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SCIENCE INSTITUTE

EXPANDING THE FRONTIERS OF SPACE ASTRONOMY

HST Cycle 30 Levelers Orientation

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The Role of Levelers

Levelers keep the panel discussions focused on

scientific merit

YOU have the **authority** to stop the discussion on a proposal.



Why Dual Anonymous Proposal Review?

Goal

Primary objective of peer review process:

Best-Justified Science

Anonymising proposals:

Tool

Places focus directly on **Science**

Removes focus from **Team**



DAPR for **Proposers**: Do's and Don't's

- ✗ Names/affiliations of proposing team, links to personal websites.
- ✗ Claims of ownership of past work.
- ✓ Focus on work proposed, include relevant info needed to assess scientific merit.
- ✓ Fully and properly cite relevant work, including proprietary data/software.
- ✓ Make reasonable effort to anonymize their submissions.
- + Team Expertise and Background statement, not anonymous, reviewed at end.



DAPR for Reviewers: Do's and Don't's

Guesses are often **wrong!**

- ✗ Do not try to guess the proposing PI or team! (It's not a test.)
- ✗ Do not discuss, imply or insinuate the identity of the proposing team.
- ✗ Discuss the experience and expertise of the team.
- ✓ Focus on the **scientific merit** of the work proposed.
- ✓ Refer to the **proposal** not the **proposers**.
- ✓ *Private communication* is **not** code for “hey, we’re the team”.



The Role of Levelers

- Levelers keep the panel discussions focused on **scientific merit**.
- Chairs and PSSs listen for science and technical issues. **Levelers** focus on the **discussion itself**.
- If the discussion veers to comments on the proposing team, their past work, their validity, or their identities, the leveler **refocuses the discussion**.
- If team identity becomes impossible to ignore, and that identity has a **clear impact** on the discussion, the proposal should be **flagged for disqualification**.
- Levelers should step in if they feel this threshold has been crossed.

YOU have the **authority** to stop the discussion on a proposal.



What to Listen For: Misbehaving Panelists

- ✗ Spending time attempting to identify the PI or the team.
- ✗ Making guesses on identities, insinuating the likely identities, or instigating discussion on the team's past work.
- ✓ Considering proposals solely on the scientific merit of what's proposed. Follow the evaluation criteria we have provided for them.
- ✓ Language matters: neutral pronouns, **proposal** not the **proposers**.



What to Listen For: Compliance with Anonymizing Guidelines

⚠ Egregious cases have (probably!) already been reported. Some minor cases may remain.

Minor slip-ups:

- Try to ignore and proceed with review of the **scientific merit**.
- Highlight anonymity concern in feedback comments.

Impossible to ignore or major violation:

- Levelers can help to make this decision.
- Comment in recommendation to Director. May be disqualified.
- Highlight anonymity concern in feedback comments.



What to Listen For: Conflicts of Interest

- ⚠ All conflicted panelists **must leave the discussion** (usually to a breakout room).
 - Most conflicts already reported.
 - Panelists can declare more during the meeting.
 - Competing proposals count as conflicts.
- ✅ State that a panelist is conflicted.
- ❌ Do not announce the **reason** for the conflict.
 - Discuss with PSS and panelists how you will handle conflicts:
 - Who will send to breakout rooms? (PSS or Leveler)
 - How do panelists want to be recalled? Email? Text? (Get cell numbers.)



Team Members & Team Expertise Statements

- ⚠ **Not** anonymous.
- ✗ **Not** considered during scientific discussions and ranking.
- ✓ Only **recommended** proposals **after** ranking phase.
 - ~20 minutes to read expertise statements. Panelists cannot opt out.
 - Raise clear, **compelling** deficiencies in expertise required to **meet science goals**.
 - By **consensus**, panel can recommended disqualification, and must provide a **detailed justification**.

✗ If a proposal is disqualified, **orbits cannot be re-allocated**.



“Compelling Deficiencies”

- ✓ Discretion of panelists:
 - Particularly difficult datasets.
 - Particularly difficult analyses.
 - Programs of exceptionally high risk.

✗ Inexperience with HST data.

✗ Failure to publish past datasets.

⚠ Comments to proposers should be based on the **scientific discussion**, not on the team or their expertise.

If it seems like a panel is considering eliminating a program:

Call SPG.



Summary of Key Points

- ✓ **Panelists should focus on the *scientific merit* of the proposals.**
- ✗ **Panelists should not try to guess the proposing team.**
 - Proposals should not include identifying information, but should cite relevant work.
 - Levelers keep discussions focused on **science**.
 - If necessary, refocus discussion or stop it completely.
 - Team expertise review is done **after** ranking. Disqualified proposals **cannot** be replaced.
- ⚠ **DAPR *mitigates* bias, but is *not bias-free*.**



Schedule

- Panel Meetings are **Wednesday 1 - Friday 3 June**
- **10AM - 4PM (NOMINALLY)**
 - Clear your whole day.
 - Chairs have discretion, but shouldn't change too far from this because timezones.
 - There should be breaks!
- BlueJeans Meetings with devoted Slack channels
 - Use the **moderator** link

Questions? Help! Use the [#hst30-levelers](#) slack channel.

**Thank you for
supporting the TAC!**