ESO Period 98
A step-by-step guide
for OPC & Panel members

ESO Observing Programmes Office
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1. Scope of this document

A step-by-step description of the evaluation of Phase 1 applications for observing time by the Observing Programmes Committee (OPC) is provided here. It is intended as a quick reference for the OPC and panel members to guide them through the sequence of actions. It provides pointers to the various documents and tools to take the best advantage of the available information.

The deadlines for the most important actions are given in Appendix A.

Direct web links are included where possible. These links are highlighted in the text, where they appear in **small blue caps**.

Each panel has a dedicated web page containing key documents in order to help referees with their work. The names of these panel-specific documents are highlighted in **red**.

The Observing Programmes Office (opo@eso.org) should be contacted in case of questions.

Note that the OPC and panel meeting lasts three days in total. OPC members meet after the Panel sessions have ended.

There are four main *roles* in the OPC:

- OPC Chair;
- Panel Chairs coordinate the work of the expert panels;
- OPC members: the Panel Chairs, the co-chairs of the two B panels and the co-chair of one of the three A panels;
- Panel members.

Any action not explicitly assigned to a specific role is understood to be relevant for everybody. Additional roles are defined for specific circumstances:

- Panel co-chairs are called to chair the panel when the Chair cannot do so (e.g. due to a conflict of interest);
- OPC substitute members: panel members who are asked to deputize for their Panel Chair (or co-chair for panels A and B) during parts of the OPC meeting (e.g. in cases of conflicts of interest);
- Other OPC members-at-large: panel members who provide additional expertise for specific cases.

2. What is new in P98?

For the convenience of the OPC and panel members who have already served, we list below the main procedural changes with respect to the previous periods.

**OPC evaluation of Public Survey Proposals:** The OPC and PSP should evaluate and discuss the seven proposals for new VISTA Public Surveys. The proposals and any accompanying information will be made available to the OPC via the OPC secure webpage.

**Ongoing Large Programmes:** Each ongoing LP will be assigned to a primary referee selected from the OPC members. The assignments will be communicated by OPO in due course. During the review of ongoing Large Programmes on the day of the OPC meeting only critical cases and any requests for extension or compensation should be discussed in more detail.
3. OPC documents
All the documents required for completion of the Phase 1 proposal evaluation process are made available via the OPC WEB PAGE.
Most documents are confidential and password-protected. Access to the documents is via the ESO USER PORTAL. OPC documents should not be used in any manner not related to the review process. The names of the referees are confidential.

4. Before the OPC meetings
Step 1: Download the proposals.
The proposal distribution for each OPC category (A, B, C and D) is packaged into a Python application called the ELECTRA PACKAGE available on the panel specific webpage.
The Electra package provides a handy interface to access the proposals, to identify those that have to be reviewed, to select proposals for printing and to perform a number of operations on these proposals (sorting, searching, etc.). Its deployment is straightforward on most operating systems. However it requires a suitable version of Python to be present on the host computer. Alternatively, the pdf files of the proposals are in a subdirectory of the Electra package and can be accessed independently. The ELECTRA MANUAL contains further details.

Step 2: Identification of the proposals to review.
This can be done in several ways using Electra, e.g. by following the link labelled “Referees” in the navigation frame on the left of the page. If Electra has not been fully installed one can still extract the list of the assigned proposals from the package (see the ELECTRA MANUAL).
Each proposal has a primary referee assigned. The remaining reviewers are called secondary referees.

Step 3: Check of the OPC category. Referees should check whether all their proposals are assigned to the correct OPC category. The four OPC categories are:
   A - Cosmology
   B - Galaxies and Galactic nuclei
   C - Interstellar medium, star formation and planetary systems
   D - Stellar evolution
Further information on these categories can be found through the detailed list here: http://www.eso.org/sci/observing/phase1/p98/opc-categories.html

Large Programme Category evaluation: The OPC members receive the list of Large Programmes including titles/abstracts on the weekend after the proposal submission in order to identify wrong categories or proposals that should be discussed together during the review.
Misclassified proposals should be reported to OPO immediately. The Web OPC Tool (WOT) must be used for this (Appendix B). OPO will assess a transfer to another category and the referee will be notified about any re-assignment.
Note that the identification code of a proposal that has been reassigned to another OPC category remains unchanged. For instance, proposal 098.D-0830 was originally submitted in category D, as can be inferred from the letter “D” appearing in its identification code. If this proposal is reassigned to OPC category A, its evaluation will have to be performed by one of the category A panels, but its identification code will remain 098.D-0830.
Only errors in the main category (A, B, C or D) assignment should be reported. Incorrect sub-category specifications within a category (e.g., D1 instead of D3) are not a concern.

