NSF's National Optical-Infrared Astronomy Research Laboratory

Anonymization Instructions for PIs

Dara Norman, Nicole van der Bliek, Mia.Hartman, Alfredo Zenteno, Verne Smith, Chadd Myers

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Change Record

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2.2	2021-12-20	transfer of original document to NOIRLab Template. Incorporation of Internal comments	Dara Norman.
2.2.1	2022-01-27		Dara Norman
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Anonymization Instructions for PIs

NOIRLab TAC is implementing a Dual Anonymous[1] review process, in which the proposals are first presented without disclosure of the investigators during the first stage of the review. Only proposal sections relevant to the science program are disclosed initially, and these must be anonymized. In the second stage of the process, additional, non-anonymized information relevant to the science program will be introduced into the review to obtain the final ranking.

Anonymous review does not mean proposals will be accepted from anonymous sources. As with previous semesters, proposers must still enter the names and affiliations of all investigators in the *TAC proposal form.* However, names and affiliations will not be visible in the versions generated for the first stage of the proposal review.

Compliance with this policy is mandatory. Proposals received with flagrant violations will be subject to disqualification before the review-panel stage. Proposals with less serious violations (e.g., forgetting to change a reference from first person to third person) will be allowed to remain in contention, but will be flagged for review by NOIRLab's TAC Staff and the TAC Director for a final decision. Feedback will be provided to the proposers regarding any violations.

A possible concern that may arise is the following: "I've made every effort to anonymize my proposal, have followed all the guidelines, changed all my references to third-person, but I fear that my work is so specialized (or my analysis methods so unique) that panelists who know me will still be able to figure out who I am. Will my proposal be disqualified?" So long as the guidelines below are followed, the answer is NO, such a proposal will not be considered to be in violation. **It is not necessary to "water down" or obscure your science, your methods, or your tools**; it is simply your responsibility to write about them in the third-person, in a way that does not intentionally identify yourself.

In order to anonymize this first stage, proposers must adhere to the following requirements in the proposal's text sections (Abstract, Science Justification, Experimental Design, and Technical Design).

1. Do not claim ownership of past work, e.g., "my previously funded work..." or "Our prior analysis demonstrates that…"
2. Do not include the names of the personnel associated with the proposal or their organizational affiliations. This includes but is not limited to, page headers, footers,

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[1] Dual refers to the fact that both PIs and reviewers are anonymous. Under this Dual Anonymous review procedure, not only are proposers unaware of the identity of the members on the review panel, but the reviewers do not have explicit knowledge of the proposal teams. The goal is to mitigate unconscious bias and allow reviewers to concentrate on the science rather than the scientist.

diagrams, figures, or watermarks. This does not include references to past work, which should be included whenever relevant (see below).

3. Referencing is an essential part of demonstrating knowledge of the field and progress. When citing references within the proposal, use third person neutral wording. For example, replace phrases like "as we have shown in our previous work [17], …" with "as previously shown [17], ..." **This especially applies to self-referencing**. For example, replace phrases like "as we have shown in our previous work (Doe et al. 2010)" with "as Doe et al. (2010) showed...". Do not refer to previous observing campaigns or *other observatories* in an identifying fashion. For instance, rather than writing, "we observed another cluster, similar to the one we are proposing under program #XXXXX," instead write "Program #XXXXX has observed this target in the past..."

4. Depending on the program element, it may be occasionally important to cite exclusive access datasets, non-public software, unpublished data, or findings that have been presented in public before but are not cite-able. Each of these may reveal (or strongly imply) the investigators on the proposal. In these instances, proposers must use language such as "obtained in private communication" or "from private consultation" when referring to such potentially identifying work.

5. Do not include acknowledgments, or the source of any grant funding.

6. Examples of text anonymization can be found in Appendix 1 below.

It takes some effort by authors to anonymize their PDF submissions. As the guidelines show, grammar and structure are expected to be different than in previous proposal submissions. **Take sufficient time to prepare the manuscript, especially if you plan to resubmit a proposal from a previous semester**.

Proposers should make an effort to describe the past work in the field, and how this proposal will improve, build-upon, or complete that past work. Many successful proposals discuss stated sample goals or statistical completeness, and how this proposed work will fit in. Similarly, proposals may also discuss the uniqueness of the sample, and goals in comparison to similar work.

a. List of disqualifying lapses in proposal anonymization

- Directly naming one's self or previous, current or future work in the required anonymous sections of the proposal with attribution.

