



STScI | SPACE TELESCOPE
SCIENCE INSTITUTE

EXPANDING THE FRONTIERS OF SPACE ASTRONOMY

HST Cycle 30 Executive Committee Orientation

<https://hst-docs.stsci.edu/hsp/hubble-space-telescope-science-policies-group-and-peer-review-information>

Molly Peeples

on behalf of the STScI Science Policies Group

May 16, 2022



Today's Orientation

1. Welcome from STScI Director, Ken Sembach,
and TAC Chair, Boris Gaensicke
1. Executive Committee Orientation
 - Overview
 - What is happening before the panels meet
 - Tips on how to run a smooth panel meeting
 - What will happen during (and after) the panel meetings
 - Grading
 - Ranking
 - Discussion of EC proposals
 - Finalizing proposal comments
 - What to expect during the EC meeting
 - Orbit Allocations
2. Q&A



Cycle 30 Proposal Review Schedule

Date	Milestone
March 25, 2022	Cycle 30 Proposal Deadline
April 8, 2022	STScI releases proposals to panelists for review
April 12, 2022	Orientation meeting for Virtual Panelists
April 13, 2022	Orientation meeting for External Panelists
May 13, 2022	Deadline for Virtual Panelists to submit preliminary grades for their assigned proposals
May 16, 2022	Orientation meeting for Executive Committee Members
May 18, 2022	Deadline for External Panelists to submit grades for their assigned proposals
May 18, 2022	STScI sends each Virtual Panelist the list of proposals to be discussed by their panel
May 26, 2022	Deadline for EC to submit preliminary grades for Large, Treasury and AR Legacy proposals
May 27, 2022	STScI releases list of proposals to be discussed during the EC meeting
June 1 – 3, 2022	Virtual panels meet
June 6 – 8, 2022	Executive Committee meets
June 10, 2022	Deadline for Panel Chairs to submit final consensus reports (including finalizing comments)
June 17, 2022	STScI releases the Cycle 30 Science Program



The Review Process:
before the panels meet



Where we are right now ...

