



ANNOUNCEMENT OF OPPORTUNITY FOR OBSERVING TIME AT THE GRAN TELESCOPIO CANARIAS



SEMESTER 2011A: March 1st 2011 – August 31st 2011

Submission deadline: **1 October 2010**

GRANTECAN opens a call for observing proposals for Semester 2011A on the 10.4-m Gran Telescopio Canarias (GTC) to the GTC user community. This semester runs from March 1st 2011 until August 31st 2011. With this new semester the GTC will open the possibility to carry out observations in classical visitor mode.

All interested applicants must use the IAC's CAT on-line system for submitting their proposals. This can be found at <http://cat.iac.es/> where also instructions are provided. The deadline for submission is 1 October 2010 at 5pm local time in the Canary Islands. Proposals that are granted time by the respective time allocation committees will be asked to provide detailed observing information in the second phase of the submission process. For a more extensive description of how the observing process at GTC is organized please refer to <http://www.gtc.iac.es/en/pages/observing-with-gtc.php>

1. Available observing time

During semester 2011A scientific operation of the telescope will occupy the majority of the available observing time, but still a significant fraction (some 20%) is expected to be required for ongoing telescope and instrument commissioning work that will preferentially be carried out during bright time. The remaining 80% will be dedicated to programs that are granted time under this call, as well as guaranteed time for instrument builders, time for ESO-GTC programs, and for the CCI International Time.

We note that the RA band around 12 hours is occupied by a few large, high-priority programs that have been granted time on the telescope. Hence the competition for time in this RA band, in particular during dark time and good seeing, will be fierce.

GTC will accept target-of-opportunity override proposals.

2. Instrumentation

Details of the instruments can be found at <http://www.gtc.iac.es/en/pages/instrumentation.php>, including the observing programs for guaranteed time and their reserved targets.

Visiting instruments will not be supported during this semester.

OSIRIS:

The OSIRIS spectrograph and imager for the optical wavelength range will be available in the Nasmyth-B focal station. Observing modes that will be offered are:

- Broad-band imaging
- Tunable filter imaging using the "red" tunable filter
- Long-slit spectroscopy

Fast-photometry and charge-shuffling CCD readout modes, multi-object spectroscopy, and use of the blue-optimized tunable filter are not offered yet.

CanariCam:

This instrument, located in the Nasmyth-A focus, allows imaging and spectroscopy in the mid-IR wavelength range. At the time of writing CanariCam has not been commissioned yet, but the commissioning process will start the second half of September 2010. Consequently, the performance characteristics of CanariCam+GTC are not yet established and anyone proposing to use the instrument implicitly accepts the risk that it may not be possible to successfully execute the observations.

GRANTECAN will accept observing proposals for the instrument modes of imaging, spectroscopy, and imaging polarimetry. *The coronagraphic mode is not offered yet.*

3. Reserved objects

The science teams of OSIRIS and CanariCam obtain guaranteed observing time. The objects and observing modes planned for their observations on GTC are reserved for the exclusive use by the instrument science teams. Target lists of reserved objects may be found on the instrument web pages at <http://www.gtc.iac.es/en/pages/instrumentation.php>

4. Telescope Support Model

As of semester 2011A observations will be either carried out in *queue-scheduled service mode* by trained observatory personnel as has been customary during the first two years of operation of the GTC, or the PIs may express their preference to execute the observations themselves on specific nights according to a set calendar (*classical visitor mode*). The PI must (i) clearly indicate her/his preference in the proposal form by selecting the appropriate option -"service" or "classical"- in the observing mode box of the proposal form, and (ii) in the case of classical observations define a valid backup program that can be carried out if the observing conditions for the principal program are not met.

In classical visitor mode the PI is expected to be present at the telescope during the observations, although the interaction with the telescope system will mostly be carried out by trained observatory personnel. If the PI cannot be present on the night scheduled for her/his observations she/he may request that a GRANTECAN astronomer carry out the observations.

Queue scheduling provides flexibility in optimizing the science return of the telescope, depending on the atmospheric and technical circumstances each night. Priority is given to the scientifically most highly ranked proposal that is suitable for the observing conditions. In general, proposals with relaxed observing constraints will have a better chance of being completed successfully.

In classically scheduled observations the risk of the weather conditions and technical failures rests with the PI, but it provides the advantage of the PI being able to adapt the observing plan in real time.

GRANTECAN will aim to follow the preference of the PI when drawing up the observing schedule, but no guarantee can be given that all preferences will be honored.

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