Note that although the same combinations of a letter and a number are used for OPC panel designation (A1 to A3, B1, B2, C1 to C4, D1 to D4) and for scientific sub-category specification (A1 to A8, B1 to B9, C1 to C8, D1 to D12), there is no one-to-one relation between panels and sub-categories. Each panel of a given category reviews proposals of all sub-categories. The composition of the panels is optimized so as to ensure full coverage of the whole range of scientific areas relevant to its category.

**Step 4: Check for conflicts of interest.**

Conflicts of interest need to be reported to OPO. The document **RULES FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICTS OF INTEREST** describes ESO’s policies for conflicts. Further information is given in the **TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RULES OF PROCEDURE** of the OPC.

Please report any conflict of interest early so that corrective steps can be taken.

The WOT interface **must** be used to report conflicts of interest. Once a conflict of interest is reported, OPO will assess its severity and its impact on the evaluation of the proposal and notify the reviewer about the next steps.

A number of conflicts of interest are identified by OPO before distribution to the referees and the assignments have taken this into account. If you feel that a conflict is incorrectly identified then please also report that to OPO by email stating the proposal number.

The corrections of the category and referee assignments must be completed before the report cards (see below) can be accessed. It is essential that all category mismatches and conflicts be reported within a few days after the release of the proposals. The OPC timeline (**Appendix A**) lists the deadline for reporting conflicts.

Conflicts of interest for each referee are listed in the **CONFLICT REPORT** available on the panel specific webpage. This document is described in **Appendix D**. A first version of the conflict report is included in the Electra package. At the time of opening of the report cards, an updated version of the **CONFLICT REPORT** will be made available.

**Step 5: Evaluation of the proposals.**

All proposals for Normal Programmes, Monitoring, GTO Programmes and ToO Programmes that have been assigned to the panel must be read and given a grade and comment before the OPC meeting. All assigned Large Programme proposals need to be evaluated as well.

Note that while the majority of proposals have a prefix of “098” in P98, Monitoring, Calibration and Large proposals have prefixes of “598”, “498” and “198” respectively.

**OPC members** have specific duties in addition to the regular proposal assignments given to other panel members. These include evaluating all Large Programme proposals (across all categories), all ongoing Large Programme reports, and all Calibration Proposals.

The criteria to be applied in the evaluation of the proposals are (in order of importance):

- scientific merit and the contribution to the advancement of scientific knowledge;
- evidence of sufficient resources and an adequate strategy for complete and timely data analysis;
- the scientific outcome of previous observations with ESO telescopes.

The following proposals should also be evaluated carefully:
• Proposals requesting time for the continuation or completion of programmes already accepted during previous periods should be given special consideration.

• **Guaranteed Time Observations (GTO)** are protected against duplication. Proposals clearly duplicating Guaranteed Time Observations should be rejected. The “Duplications” feature of Electra can be used to identify such cases. The GTO [PROTECTED OBSERVATIONS WEB PAGE](#) is also useful.

• A similar protection applies to VISTA and VST Public Survey observations, which should not be duplicated without specific justification in open time. These protections are listed on the [PUBLIC SURVEY PROTECTED OBSERVATIONS WEB PAGE](#).

• **Calibration Programmes**: OPC members should assess the potential enhancement of future science programmes.

• **Ongoing Large Programmes**: Each ongoing LP will be assigned to a primary referee selected from the OPC members. The assignments will be communicated by OPO in due course. During the review of ongoing Large Programmes on the day of the OPC meeting only critical cases and any requests for extension or compensation should be discussed in more detail.

Referees must assign grades and comments to each run of the assigned proposals. Before starting their work referees should consult the guidelines for grading and the grade scale to be used which can be found in [Appendix C](#).

The full grade scale should be used so as to ensure that the resulting ranking of the proposals is as meaningful as possible. Grades assigned by individual referees can and should be specified with one decimal digit (e.g. 2.7).

Proposals should be evaluated based solely on their contents. The Observatory will evaluate the technical feasibility of programmes. Should clarification of some technical aspects of a proposal be necessary, please contact [OPO](#).

The WOT interface ([Appendix B](#)) must be used to return the proposal grades.