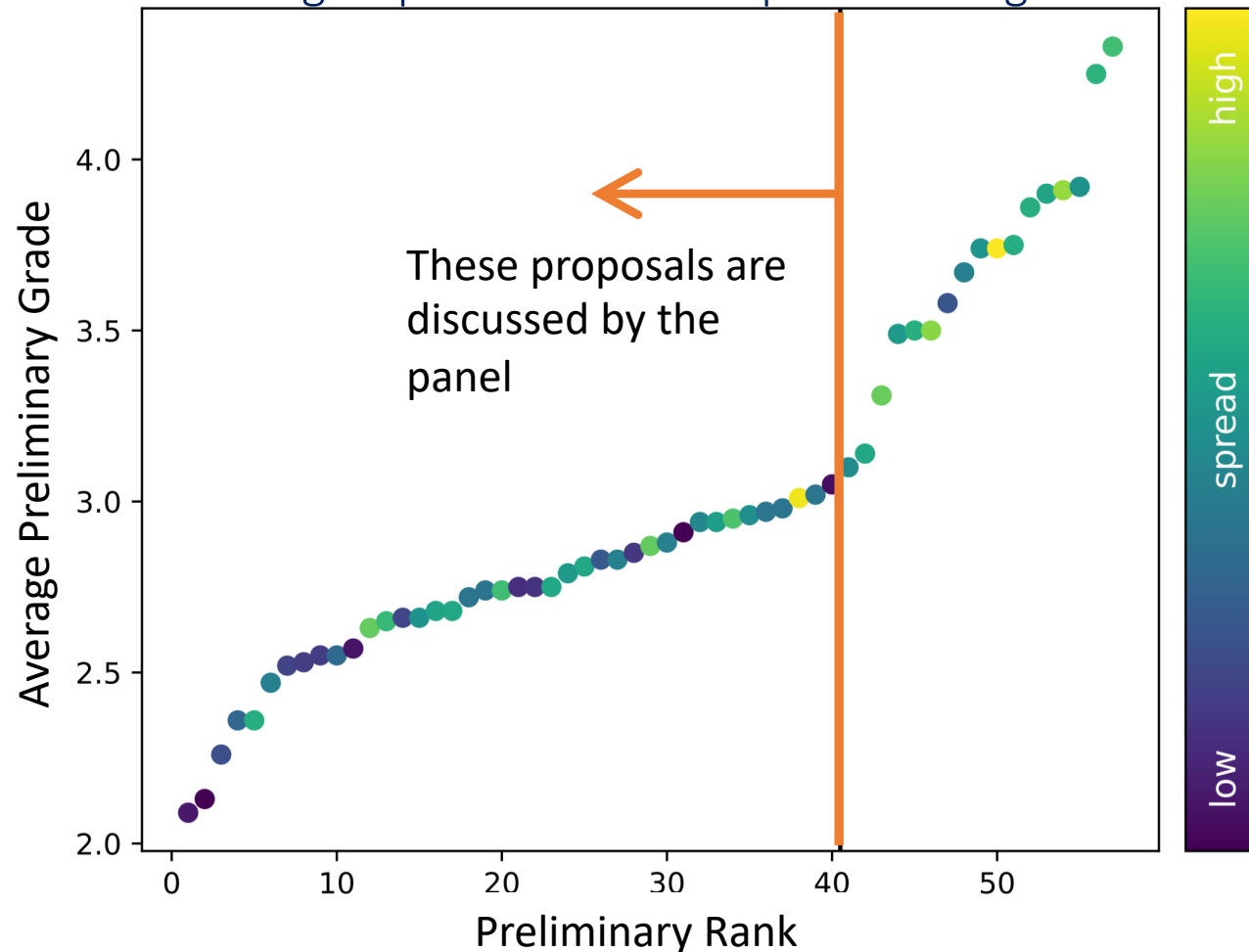
- Most panels have their lists of proposals to discuss during the meeting. The Science Policies Group is waiting for a few straggling grades to produce and distribute the rest---should happen by Wednesday at the latest 🙌
- Externally reviewed proposals are finished being graded; once these grades are in, STScI will provide Chairs with proposals likely to be recommended for approval from this pool
- Expert reviews for the EC proposals are coming in -- should mostly be there by this Friday, but some may take longer
- EC grades are coming in --- be sure to get yours in by next Thursday, May 26!!



Preliminary ranking determines which proposals will be discussed

STScI averages grades & advance the higher ranked proposals for discussion.

- Preliminary grades and specific ranks are not circulated to the panels; proposals to be discussed should be reviewed as a group without bias of prior ranking.





Proposals for Review

- Discussion lists will be distributed later this week. Your panelists will need to **review all surviving proposals** so they can contribute to the discussion.
- Each non-conflicted panelist may suggest one (1) proposal from the triage for inclusion in the review. A strong justification must be provided. It is *extremely* rare for triaged proposals to be awarded time.
- Panelists must let Chairs know if they would like to suggest a proposal to raise from triage; **as Chair, you can set a deadline for this to give all of your panelists time to review the proposal.**
- The process is necessary in order to limit the number of proposals for discussion
 - Spend time discussing the best proposals
 - Avoid discussing proposals that are less likely to be approved



The Review Process:
preparing for the panel meetings



The Panel Meetings

The subject panels will meet virtually via BlueJeans **Wednesday, June 1 through Friday, June 3** (in two-and-a-half weeks!).

Panelists have been told to be available from **10am to 4pm Eastern Daylight Time each day**: That's 7am–1pm on the US west coast, 4am–10am in Hawaii, 3pm–9pm in the British Isles, 4pm–10pm Central European Time, and 5pm–11pm in Greece.

Panel Chairs will set the schedule; breaks will be scheduled throughout the day.



