# Southern African Large Telescope


# User Support by the SALT Astronomy Operations

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# Contents

# 1 Introduction

The aim is to define in detail the way we, as SALT Astronomy Operations team, perform user support for the SALT community. Currently this document includes general communication issues and Phase I and II handling of proposals, as well as a summary of CT SA duties. The higher level support philosophy is (we assume) written down somewhere else, but in general the support should be both efficient (no PIs or messages fall through the cracks, short response time) and striving towards satisfied and happy users.

# 2 SALT Astronomer duties in Cape Town

CT SA duty week starts on a Wednesday morning, and lasts until Tuesday night, or until the Mon/Tue night's data from Sutherland is taken care of.

A summary of the current CT SA duties follows: SA CT duty is responsible..

- that the data are copied from Sutherland, and inform IT if they were not.
- that the data are reduced with the current version of pipeline (if the data were copied over normally) or start the reduction scripts manually (when the data arrive later).
- that the reduced data are copied to the ftp site
- of quality control (TBD in another document)
- that the PIs are informed of the data
- that the liaison SA is informed that the data was reduced and delivered
- for preparing a summary at the end of the week
- for keeping the status web-page up-to-date
- for checking the SALTHELP and SA accout emails, and answering and/or forwarding every one of those mails, bbc'ing others, and keeping the accounts clear and organized.

The goal should be to carry out these duties, especially the data delivery, DAILY. However, since for various reasons this is not always possible, the minimum is to carry out the duties within a WEEK.

In particular, the CT duty is responsible that any carry over items from his/her week are taken care of (either do it, or make an agreement with the next SA).

SALT Astronomy Ops do not provide user support during weekends and public holidays. As indicated above, all items must be cleared during the duty week, but there is no requirement to e.g. support PIs during weekends.

In general, CT duty week should not be scheduled on the week just before or after a SALT duty week.

# 3 Communicating with SALT users

## 3.1 SALT board and SALT Science Working Group

The Manager (i.e. David) is responsible for this.

## 3.2 General queries and Principal Investigators during phase I

The CT duty SA is responsible for checking DAILY both the SA and SALTHELP accounts. The duty SA either answers and takes action on the issues raised, or forwards mails to other people who might know more of a particular issue. In the latter case the responsibility to answer/act is on the person who got the forwarded message.

SALTHELP email account should be the primary avenue for PIs to communicate with any member of the SALT AstOps during preparation of proposals and for any general queries not specifically related to an accepted program in the queue. Answers should also be sent from that account - if personal account was used, then the sent message should be copied over. All correspondence should be saved in PI-specific folders on SALTHELP.

Note the special case in support, detailed below in Section4.1, during proposal submission periods.

[ a restructuring of the email accounts is pending ]

## 3.3 Principal Investigators during phase II and on-going programs

The Manager (i.e. David) is responsible for dividing up the PIs of accepted proposals for each SA.

The *primary liaison SA* for a given PI should be responsible for all scientific and technical aspects of the proposal, including making sure that all taken data are delivered.

There should also be a *secondary liaison SA* for each PI, who takes care of the PI data and communication during longer primary liaison absences. It is the responsibility of the primary liaison to inform the secondary when and in what fashion his/her backup is needed.

Each SA must initiate a personal contact with the PI during the Phase II process for their primary contacts.

Communication with the PIs at this stage should be done from within the SA email account, and all correspondence saved to PI-specific folders. If some correspondence is done from personal accounts, the messages should be copied over. These emails will be eventually visible (and repliable?) from within the PIPT Web Manager tool developed by Tim-Oliver Husser.

# 4 Proposal submission sequence and related responsibilities

## 4.1 Phase I

1. Call of proposal from David, approved by the Board. At least 6 weeks before the submission deadline.

2. Proposals to be submitted using PIPT directly to the database. Currently an xml-file is also sent to the SUBMIT account.