**Report Cards** for each proposal will become available through the WOT interface once the reported conflicts have been resolved by OPO.

Note the following:

• Each run of every proposal must receive a grade.

• The primary and secondary referees must provide comments for each proposal emphasizing strengths and weaknesses.

• Detailed comments must be provided in particular for proposals that receive an extreme grade (grade ≤1.5) or poor grade (grade ≥4.0).

• Comments are encouraged for all other evaluated proposals.

While different grades may be assigned to different runs, the comments apply to the proposal as a whole. The comments serve different purposes. They are the basis for the panel discussion and, in the case of triaged proposals; they are used for the feedback to the proposers. Grades and comments for Normal Programmes, GTO Programmes and ToO Programmes will be accessible only to the members of a panel (and to the OPC Chair). Members of other panels will not be able to access them. Grades and comments for Large Programmes will be readable by all panel members of the category in which the Large Programme was submitted as well as by all OPC members.

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1 The WOT comments field cannot be left empty. Doing so for any proposal would prevent closing the report cards.
Only OPC members have access to the pre-meeting grades and comments of calibration programmes.

It is absolutely necessary that referees respect the deadline for the submission of the report cards (Appendix A). Triage can be carried out only once all members of all panels have completed their report cards.

**Step 6: Evaluate pre-OPC documents.**

Once all panel members have submitted their report cards, the following reports will be made available on the panel specific webpage via the [OPC WEB PAGE]:

- **REPORT FOR CYCLE 98A** lists the grades and comments for the panel;
- **HISTOGRAMS** of the grades per panel member;
- **RANKED LIST** of all runs in the panel, showing the triage line;

These reports represent the basis for the panel discussions during the OPC and panel meetings.

The lowest-ranked ~30% of the runs will not generally be discussed at the panel meeting (see below and Sect. 5.1). Panel members will get the chance to "resurrect" some proposals if considered necessary. Triage runs will appear in the final (post-OPC meeting) rankings below all runs reviewed at the panel meetings. As a rule, triaged runs are not scheduled.

The adoption of triage has significant implications for the evaluation of the proposals. To ensure that the triage line is fair and meaningful, it is essential that each referee grades all assigned proposals. It is also critical that all referees submit their report cards by the deadline, as triage can only be done once all report cards have been received.

Each referee should evaluate whether the panel should discuss a triaged proposal. A description of the triage process is given in Appendix E.

**Step 7: For OPC members only: review of the ongoing Large Programmes.**

The OPC evaluates the progress and status of ongoing Large Programmes and issues recommendations on their continuation. This evaluation is based on the consideration of the original **PHASE 1 PROPOSALS** and the corresponding Status Reports submitted by the PIs. The reports are discussed during the OPC meeting (on the last day).

Only critical cases and any requests for extension or compensation must be discussed. Relevant documents for the evaluation of on-going Large Programmes include a list of ongoing Large Programmes including their Primary Referees as well as a summary of the **LARGE PROGRAMME TIME COMMITMENT** in future periods. Note that while LPs that are due to be completed in the ongoing period are assessed, newly approved Large Programmes in the previous period are not evaluated.

**Step 8: For OPC members only: review of the other OPC-specific documents.**

The following documents are made available to OPC members (the first two documents are subject to the submission of any CPs):

- **GRADES AND COMMENTS FOR CALIBRATION PROGRAMMES**;
- **Report on the pre-OPC EVALUATION OF THE CALIBRATION PROGRAMMES**;
- **GRADES AND COMMENTS FOR TOOs**;
- **GRADES AND COMMENTS FOR LARGE PROGRAMMES**;
- **Reports on Public Surveys** (for P98 only – see Section 6.6)
Step 9: For Panel Chairs only: preparation of the meeting of your panel.

It is good practice to have a clear idea of the panel’s tasks. Useful preparations include establishing a list of the non-triaged proposals sorted by topic in order to discuss similar proposals together. This list can be communicated to the panel members before the start of the meeting.

5. The panel meeting

The panel meeting is spread over 2 days, from Tuesday morning to Wednesday evening. It starts with a general introduction for all panel members. The presentation includes an overview of the proposal submission, the availability of telescope time guidelines for the panel work and an overview of the status of telescopes and instruments. Joint panel meetings are scheduled on Wednesday afternoon for the evaluation of the Large Programme proposals.

5.1 Individual panel meetings – General procedure

The corresponding Chair leads the panel meeting. The mission of each panel is to grade all Normal, GTO and ToO programme runs and establish a single ranked list per telescope of all the runs. ToO runs are discussed later by the OPC based on the panel grades.

