

Processing Requests to use SDSS Facilities and Resources for Non-SDSS Observing Activities

Objectives

To define a process that provides for the formal review, approval, and integration of non-SDSS observing activities in a manner that does not compromise SDSS operations or the achievement of Survey goals.

Definition

Non-SDSS observing activities are defined as activities that require the use of SDSS facilities and resources at Apache Point Observatory (APO) in a manner not directly related to the achievement of the Science Requirements or scientific goals of the Primary Survey. The Primary Survey is defined in the ARC Principles of Operation for the Sloan Digital Sky Survey (PoO).

Article 5.3 of the PoO provides for the consideration of initiatives for extension beyond the SDSS Primary Survey. These include initiatives to use or augment the SDSS hardware, operations, or data for purposes that are not part of the Primary Survey. They are not a part of the core science program of the Survey and their costs are not borne by the SDSS. This document provides an implementation plan for the consideration of initiatives to use SDSS resources at APO for non-SDSS purposes.

Process

All proposals for the use of SDSS facilities for non-SDSS purposes must be submitted to SDSS Director and Project Scientist for review and approval. In accordance with Article 5.3 of the PoO, the SDSS Director may approve extension proposals after review by the Project Scientist to assess scientific merit and then by the Director to ensure technical appropriateness and financial impact. A decision on the proposal will be made within 30 working days of the date the proposal was received by the Director's Office.

1. To facilitate a timely review, the proposal must include the following:
 - A description of the science program or project that the activity will support;
 - A statement regarding how observing and other support costs will be paid for;
 - A description of how the telescope and instruments will be used, including any special observing instructions or needs;
 - A description of the level of support required from site personnel;
 - A description of the level of support required from off-site personnel;
 - A description of the level of data processing support required;
 - What involvement, if any, the requester will have in the observing operation at APO;
 - What is the potential impact on survey operations at APO (e.g., disruption of normal activities, loss of observing time, efficiency, etc.);
 - A description of how and where the data will be stored and made available to the requester;
 - A statement regarding whether the data will be made available to the SDSS collaboration, and by what means.

2. Unapproved requests may be appealed to the Chair of the SDSS Advisory Council.
3. Once approved, special observing needs and instructions shall be provided to the Head of Survey Coordination so they may be included in the SDSS Monthly Observing Plan at an appropriate time. The schedule for non-SDSS observing activities will be coordinated by the Head of Survey Coordination, the Lead Observer, and the requester. The schedule shall not in any way compromise the achievement of survey goals or requirements.
4. If non-SDSS plates are to be observed, instructions for when each plate will be plugged and prepped for observation will be given to the SDSS plugging technicians by the SDSS observers, following standard operating procedures. The instructions will be in accordance with the approved Monthly Observing Plan.
5. All requests for personnel support will be carefully reviewed and may require augmenting the statements of work (agreements) between ARC and the institutions doing work for the SDSS, to provide for the additional level of support being requested and to establish a mechanism for how the additional level of effort will be paid for. Institutions have agreed to provide a certain level of support to the SDSS; there is no guarantee that they will agree to an increase to support an initiative for extension beyond the Primary Survey.