Panel Schedules: Plan them now

- Plan to spend no more than 15 minutes discussing each proposal.
- Build in breaks that are long enough for panelists to get meals, stretch their legs, *and* use the bathroom.
- Keep time zones in mind!
- Plan ahead of time what order to review proposals in. Some popular options:
 - Numerical. Easy to keep track of, but may introduce bias w.r.t. when proposals submitted
 - Sorted by topic. Provides less “whiplash” but also provides strong temptation to compare proposals during the discussions
 - Random!
 - Some combo of the above
- Consider primary+secondary reviewers when setting the discussion order. Do not want small subset of people to dominate the conversation for extended periods while others “check out”.
- Consider conflicts – can consolidate individual’s conflicts, especially at beginning / end of day for those with hardest to accommodate time zones.



Panel Schedules: Plan them now

- Popular technique is to set up a shared google spreadsheet with the schedule in it so panelists can see it ahead of time. This can also be used to keep track of conflicts and reviewers – and where comments are after the ranking is finalized.

Start Time	Duration		Proposal	Primary	Secondary	Conflicts
10:00	0:20	Introductions, Set Up				
10:20	0:10	Proposal	1234	Hubble	Tinsley	Rubin
10:30	0:10	Proposal	2345	Rubin	Hubble	
10:40	0:10	Proposal	3456	Tinsley	Rubin	
10:50	0:10	Proposal	4567	Leavitt	Rubin	Tinsley, Herschel
11:00	0:10	Proposal	5678	Herschel	Leavitt	

- Introductions are important! Don't spend too much time here, but don't skip. Where are people located, what's their area of expertise, what's their time zone, what's the name of the cat that will be walking across their keyboard during the review? Remember also the STScI support staff.



Set up your panel schedules now

Day One			
Start Time	Duration		Suggested Work
10:00	0:20	Introductions, Set Up	
10:20	1:00	Work	(4 proposals)
11:20	0:20	Break	
11:40	1:00	Work	(4 proposals)
12:40	0:40	Break	
13:20	1:15	Work	(5 proposals)
14:35	0:20	Break	
14:55	1:00	Work	
15:55	0:05	Wrap Up	
16:00		Adjourn	

Day Two			
Start Time	Duration		Suggested Work
10:00	0:05	Set Up	
10:05	1:15	Work	(5 proposals)
11:20	0:20	Break	
11:40	1:00	Work	(4 proposals)
12:40	0:40	Break	
13:20	1:15	Work	(5 proposals)
14:35	0:20	Break	
14:55	1:00	Work	(4 proposals)
15:55	0:05	Wrap Up	
16:00		Adjourn	

Day Three			
Start Time	Duration		Suggested Work
10:00	0:05	Set Up	
10:05	1:15	Work	(5 proposals)
11:20	0:20	Break	
11:40	1:00	Work	Ranking
12:40	0:40	Break	
13:20	1:15	Work	Ranking
14:35	0:20	Break	
14:55	1:00	Work	Large Proposals
15:55	0:05	Wrap Up	
16:00		Adjourn	

See Slack for template schedule spreadsheet you can edit and share with your panels!



The Review Process:
during the panel meetings



Roles and Responsibilities

- **Panel Chair**, supported by the **Vice-Chair** runs the meeting
 - Panelists should follow the code of conduct
- **Panel Support Scientist (PSS)** maintains database, produces ranked lists, answers questions, or summons STScI staff experts, as needed
- **Leveler** has the authority to stop the discussion if the discussion strays away from proposal criteria strengths and weaknesses
- Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI) staff
 - Science Policy Group (SPG) answers questions on policy issues
 - Instruments Division (INS) answers technical questions on instrument capabilities and performance
 - Scheduling Group answers questions on the execution of observing programs
- Observers

Representatives from NASA Headquarters, the HST Project at Goddard Space Flight Center, ESA, the STScI Director and Deputy Director, STScI HST Mission Office, Osterbrock Fellows