Any proposal that had been removed by triage can be resurrected by the request of one or more panel members (including the chair). They are added to the list of the proposals to be reviewed by the panel during the meeting. None of the remaining triaged proposals is discussed further.

The panel must review each proposal and assign grades to all its runs. Typically, the primary referee presents the proposal and his/her assessment. Then the other referees give their comments. This is followed by a general discussion and concluded by a vote.

The voting procedure is by paper ballot on which the panel member indicates his/her acronym, the identification code of the proposal or the run(s) and the grade that he/she assigns to this proposal or run(s).

The panel may decide to assign the same grade to all the runs of a given proposal or different grades to individual runs. In the latter case, separate voting rounds must take place for each individual run.

While it is legitimate to assign different grades and ranks to different runs of a given proposal, referees should be aware that this implies that some of them may end up being scheduled and others not.

The mean and the standard deviation of the votes of the individual referees are computed and stored in the database. The mean is adopted as panel grade and used as reference to establish the rankings. The ballots are collected and kept by OPO for one year following the OPC meeting. These ballots are consulted in case the outcome of a vote is questioned at a later stage.

Proposals on similar topics should be grouped for discussion to make their relative grading and ranking easier and more consistent.

Panel members must declare conflicts of interest if and when applicable and leave the room during the discussion. See the RULES FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICTS OF INTEREST for more details.

The conflicts of interest identified for each referee prior to the OPC meeting are listed in the CONFLICT REPORT. Should an additional conflict be identified during the meeting, the conflicted referee should leave the room for the discussion.

Proposals must be evaluated as submitted. In particular, barring compelling scientific reasons, the panel should refrain from recommending different time for allocation in the proposals.
The panel may request the amount of time to be allocated to one or several runs of a programme to be changed if this is justified on scientific grounds. In such a case, a request should be sent to OPO with the scientific justification. Such a change should also be described in the feedback to the PI.

LPO instrument experts will conduct technical feasibility assessments of the proposals after the OPC meeting.

Requests for clarification of technical aspects of a proposal should be sent to OPO. Answers to technical feasibility questions are provided within 24 hours. Only questions submitted before the end of the Tuesday sessions can receive an answer before the end of the panel meeting on Wednesday evening.

The runs are ranked according to their grade on a telescope-by-telescope basis. Different runs of a given proposal with the same grade are assigned the same rank. A merged ranking of all proposals is established across all panels for each telescope. The assigned grades are re-normalized so as to ensure consistency across panels.

The primary referee of each proposal needs the necessary information for the feedback comments to be communicated to the PI.

A scientific assistant, who records the outcome of the votes, supports the panel in its work. All questions addressed to OPO (e.g. on procedures, policies or the technical feasibility) should be communicated through the scientific assistant.

### 5.2 ToO runs

ToO runs are defined for targets that cannot be known more than one week before the observation needs to be executed. (See [CALL FOR PROPOSALS](#) for more details). ToO programmes may include a mixture of ToO runs and “regular” runs. The steps described in this section and in Sect. 6.2 apply only to the ToO runs. The regular runs are evaluated and scheduled according to the general procedure. ToO runs should be graded consistently with all other runs with which they compete for allocation of time.

After the end of the panel meeting, OPO prepares a merged list of ToO runs to be discussed during the OPC meeting (part II) and finally recommended for implementation (see Sect. 6.2 for more details). This merged ToO list includes a tentative cut-off line to be discussed and approved by the OPC. Runs below the cut-off line will not be considered for scheduling.

### 5.3 Large Programmes and Joint Panel sessions

The allocation of time to a Large Programme represents a major commitment of ESO facilities over several periods. Particular care is required in the evaluation of Large Programme proposals. Approved Large Programmes are given top priority in the Service Mode queues.

The discussion of Large Programmes is done in a joint panel session. The joint panel sessions take place in parallel on the afternoon of Wednesday of the OPC week. Each session is led by one of the panel chairs nominated prior to the OPC meeting.

The joint panel votes on each Large Programme proposal. The vote takes place using the voting slips, as for normal programmes.

The primary referee of each proposal presents a summary of the conclusions of this review to the OPC.
6. The OPC meeting

The OPC meeting is scheduled after the Panel meeting is over.

