



ANNOUNCEMENT OF OPPORTUNITY FOR OBSERVING TIME AT THE GRAN TELESCOPIO CANARIAS



SEMESTER 2021A: March 1st, 2021 – August 31st, 2021

Submission deadline: **2 October 2020, 22:59 (Canary Islands time)**

GRANTECAN opens a call for observing proposals for Semester 2021A with the 10.4-m Gran Telescopio Canarias (GTC) for its user community. This semester runs from March 1st 2021 until August 31st 2021. Time is open for both queue-scheduled and 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://www.iac.es/OOCC/night-cat/call-for-proposals/> where instructions are also provided. The **deadline for submission is 2 October 2020 at 22:59 local time in the Canary Islands (or 21:59 UT)**. Proposals that are approved by the respective time allocation committees will be asked to provide detailed observing information in "Phase 2" of the submission process. For a more extensive description of how the observing process at GTC is organized, refer to <http://www.gtc.iac.es/observing/>.

We note that the Time Allocation Committees may decide to extend the duration of the observing period for certain programs over more than one semester.

INSTRUMENTATION OFFERED

MEGARA, EMIR, HiPERCAM (all modes).

WHAT'S NEW

OSIRIS and HORuS are not offered this semester due to OSIRIS migration to the Cassegrain focus.

HiPERCAM high-speed, 5-band visiting imager is offered only for observations to be executed at the beginning of the semester (March-June 2021).

IMPORTANT NOTICES

The 10 to 12 hours R.A. range is highly subscribed by ongoing high-priority large programmes, while the 3 to 8 hours R.A. range is generally undersubscribed.

Bright moon time is undersubscribed.

We encourage users to request Visitor Mode when observing conditions are especially suitable for this mode. Observing efficiency is notably larger than in queue observations, and GRANTECAN offers some flexibility in the scheduling of this mode to increase the chance of success of the proposal. Remote Visitor Mode is also supported in GTC.

1. Available observing time

During semester 2021A the majority of the available observing time will be used for science operations, with some 20% being needed for telescope improvement and instrument commissioning that will be preferentially 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 and for the CCI International Time.

We note that the R.A. range from 10 to 12 hours is highly subscribed by approved high-priority large programs. Hence there will be strong competition for time in these R.A. bands, in particular during dark/grey time and under good seeing conditions (see Figure 1 as an example).