Code of Conduct

In addition to the code of conduct for panelists, we expect Chairs and Vice Chairs to:

- Lead by example in creating the appropriate environment for free and professional discussion
- Lead the panel in an inclusive and welcoming way and respond immediately to any abusive, bullying or unprofessional behavior
- Proactively encourage participation of reviewers who may be less experienced at panel reviews
- Proactively solicit input from each panel member in the discussion of each proposal; ensure that the discussion is not dominated by a few reviewers – an “I concur” is OK, but don’t take silence for no opinion. It helps to change up the panelist discussion order.
- Keep the discussion moving and end on time to allow for sufficient time and discussion for all the proposals in the panel
- Keep the discussion focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal, and no other tangential topics
- **At any time, please feel free to talk to (message) STScI staff if you have any concerns.**



Tools for a virtual meeting

- By now, you should have joined the **Hubble TAC Slack Team**. The desktop app is vastly superior to using it in a browser window. **Slack is the easiest way to get in touch** with STScI staff, your Panelists, and the other EC members.
- **Each panel will have its own channel in BlueJeans**. Connection information will both be emailed to you and posted to Slack.
 - Your PSS will organize a BlueJeans check for your Panel in advance of the meeting. *Please* join if you can, even if you have used BlueJeans before. Also, a chance to say hi!
 - There exists a BlueJeans app for phones and tablets, and international call-in numbers in case of loss of connectivity. Best to be prepared...
- Do not discuss individual proposals within the channels in Slack.
- Read through <https://hst-docs.stsci.edu/hsp/hubble-space-telescope-science-policies-group-and-peer-review-information/blue-jeans-and-slack-guidelines> in advance of the meeting



Tools for a virtual meeting: Slack

You may find yourself in a Slack Channel, and you may ask yourself, Well, how did I get here?

- **#hst30-[topicalpanel]** – the channel for each topical panel. Panelists, Chairs, Vice Chairs, non-conflicted SPG members and At Large Members
- **#hst30-executivecommittee** – the whole Executive Committee, plus the SPG. This will serve as the “topical” panel slack channel for the EC
- **#hst30-tacchair-atlarge-smo** – as it says, just the TAC Chair, At Large Members, and members of the Science Policies Group; largely for use during the topical panel meetings
- **#hst30-tac-post-to-all** – absolutely everyone; for major announcements from STScI

Each channel has a pinned post saying who is in it. If you're confused which channel should be used for what, just ask.



The Panel Meeting -- Overview

1. Panels discuss and re-grade each proposal.
2. Once the grading is complete, the ranked list is compiled.
3. Panels can re-rank proposals within this list to allow for science balance, etc.
4. Once the ranking is complete, panelists can review the Team Expertise for the top proposals.
5. Panelists provide written consensus reports for *every* proposal.
6. Panelists comment on a subset of the Executive Committee (Large, Treasury, AR Legacy) proposals to assist the Chair and Vice Chair in their reviews.



Panel Chair Conflicts

Panel Chairs may be conflicted on some proposals. In case of a conflict, you may

- Ask the Vice-Chair to act as the Panel Chair during the discussion of the proposal for which you are conflicted
- Ask one of the At-Large TAC members to act as the Panel Chair during the discussion of the proposal for which you are conflicted. (This option may be particularly helpful for the discussion of the Large, Treasury, and Archival Legacy proposals)
- Let relevant folks know ahead of time when you will have to step out because of Conflicts – having proposal discussion order set ahead of time will help with this.



Detailed Proposal Discussion Procedures

1. Panelists with conflicts disconnect from the virtual meeting room or are moved to a separate “breakout room”. This includes STScI staff and Observers.
2. The Chairs and Vice-Chairs manage the process and may participate in the discussion, but do not grade.
3. The primary reviewer summarizes and reviews proposal. The secondary reviewer adds supplementary comments.
4. The panelists discuss the proposal, *without comparisons to any other proposals*.
5. The discussion should include the resource allocation: primary orbits, coordinated or pure parallel, exclusive access period, duplication justification, special requirements.
6. The panel submits final grades on the proposal via SPIRIT. **Everyone not conflicted except the panel chair and vice chair must grade--NO abstentions!!**
7. The primary reviewer is responsible for collating all relevant comments, and recording those comments in SPIRIT.



