



Time  
Allocation



Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory  
Community Science and Data Center  
Gemini Observatory  
Kitt Peak National Observatory  
Vera C. Rubin Observatory

Updated March 2022

## Frequently Asked Questions about the new Time Allocation System (TAS) and Dual Anonymous proposal submission

### How can I get help?

Our TAC team can be reached at our help email address: [proposal-help@noirlab.edu](mailto:proposal-help@noirlab.edu)

### Does my proposal need to be anonymized for this (2022B) Call?

Yes. Proposals submitted through both NOIRLab TAS and Gemini PIT must be anonymized. See NOIRLab TAC and Gemini web pages for additional information.

### Why is NOIRLab implementing a Dual Anonymous, 2 stage review?

The review of acceptance outcomes from the NOIRLab telescope allocation, and other modern subjective evaluation processes, have concluded that gender bias may be a factor in uneven outcomes. NOIRLab is implementing a Dual Anonymous, 2 stage review to mitigate such bias.

### Why is the NOIRLab Dual Anonymous review done in 2-stages?

A single stage review procedure, like that adopted by STScI, is not entirely compatible with some of the mission objectives of the NOIRLab TAC process, including support for thesis datasets and broad access objectives. Therefore, we are implementing the NOIRLab review as a 2-stage process where the first stage includes a Dual Anonymous blind review.

### Where do I find instructions for anonymizing my proposal?

Instructions for making proposals anonymous can be found [on the NOIRLab webpage](#). Please take sufficient time to prepare the manuscript, especially if you plan to resubmit a proposal from a previous semester.

### What content should I put in the Team Background attachment?

Guidance for what information to include on the Team Information and Background page is available in the [Anonymization Instructions document](#). There is also a template provided that includes guidance for the page content.

### Do Gemini proposals also have to be anonymous?

Yes. Proposals submitted through both NOIRLab TAS and Gemini PIT must be anonymized. See Gemini webpages for additional information.

**When do you provide the Team Background and Information pages to the TAC?**

*Team Background and Information pages will be provided after the end of the first stage, which ends with a ranked order of the proposals based on the anonymized information.*

**Does anonymization apply for citing a paper that is not public yet, but will be by the time the TAC reads the proposal.**

*Yes, you should cite as a 'private communication', for example, "Figures adapted from Smith, et al. obtained in private communication". If it is unclear if the paper will be published by TAC review, the figures from previous work should simply not be claimed. In a case where you are PI of a dataset being referred to but the data is publicly available, you should just refer to using publicly available data, i.e. not claiming ownership.*

**Is anonymizing now mandatory, and if one fails to do it correctly, the proposal will be rejected?**

*Yes, anonymizing is mandatory. The TAC staff will always review anything that is not anonymized correctly. If there is time before the panels meet, we will try to reach out to the PI and let them know. If the panel members identify something the TAC staff didn't catch, then we will have to review how egregious that violation is. In the first semester (2022B) of implementation, staff will be more lenient than in future semesters. However, yes, it is the case that any egregious violation of the anonymization of a proposal is at risk for being thrown out and not reviewed by the TAC.*

**Is it the case that If we have critical custom data reduction software, that is important to explaining how the science will be accomplished, we need to say "There exists software to accomplish ..."**

*Yes, you must not claim ownership of your custom software in the body of the proposal. If you want to say something more about the software in the team background section, you're able to do it there.*

**Is it up to the panel to decide how much weight to give to the second stage review?**

*It's not a weighting that is applied by the panel, but the review panel may make adjustments that support NOIRLab mission objective of 'enabling breakthrough discoveries in astrophysics with state-of-the art ground-based observatories, data products, and services for a diverse and inclusive community'. Any adjustments will need to be agreed on as a panel with oversight by the panel chair, that is, it is **not** TAC staff who make adjustments to the ranked list. In particular, we anticipate small adjustments being made near the bands of probable telescope-estimated-nights-available for each telescope.*

**How should a PI handle a collaborative proposal where the requested time for the science goals are split between multiple partner TACs?**

*A PI can still submit proposals for only part of a collaborative proposal. The science case for the full proposal and the PI's part should be made and the PI should include*

some context like, "we are applying for the additional required nights outside of the NOIRLab TAC", without specifying the mechanism.

### **Why do I need to login to write and submit my proposal?**

*The legacy submission tool required a unique user for each proposal, in NOIRLab TAS your proposals are centralized to your user account and therefore only a single login is required for proposals across all future semesters. User accounts help our team address issues that might be encountered during the creation and submission process and allows us to provide enhanced features such as proposal sharing and recalling. This is the same login you (can) use to access the NOIRLab Science Data Archive.*

### **Can I use the same login to submit more than one proposal?**

*Yes! In the NOIRLab TAS your proposals are centralized to your user account and therefore only a single login is required to access proposals across all future semesters.*

### **Why are there no options for Gemini instruments in the proposal form?**

*As in previous semesters, all Gemini proposals must be submitted through the Gemini Phase I Tool (PIT). You can find the link here:  
<https://www.gemini.edu/observing/phase-i/pit> .*

### **Can I see my Gemini proposals in my TAS Dashboard?**

*No, Gemini proposals must be submitted through the Gemini Phase I Tool (PiT), which is a separate system. You can submit Gemini proposals at  
<https://www.gemini.edu/observing/phase-i/pit> .*

### **Why don't you support Latex anymore?**

*By simplifying the submission process we are reducing the barrier to entry for observation requests which makes our resources more accessible to the scientific community. Removing the compilation of LaTeX within our system also helps to ensure consistency between proposal renderings which provides a more fair and straight forward review process. Investigators are welcome to use LaTeX when writing the proposal attachment and we provide an Overleaf template and LaTeX ZIP file for download. The resulting PDF can be attached in the attachment field of the proposal.*

### **Are there templates and .sty files available for proposals?**

*Yes, templates, and an example of how your proposal should look, are available at  
<https://noirlab.edu/science/observing-noirlab/proposals/attachment/standard-template>*

### **Why doesn't my abstract fit?**

*Please note that the limits for the text portions of the proposal form (abstract, technical description, etc.) are CHARACTER limits NOT word limits.*

**Can collaborators edit proposals simultaneously?**

*No, collaborators can share the proposal text in the webform, but should not attempt to edit simultaneously as this could lead to a loss of text. You will be able to see saved changes that a collaborator with write access makes to the proposal.*

**I added a co-I with permissions to edit our proposal, but co-I says they can't get in, what is wrong?**

*You must use the same email address that your collaborator used to create their SSO. If you are using a different email address, sharing access to the proposal is not possible.*

**Forgot your username or password?**

*If you forgot your password use the "I forgot my password" link at the bottom of the login form. You will be prompted to enter your email address after which password recovery steps will be provided.*

**I submitted my proposal, but found an error, can I get it back to fix it?**

*IF there is still time before the proposal deadline, Yes, you can recall your proposal through your dashboard. Simply select the curved arrow beside that proposal to recall it. You can then select the pen icon to edit the proposal. REMEMBER TO RESUBMIT THE PROPOSAL BEFORE THE DEADLINE. ONLY SUBMITTED PROPOSALS WILL BE SENT TO PANELS FOR REVIEW. However, IF the deadline has passed you will not be able to recall the proposal.*

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