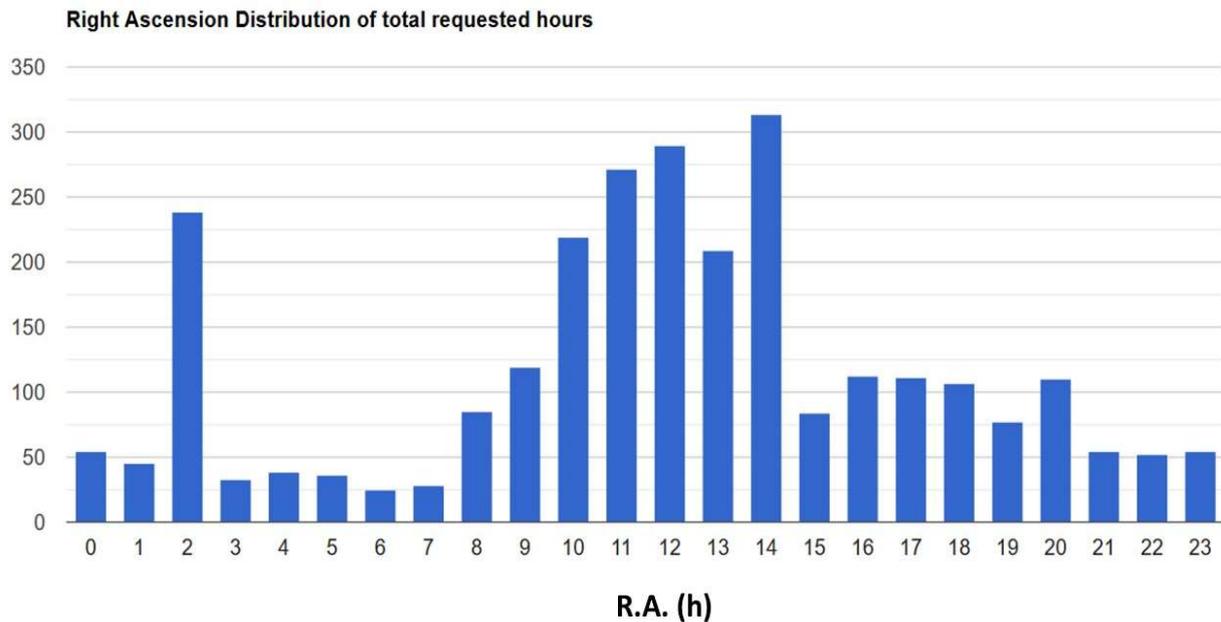


Figure 1: R.A. distribution for OBs that were requested to be executed in S20A. Note the high oversubscription in RA=10-12h and the relatively low demand for RA=3-8h.

GTC accepts target-of-opportunity (ToOs) override proposals. GTC's procedure for triggering ToO observations can be found at <http://www.gtc.iac.es/observing/too.php>.

For S21A, **no Large Programmes are offered at GTC.**

2. Instrumentation

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

EMIR:

The EMIR near-infrared wide-field imager and medium-resolution spectrograph will be available in the Nasmyth-A focal station. Observing modes offered in the present call are:

- Broad-band imaging (Y, J, H, Ks filters).
- Narrow-band imaging ([FeII],[FeII]_{cont},Br γ , Br γ _{cont},H₂(1-0),H₂(2-1)).
- Long-slit spectroscopy (0.6", 0.8", 1.0", 1.2", 1.6", and 5.0" slit widths).
- Multi-Object spectroscopy.

See <http://www.gtc.iac.es/instruments/emir/emir.php> for detailed information.

MEGARA:

For semester S20B MEGARA optical spectrograph will be available with all its capabilities, both integral-field Unit (IFU) and multi-object spectroscopy (MOS) at intermediate-to-high spectral resolutions (R~5,500, 12,000 and 20,000 for the LR, MR and HR modes respectively). For more information, see <http://www.gtc.iac.es/instruments/megara/megara.php>.

HiPERCAM:

The HiPERCAM high-speed, multi-band imager is a GTC visitor instrument (P.I. Vik Dhillon) that is located at the Folded-Cass E focus. HiPERCAM provides simultaneously imaging in 5 channels (u', g', r', i', z'), at (windowed) rates over 1 kHz in a FOV of 2.8' x 1.4' with a 0.081"/pix plate scale.

HiPERCAM will be using Folded Cass-E focal station during S21A until the arrival of MIRADAS by the end of June 2020. For this reason, **HiPERCAM applicants must be aware that observations for S21A must be concentrated at the beginning of the semester (March-June 2021).**

Further information about the instrument is found in the GTC web pages at <http://www.gtc.iac.es/instruments/hipercam/hipercam.php> and/or contacting the instrument PI at vik.dhillon@sheffield.ac.uk

3. Reserved objects

The science teams of MEGARA, EMIR and HiPERCAM are granted 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/instruments/>, following the links for the corresponding instrument.

4. Telescope status

There is no significant change from previous semesters.

5. Observing overheads

It is important to make realistic estimates of the observing overheads at the time of writing a proposal, as well as when completing the Phase-2 observing definition. As a guideline, for **MEGARA**, 10 min

are assumed for target acquisition in IFU mode, while 15 min are considered for Multi Object Spectroscopy mode, while for **HiPERCAM**, the same overheads than MEGARA in IFU mode (10 minutes per observing block) will be considered for pointing/configuring the instrument.