Proposal Ranking: Procedures

1. Each panel has an allocation of N orbits for Small proposals and M orbits for Medium proposals.
 - All proposals must be graded and ranked on the same scale.
 - If your panel has Archival, Snapshot, or Calibration proposals, they do not count toward the orbit allocation. (There are separate total Snapshot and Calibration orbit pools across all panels.)
2. Once all proposals have been graded, the Panel Support Staff generates an initial ranked list.
3. The panel then discusses and agrees on a **final ranked list of programs** that encompasses at least $2 \times N$ orbits.
 - Any changes to the initial ranked list must be done by sequential pairwise comparisons and changes, being mindful of any conflicts of interest
 - Some panels don't change their initial ranked list at all; others make many many changes.



Medium Proposals

- Medium proposals are reviewed solely in their assigned panel.
- **Each panel grades and ranks the Medium proposals together with all other proposals.**
- Medium proposals may be recommended for acceptance if they are above the 1N line. **Panels should not artificially move a Medium proposal above the line.**
- Each panel is allocated M orbits for Medium proposals based on the relative orbit pressure among the Medium proposals across all panels.
- Medium proposals above the 1N line have no orbit charge until the Medium orbit allocation M is reached going from the highest to the lowest ranked Medium proposal above the 1N line.
- Thereafter, Medium orbits must come out of the Small orbit pool if the panel wishes to recommend additional Medium proposals above the 1N line.
- If the Medium proposals above the 1N line do not fully use the Medium orbit allocation, those Medium orbits will be returned to the communal pool; the panel **cannot** allocate them to Small programs.
- A summary of the recommended Medium proposals will be provided by the Chairs at the beginning of the Executive Committee meeting.



Proposal Ranking Guidelines

- **Decide ahead of time how you will go about running the ranking stage.**
- Proposals above the $1N$ line will be recommended for execution; proposals between $1N$ and $2N$ are in reserve; proposals straddling the line may be executed, depending on the EC's and Director's recommendation
- Look at ranking for science balance and duplication of science/target issues (don't forget externally-reviewed proposals!)
- Top ranked proposals are very unlikely to drop below the $1N$ Allocation line: only discuss if there are very serious reservations. Similarly, proposals near the $2N$ line generally do not require extensive discussion unless there are strong concerns that they should be higher
- **The Panel Chair writes a short summary**, documenting the primary decisions of the panel, the reasoning that went into those decisions and the manner in which contentious issues were resolved.
 - The summary should capture the logic and rationale of the panel's conclusions in sufficient detail so that it can be recalled and understood later by the STScI Director and/or the Executive Committee



Proposal Ranking Do's

- **Decide ahead of time how you will go about running the ranking stage.**
- Panels may decide which proposals should be discussed with all panelists present. If a proposal is raised for discussion, panelists can re-rank that proposal in a pairwise fashion, i.e., against proposals immediately above or below; only panelists who are unconflicted on both proposals can participate in that discussion
- Have the primaries quickly summarize the strengths and weaknesses from the discussion
- Have a general panel discussion and then all unconflicted panelists vote whether to swap the positions of the proposals
- Repeat until everyone is in agreement on the ranked list down to 2x your panel's allocation



... and Proposal Ranking Don'ts

- Don't compare more than two proposals at a time
- ARs are *not* Free Resources --- don't artificially move them all above the Allocation Line (Solar System and EC)
- Don't cut proposals to get more "above the line"
- Don't try to artificially move up a smaller proposals to make it fit around the line, make sure there is full consensus for a scientific move
- Mediums are a shared resource across all panels; don't arbitrarily move them up if you haven't "used" all of your panel's allocated medium orbits



