



# ANNOUNCEMENT OF OPPORTUNITY FOR OBSERVING TIME AT THE GRAN TELESCOPIO CANARIAS



**SEMESTER 2011B: September 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 – February 29<sup>th</sup> 2012**

Submission deadline: **1 April 2011**

GRANTECAN opens a call for observing proposals for Semester 2011B on the 10.4-m Gran Telescopio Canarias (GTC) for the GTC user community. This semester runs from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 until February 29<sup>th</sup> 2012. GTC time is open for queue-scheduled observing as well as classical visitor-mode observing.

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 April 2011 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 2011B 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 1 hour and 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/grey 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. *We regret that due to delays in the commissioning process the instrument will not yet be offered for general use to the GTC science community.* GRANTECAN remains committed to prepare the telescope and commission the instrument at the shortest possible time scale.

### **3. Reserved objects**

The science team of OSIRIS obtains 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. Observing overheads**

It is important to make realistic estimates of the observing overheads, both at the time of writing a proposal, as well as when completing the Phase-2 observing definition. Based on recent experience it has been decided to increase the overhead accounted for the acquisition for long-slit spectroscopy with OSIRIS to 15 minutes. As a guideline, for simple observations in imaging mode a total overhead of 13 minutes per Observing Block should be accounted for, while for spectroscopy this total overhead increases to 18 minutes, and for tunable filter imaging to 23 minutes. These numbers serve as a guide only and vary according to the detailed definition of the OB.

A second important change is when using the tunable filter: for reasons of overall efficiency and since these calibrations are specific for each observing programme, we require that applicants define their night-time tunable-filter calibrations also as Observing Blocks. The time necessary for these calibrations will be charged to the observing program.

These changes will take effect from semester 2011B onwards.

### **5. Telescope Support Model**

As of semester 2011A observations can 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 can and will be honored. In particular in case a proposal conflicts with high-priority ESO-GTC programs the proposal will most likely not be scheduled in classical visitor mode.

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