- Directly naming a co-I or their previous, current or future work in the required anonymous sections of the proposal with attribution as a co-I.
- Directly naming a competitor or their previous, current or future work in the required anonymous sections of the proposal with direct attribution.

b. Team Information and Relevant Background (For standard proposals)

As part of this change, NOIRLab proposals will also require PIs to provide a "Team Information and Relevant Background" text section. This section will not be provided to reviewers until the second stage of the review At the second stage of the review, the discussion will be limited to proposals that are above or near the band that represents the estimated number of available nights and support NOIRLab mission observing access priorities[2]. Guidance for the content of this section is provided below. This team information should be a single page description of the background, roles, resources and past time awards on expertise, background, and roles of the team members as they relate to the science proposed. The page should not be a list of Co-Investigators and it is NOT necessary to report on the qualifications of every team member, however if there is information about those conducting or leading major aspects of the proposed study that can be cited in this document. For example,   the page can include additional information about whether the proposal includes data to be used for a graduate thesis or student project, relevant additional resources available to complete the science goals, or other potentially identifying information that the proposer considers essential to understanding the science goals of the proposal. The PI may also want to explain why time through this NOIRLab open public access is critical to obtaining the data to complete this science (e.g., PI/Team has no other access to this or similar telescopes/instruments) or that the proposal is a continuation of an existing program on the same telescope/instrument. (Appendix 2 for additional details.)

Applications from astronomers and students who work at non-U.S. institutions are required to indicate why the project cannot be done using other facilities available to the investigators and why U.S. national facilities are needed.

Survey proposals

As with standard proposals, proposers should make an effort to describe their past work and how this proposal will improve, build-upon, or complete that past work in an

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[2] NOIRLab mission access priorities include: thesis proposals, Student proposals that are not thesis proposals, proposals that include a broader impact (e.g. EPO, unique technique/method (including software), proposals that broaden astronomy community access, or provide new instrumentation or methods.)

anonymized way. Anonymization extends to the Management and Data Release plans for Survey proposals.

The Science Justification section should be no more than three pages and should include only text (or tables). In an anonymized way, the Management and Data Release plan should describe the overall plan for conducting the proposed survey. Be sure to include:

- Approach: Discuss the organizational plan to execute the tasks required to complete the research goals and delivery of the data products. This discussion should include plans to support the observing runs, the pipeline processing plan, data reduction and analysis, archiving plan, data dissemination plan, and coordination of the survey with non-NOIRLab facilities or data sources.
- Personnel requirements without naming specific people: Discuss the roles needed that are relevant to management and data release, including anticipated levels of work. Specific team members should NOT be named in this part of the proposal, only key roles and work to be done. Identifying information should be saved for the Team Information and relevant Background section of the proposal. (Which is available only in stage two.)

Describe the data products (reduced observations, single or stacked images, spectra, object catalogs, and so on) to be released, as well as the timeline and mechanism of their release to the community. Please differentiate between intermediate products developed during the execution of the survey and the final products likely to be produced after the full observations have been obtained.

Guidance for Team Information and Relevant Background (For survey proposals)

This Team Information and Relevant Background section will not be provided to reviewers until the second stage of the review. The management and data release plans for the survey program should be an **anonymized part of the proposal**. However the Team Information and Relevant Background section for survey proposals can include additional information that ties key team members to the the proposed plans, identifies unique or identifying information about the team that is relevant to the science goals, or information on why time through this NOIRLab open public access is critical for meeting the goals of this survey project.

This section should be no more than one page and should include only text and can expand on identifying details of the proposal including

- Details of the personnel who will carry out the roles described in the main proposal. Include only those survey team members most relevant to management and data release, including their anticipated levels of participation. It is NOT necessary to report on the qualifications of every team member.
- Any relevant institutional/other support for the survey
- Any previous use of NOIRLab facilities that are relevant to the data release plan (publications can be cited here).

Appendix 1: Examples of text anonymization

Created by Lou Strolger (STScI) , last modified on Dec 13, 2018

The following examples are meant as additional guides in crafting your own proposals.

Here is an example of text from a sample proposal:

> Over the last five years, we have used infrared photometry from 2MASS to compile a census of nearby ultracool M and L dwarfs (Cruz et al, 2003; 2006). We have identified 87 L dwarfs in 80 systems with nominal distances less than 20 parsecs from the Sun. This is the first true L dwarf census – a large-scale, volume-limited sample. Most distances are based on spectroscopic parallaxes, accurate to 20%, which is adequate for present purposes. Fifty systems already have high-resolution imaging, including our Cycle 9 and 13 snapshot programs, #8581 and #10143; nine are in binary or multiple systems, including six new discoveries. We propose to target the remaining sources *via* the current proposal.

