “This agreement between ispace and the University of Leicester is a brilliant example of what UK space science can achieve when world-class academic expertise meets commercial ambition and I’m delighted to see it deepening our cooperation with Japan.

“By analysing the composition of the lunar surface – identifying resources like high value minerals, volatiles and water ice – this mission will lay the groundwork for sustainable lunar exploration, opening up economic opportunities and strengthening the UK’s role in this emerging market.”

Dr. Hannah Lerman, Planetary Group, School of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Leicester (PI of the UKSA Bilaterals programme with ispace): "We are very excited to see our collaboration with ispace progress with this latest agreement. ispace brings a fresh, dynamic approach to developing and launching space missions and we are thrilled to be part of their vision. This is a new model of space exploration that opens up a wide range of possibilities to demonstrate the capabilities of our technology developed at the University of Leicester. With human exploration missions so close to launch, this agreement is an important step in preparing for a future return to the moon."

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About ispace, inc. (<https://ispace-inc.com>)

ispace, a global lunar exploration company with the vision, “Expand our planet. Expand our future.”, specializes in designing and building lunar landers and rovers. ispace aims to extend the sphere of human life into space and create a sustainable world by providing high-frequency, low-cost transportation services to the Moon. The company has business entities in Japan, Luxembourg, and the United States with approximately 300 employees worldwide. For more information, visit: www.ispace-inc.com and follow us on X: [@ispace_inc](https://twitter.com/ispace_inc).

About the University of Leicester (<https://le.ac.uk>)

The University of Leicester is led by discovery and innovation – an international centre for excellence renowned for research, teaching and broadening access to higher education. It is

among the Top 30 universities in the Times Higher Education (THE)'s Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 rankings with 89% of research assessed as world-leading or internationally excellent, with wide-ranging impacts on society, health, culture, and the environment. The University is home to more than 20,000 students and approximately 4,000 staff.