In the case of **EMIR**, an observation in imaging mode a total overhead of 10 minutes per observing block should be accounted for, while for longslit/multiobject spectroscopy the total overhead increases to about 20 minutes, to account for the CSU configuration and acquisition process, except in the case of telluric standard observations where CSU re-configuration is not necessary and only 10 min of overheads are accounted for. In addition to the overheads for target acquisition and instrument/telescope setup, there are also overheads associated to the observing technique. For typical science exposures, open-shutter efficiency for EMIR is about 70% in imaging and 90% in spectroscopy (including dithering, readout overheads, etc.). To optimize the telescope time for a predefined on-source integration time, applicants should use the *EMIR efficiency calculator* available at:

www.iac.es/proyecto/emir/pages/observing-with-emir/observing-tools/efficiency-calculator.php

To accurately estimate overheads, a **Phase 2 simulator** is available at <http://gtc-phase2.gtc.iac.es/science/F2/>. We strongly recommend the use of this simulator to determine the total telescope time to be requested in the present call for proposals.

When using EMIR, for reasons of overall efficiency and since these calibrations are specific for each observing program, **we require that applicants define their night-time calibrations also as observing blocks**. The time necessary for these calibrations will be charged to the observing program and should therefore be included in the time request.

See <http://www.gtc.iac.es/observing/> for further details.

6. Telescope Support Model

Observations can be either carried out in *queue-scheduled service mode* by trained GTC support astronomers, or the PIs may express their preference to personally execute the observations on specific nights proposed by the GTC team (*classical visitor mode*). The PI must clearly indicate her/his preference in the proposal form by selecting the appropriate option -“service” or “classical”, and in the latter case should define a valid backup program that can be carried out if the observing conditions required for the principal program are not met.

Queue scheduling provides flexibility in the execution of the observations optimizing the science return of the telescope. Priority is given to the scientifically most highly ranked proposal that is suitable for the observing conditions. Statistically, proposals with relaxed observing constraints will have a better chance of being completed successfully. In classical visitor mode, on the other hand, dates of observation are fixed by the GTC team and the risk of poor weather conditions and technical failures rests with the PI, but has the advantage that the observing plan can be adapted by the PI in real time which may result in further increasing the efficiency of the observations. **Considering the low demand for visitor mode observations, GRANTECAN provides some flexibility of the scheduling of visitor nights**, i.e. by allocating some extra time that increases the chance of success of the proposal.

In classical visitor mode, the PI will normally be present at the telescope during the observations, although the interaction with the telescope system will mostly be carried out by trained observatory personnel. The data are immediately made available to the PI. **Remote visitor mode is also supported in GTC**. If on the scheduled dates the PI cannot travel to the observatory, then the GTC support astronomer will carry out the observations in service mode, with the possibility of remote

connection of the PI that allows real-time assessment of the data quality and the opportunity to adjust the observing parameters.

Visitor programs will only be admitted for those programs that fall in the top of the TACs ranked list (A or B ranked bands). Lower ranked programs will automatically be placed in the observing queue, except for those requesting observing modes that are only admitted in visitor mode (e.g. programs using high-speed readout modes of OSIRIS). 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

Data obtained in queue mode are provided to the users via GTC FTP service once they pass the data quality assessment. Files are available for a 50-days period, so we recommend users to retrieve these and inform GTC as quickly as possible if any problem is found with the quality of data, so that GTC can assess the problem and, if necessary, repeat the observations. **All observations are also copied to the GTC Public Science Archive, hosted at the Center for Astrobiology in Madrid (<http://gtc.sdc.cab.inta-csic.es/gtc>), which can also be used to avoid duplications when preparing a proposal. PIs will be contacted by the CAB archive staff and asked to submit their reduced data once published.**

For questions related to data analysis once the observations are retrieved from the GTC FTP service, **a specific Phase-3 tool located at:**

<http://gtc-phase2.gtc.iac.es/science/F3/phase3start.php>

has been developed to communicate your problems to GTC staff, including also some support in the data reduction process.

Publications that result from data taken with the Gran Telescopio Canarias must credit the use of this telescope in the following way: "*Based on observations made with the Gran Telescopio Canarias (GTC), installed in the Spanish Observatorio del Roque de los Muchachos of the Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias, in the island of La Palma*". In the particular case of each instrument, corresponding credits can be found at:

http://www.gtc.iac.es/observing/observing.php#Publications_and_acknowledgements

For general queries, please contact Antonio Cabrera Lavers: antonio.cabrera@gtc.iac.es