3. During submission period there will be two people – David and an SA – in charge of answering questions regarding anything connected to submission of proposals (whether technical or scientific or instrumental) for this period. They are responsible for answering or forwarding these questions. The SA will change from submission period to the next. How they divide their duties during the submission period is completely up to them. (remember the density of emails grows significantly upto the deadline).

4. The tool should automatically acknowledge a valid submission. If it does not, David will do it manually.

5. David and Encarni will be responsible for checking the SUBMIT account periodically during the submission period.

6. The proposals can be changed or updated or re-submitted until the deadline. After the deadline the system has to lock all submitted proposals from further changes. Only communication with the Manager enables changes at this stage.

7. The PIPT Web Manager should be available for the TAC to view and analyse the proposals. The SALT manager (David) is responsible to make sure that the whole TAC is able to review all the submitted proposals right after the deadline (in a couple of days).

8. The time when the TAC will give its final decision has to be known in advance (one week, three??).

9. Right after the submission deadline the SALT manager (David) is also responsible for distributing the proposals to SAs for technical and observational feasibily review. This review runs in parallel to the TAC scientific review. The review should be done in pairs.

10. The SA provided technical reviews have to be ready and submitted to the SALT manager a week before the final date of TAC decisions. Some pre-defined (web)form should be used.

11. The SALT manager is responsible for informing the PIs of the TAC decisions. This should also include information about phase II submission deadline, and information about the liaison SAs.

12. After the TAC decisions an SA (Encarni) will be responsible for making sure that all accepted proposals are in the SDB with their correct status and allocated time.

## 4.2 Phase II

1. The deadline for the submission of phase II content of the accepted proposals must be specified and known to both PIs and SAs. Say, one month after the TAC decisions. The time should be specified in the first call for proposals already, and be visible on the web.

2. The SALT manager is responsible for dividing all accepted proposal to liaison SAs (both primary and secondary SAs) during the first week after TAC decisions.

3. After this, the CT duty SA is responsible for forwarding all questions coming to SALTHELP or SA accounts to relevant SAs.

4. After this each individual (primary) SA must contact all their PIs and inform them about (a template email will be prepared for this):
   - "I am your SA"
   - make sure they know what to send for phase II
   - answer all their questions from now on, and make sure their data is delivered when data has been taken

5. After submission of phase II material (OBs, readme's, FCs) the responsible SA has to be informed of the final (see below) submission (by a automatic mail from PIPT Manager?).

6. The phase II material can be changed or updated or re-submitted until the phase II deadline. When the PI thinks he is finished with the material he informs the liaison SA (a switch within the PIPT manager) that this is the case. The tool then locks the submitted OBs. Only communication with the liaison SA enables changes at this stage.

7. While the PIPT manager accepts only 'technically validated' phase-II material, there might, and will, be cases of scientifically or observationally absurd submissions. Thus, the liaison SA has to thoroughly check and iterate all the submitted material using PIPT (Web) Manager and e-mail with the PI until all the OB's can be validated. *This is the single most important step in phase II for SALT AstOps.*

8. The phase II deadline for the PI means that the material has to be submitted by that time. If there is no submission, there will be an email reminder the next day. If material is a week late, the case will be forwarded to the SALT manager, David.

9. The liaison SA has to start checking and validating the submitted material after their final submission from their PIs. The validating of the phase II material has to be finished before the start of the new observing period.

10. Accepted OBs appear in the queue. It is the responsibility of the liaison SA to make sure his/her OBs are in the queue - this requires that the OPT tool is also available in CT.

11. The PIs are allowed to change relative the priorities of all their non-observed OBs using the PIPT Web Manager. If they need to change something within the blocks (targets, configuration, etc), they need contact their liaison SA, who may approve the change by un-locking the OBs in question.

# 5 Tracking of observing blocks

How do we track the status of OBs from submission all the way to archiving? Which status flags do we exactly need? Who changes them, which are changed automatically, etc.

This will be discussed/included somewhere else.

# 6 Data delivery

This might be included in a document of its own? (responsible is Nic).