Here is the same text, re-worked following the anonymizing guidelines:

> Over the last five years, 2MASS infrared photometry has been used to compile a census of nearby ultracool M and L dwarfs (Cruz et al, 2003; 2006). 87 L dwarfs in 80 systems have been identified with nominal distances less than 20 parsecs from the Sun. This is the first true L dwarf census – a large-scale, volume-limited sample. Most distances are based on spectroscopic parallaxes, accurate to 20%, which is adequate for present purposes. Fifty systems already have high-resolution imaging, including the Cycle 9 and 13 snapshot programs, #8581 and #10143; nine are in binary or multiple systems, including six new discoveries. We propose to target the remaining sources *via* the current proposal.

Here is another example of text from a sample proposal:

In Rogers et al. (2014), we concluded that the best explanation for the dynamics of the shockwave and the spectra from both the forward-shocked ISM and the reverse-shocked ejecta is that a Type Ia supernova exploded into a preexisting wind-blown cavity. This object is the only known example of such a phenomenon, and it thus provides a unique opportunity to illuminate the nature of Type Ia supernovae and the progenitors. If our model from Rogers et al. (2014) is correct, then the single-degenerate channel for SNe Ia production must exist. We propose here for a second epoch of observations which we will compare with our first epoch obtained in 2007 to measure the proper motion of the shock wave.

Here is the same text, again re-worked following the anonymizing guidelines:

Rogers et al. (2014) concluded that the best explanation for the dynamics of the shockwave and the spectra from both the forward-shocked ISM and the reverse-shocked ejecta is that a Type Ia supernova exploded into a preexisting wind-blown cavity. This object is the only known example of such a phenomenon, and it thus provides a unique opportunity to illuminate the nature of Type Ia supernovae and the progenitors. If the model from Rogers et al. (2014) is correct, then the single-degenerate channel for SNe Ia production must exist. We propose here for a second epoch of observations which we will compare with a first epoch obtained in 2007 to measure the proper motion of the shock wave.

Appendix 2: Guidance for Team Information (Standard proposals)

Suggested content for Team Information and Background document

The Team Information and Background document is an opportunity for the PI to identify other information relevant to the science of or execution of the proposal. This should be a single page and should consist of text only (no figures). This section need not be anonymized and can be used only to 1) make fine adjustments to the stage 1 rankings, particularly for proposals that fall near the band that represents the estimated number of total nights available or 2) to identify a team that the panel feels is not able to carry out the science as proposed.

For standard proposals, examples of information that could be included are:

1. Student research support enabled with the observations: This may include data for thesis projects and non-thesis project student support.
2. Past use of NOIRLab facilities information: How effectively have you used the facilities available through NOIRLab in the past? List allocations of telescope time on facilities available through NOIRLab to the Principal Investigator during the past 2 years, together with the current status of the data (cite publications where appropriate). Mark any allocations of time related to the current proposal.
3. Other Facilities or Resources information: Do you currently have a grant that would provide resources to support the data processing, analysis, and publication of the observations proposed here? How do the proposed observations complement data from other facilities, including private observatories and both ground-and space-based telescopes? In addressing this question, take a broad view of your research program.
4. Other information that the PI thinks relevant to the science or broader impact scope of obtaining the data requested in this proposal.

We recommend that the PI NOT simply add a list of Co-Is but if there is important, relevant expertise (e.g. software, instrumental) to be called out, that information can be listed here.

Appendix 3: Guidance for Team Information (Survey proposals)

Suggested content for Team Information and Background document

Similar to the guidance for Standard proposals, The Team Information and Background document is an opportunity for the PI to identify other information relevant to the science of or execution of the proposal. This should be a single page and should consist of text only (no figures). This section need not be anonymized and can be used to 1) make fine adjustments to the stage 1 rankings, particularly for proposals that fall near the band that represents the estimated number of total nights available or 2) to assess the details of the data management or release that cannot be anonymized but are needed to demonstrate team competency (e.g., the individual names of those assigned to data management roles). Information outlined above for Standard proposals can also be included as space is available. **We recommend that the PI NOT simply add a list of Co-Is** in this section.