Proposal De-anonymization and Team Expertise Review

- After the ranking has been finalized and is frozen, the proposals above the 1 N line are de-anonymized and panels will review the Team Expertise description for each recommended proposal.
- If necessary, the panel may express concerns about insufficient expertise, which will be recorded and communicated with the Director.
- **Any concerns will not change the ranking of the proposals** in the panel but may affect the Director's decision to accept a particular proposal.
- Even if no concerns are raised, this process is in place to alleviate community anxieties about the dual anonymous review process.



Topical Panel Review of Executive Committee Proposals

- You can solicit feedback from your panel on the subset of EC proposals you have been given to review. This process allows more scope for community input and specialist commentary, informing your opinions and aiding discussion in the Executive Committee meeting.
- **Decide how you wish to solicit feedback, and include it in your panel schedule.** Chairs and Vice Chairs should work together on this. Often, this feedback is a group discussion amongst the panel members, but you can also solicit written feedback. You can ask all panelists to review all proposals, or assign specific proposals to specific panelists.
- The same rules apply for conflict of interest as with panel proposals.
- **Do not let panelists know which proposals have been triaged, or not.** You may want extra feedback on proposals you will want to “advocate” for at the EC level, but negative feedback on triaged proposals will remain useful for writing your comments.



The Review Process:
finalizing comments to proposers



Proposal Comments

- Comments are required for all proposals (including triaged proposals).
- Final comments may be entered after the meeting finishes; expect to spend time after other work has completed to work on the comments as a group.
- **The deadline for panel members to enter comments is June 7, 2022 and for Chairs to review and approve comments is June 10, 2022.**
- Primary reviewer is responsible for writing the comments; add any comments arising from the discussion to produce a final set of comments for each proposal.
- Don't make up reasons for rejection – if a proposal was good, but just didn't quite make the cut, then say so. Be particularly careful near the allocation boundaries. Use *Mandatory* comments only to exclude targets [e.g. duplications] or to reduce observing time allocation. All other comments are *advisory*.
- **BE THOUGHTFUL.** People put a lot of effort into writing these proposals, and you have put a lot of effort into reviewing them. Let your comments reflect that effort.



Proposal Comments: Practical Instructions

4567 Review Comments

Save Review

Review Completed

Strengths

Weaknesses

Resources

Comments

Technical Notes

Instructions

Strengths and Weakness are Mandatory

Other categories are optional and rarely used. Most of what you think should go here can probably be listed as a “strength” or a “weakness”.

If any duplications are not well-justified, “Resources” is a good place to note this. “Technical notes” and “Instructions” should be used only to document conversation with STScI technical staff—we will tell you if something should go there!

Enter review comments related to the strengths of the proposal.



Proposal Comments: Detailed Instructions

- Proposal feedback comments should be concise.
- Please avoid asking questions in the comments.
- The reports should focus on the scientific content and not the reviewer.
- **Comments that may be perceived as derogatory or insulting must be avoided.**
- Reviewers cannot be sure at the time of writing feedback comments whether the proposal will be accepted (even if it is “above the line”). The **comments should be phrased in such a way that they are sensible and meaningful regardless of the final outcome.**
- Reviewers should **avoid statements that create the impression that the low ranking of a proposal is due to a minor mistake.** Many proposals do not have obvious weaknesses but are just less compelling than others: in such cases, acknowledge that the considered proposal is good and refer back to which parts of the rubric it did not score as highly on as more highly-ranked proposals.
- **Never include in the report an explicit reference to another proposal, such as the proposal ID.**
- Whenever possible, make suggestions for possible improvements, but avoid giving the impression that following those suggestions guarantees that the proposal will be more successful in next cycle.

For more information: <https://hst-docs.stsci.edu/hsp/hubble-space-telescope-science-policies-group-and-peer-review-information/proposal-feedback-comments>



Workflow for Finalizing Feedback Comments

<https://hst-docs.stsci.edu/hsp/hubble-space-telescope-science-policies-group-and-peer-review-information/reviews-grades-comments/proposal-feedback-comments> has detailed instructions – we will point you here again at the appropriate time.

Both the Chair and the PSS will proofread the reviews. The PSS will look for the following, among other things:

- grammatical errors and typos
- anything contradicting the previously posted guidelines
- personal remarks about proposers
- explicit identifications of other Cycle 30 proposals or proposers, reviewers, or STScI staff
- comments that contain only insubstantial or superficial remarks
- remarks that do not make sense because the reviewers expected the proposal to be approved, while in the end it was not

Once the PSS/Panel Chair is happy with the final review they should click the Review Signoff button. This will change the review status of the proposal to “Complete.”

Proposal Comments

- Comments are required for all proposals (including triaged proposals).
- Final comments may be entered after the meeting finishes.
- The deadline for panel members to enter comments is June 7, 2022 and for Chairs to review and approve comments is June 10, 2022. The deadline for EC proposal comments is June 9, 2022.
- Primary reviewer is responsible for writing the comments; add any comments arising from the discussion to produce a final set of comments for each proposal.
- Be particularly careful near the allocation boundaries---you won't know for sure if these proposals will be accepted, or not.

A background image of a starry night sky with a nebula. The stars are of various colors, including blue, white, and yellow. The nebula is a mix of blue and brownish-purple. A thin, horizontal orange line is positioned below the text.

The Review Process: the Executive Committee Meeting



The Executive Committee Panel Meeting

- For the most part, proposal discussion and ranking will work the same as in the topical panels, but with the Panel Chairs, Vice Chairs, and At-Large Members acting as the Panelists
- We expect to circulate the Discussion / non-Discussion lists by the end of next week
 - Each panelist may resurrect one proposal – tell the TAC Chair as soon as possible if you would like to do so.
- Special consideration will be taken at the ranking stage for programmatic balance including the recommendations from the topical panels. This will most likely affect limited resources (e.g., activations for targets of opportunity) or potential duplications



The Executive Committee Panel Meeting

Take into account the expert reviews! You can find these in Spirit under “Documents”

GO Ready SIZE LARGE TIME REQUEST 0 Orbits CONFLICTS 0 PRELIM GRADE (C. DEV) 0.00 (0.00) GRADE COUNT 0 of 8

2 Reviewers CATEGORY Intergalactic Medium and the Circumgalactic Medium ALLOCATION 0 Orbits REMARKS 0 PRELIM RANK n/a NOTES

Primary Reviewer... Set Review Status... Actions

Proposal Info Assignments Conflicts Grades Remarks Notes

Abstract Documents Investigators HST Observation Details

Document	View	Download
...pdf	View	Download
.ExternalReview1.pdf	View	Download
.ExternalReview2.pdf	View	Download

The background of the slide is a deep blue and purple starry night sky. A large, diffuse nebula with wispy, ethereal structures is visible on the left side, extending towards the center. The sky is filled with numerous stars of varying brightness and colors, including bright white and yellow stars, and many smaller, fainter blue stars. The text "Orbit Allocations" is centered in the middle of the image in a clean, white, sans-serif font. A thin, horizontal orange line runs across the width of the slide, positioned just below the text.

Orbit Allocations



Cycle 30 Orbit Allocation

- Cycle 30 will be two months longer than Cycle 29. Therefore the orbit allocation is larger than in Cycle 29.
- **Total** allocation for Cycle 30: **3,500** orbits
- Allocation for **Small** proposals: **1,700** orbits
- Allocation for **Medium** proposals: **1,000** orbits
- Allocation for **Large/Treasury** proposals: **~750** orbits
- This break-down is driven by the relative orbit pressure in the different categories



Thank you!

The HST TAC would not be possible without your critical support and contributions!