6.1 Review of Calibration Programme proposals

If there are any Calibration Programme proposals, they are discussed in the OPC meeting. The discussion is based on the pre-meeting review of the proposals by all OPC members and a report by ESO assessing the difference to standard calibrations and feasibility.

6.2 Final review of Large and Large GTO Programmes

Half of the OPC meeting day is dedicated to the final evaluation of the new Large Programme proposals. The recommendation of the joint panel session is presented to the OPC by the primary referee. After the discussion, the OPC votes on a recommendation. Large Programme proposals require a qualified majority. As a rule, only proposals that receive a qualified majority during the joint panel session should be re-discussed and voted on during the final OPC review. The numbers of positive and negative votes, abstentions and the conflicted non-voting referees are recorded for each Large Programme. Whether the votes are cast in an open or closed ballot is up to the discretion of the OPC Chair. Any GTO Large Programme proposals (Large programmes with GTO contract keywords) should be assessed and discussed alongside any Large Programmes.

6.3 Final review of ToO runs

OPO prepares a merged ranking across categories and panels to be discussed by the OPC. Decision about the final recommendation of ToO runs is made by the whole OPC based on the merged ranking provided by OPO.

6.4 Review of merged rankings of panels

ESO provides a merged ranked list of all runs per telescope based on re-normalised grades. The Panel Chairs should cross-check the merged ranking and make sure it reflects the recommendations of their panel and no undue conflicts or duplications are present.

6.5 Review of ongoing Large Programmes

OPC members will be invited to present their assessments of programmes for which there are concerns and/or requests for compensation. The OPC Chair will invite the primary referee to lead the discussion for the critical cases.

6.6 VISTA Public Surveys

The Public Survey Panel (PSP) invited seven teams to submit proposals for new VISTA Public Surveys. A member of the PSP will present their recommendations to the OPC members who will then discuss the proposals to recommend for approval. The proposals and any reports from the ESO Survey Team will be made available to the OPC before the OPC meeting to help them with this assessment.
7. After the OPC meeting

The primary referee provides a text with OPC or panel comments for each proposal. The feedback should help the proposers to understand the outcome and possibly help to improve the proposal for re-submission. Referees can start to enter their comments during the panel meetings.

Feedback should be based on the discussion of the proposal at the panel and/or OPC meeting. It should be concise and comprehensive, emphasising the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal. Comments that may be perceived as derogatory or insulting should be avoided.

Allocation of observing time is only known after the schedule has been built. The comments should be phrased in a way that it is sensible and meaningful regardless of the outcome of the scheduling process. The comments should not include ranking information, as this is known only after the merged rankings have been established. Feedback for triaged proposals should be provided based on the pre-meeting comments.

As a general practice, in each panel, draft feedback comments are circulated among the panel members for review and comments, and they are updated on the basis of the latter by the primary referee prior to their submission to the ESO database. It is the responsibility of the panel chair or co-chair to review the content of all comments in their panel.

Feedback comments must be submitted using the “Comment cards” in WOT (Appendix B) by the deadline specified in the OPC timeline (Appendix A).
APPENDICES

A Timeline of OPC activities for P98

① **Step 1**: Distribution of the observing proposals to the referees (p. 4)
   Deadline: 7 April, 2016

⑦ **Step 2**: Feedback of the referees regarding category changes & conflicts of interest (p. 5)
   Deadline: 12 April, 2016

① **Step 3**: Release of the report cards to be completed by the referees (p. 6)
   Deadline: April 14, 2016

③ **Step 4**: Submission of the report cards by the referees (p. 6)
   Deadline: 9 May, 2016

① **Step 5**: Distribution of OPC working documents to the referees (p. 7)
   Deadline: 12 May, 2016

**Step 6: Panel and OPC meetings (Sects. 5 and 6)**
   18 and 19 May 2016: Panel meetings
   20 May 2016: OPC meeting

① **Step 7**: Release of the comment cards to be completed by the primary referees (p. 11)
   Deadline: 18 May, 2016

③ **Step 8**: Submission of the comment cards by the primary referees (p. 11)
   Deadline: 30 May, 2016

③: Referees actions
①: OPO actions
B The Web OPC tool

The Web OPC Tool (WOT) is accessible via the ESO USER PORTAL following the link labelled “Report/Comment Cards” under the “Actions” button in the left frame menu. First select the proper period from the pull-down menu, then press the “Change cycle” button.

B.1 Reporting errors in the OPC category

Follow the link to the “Report Cards” to open a page with the list of proposals of the selected cycle. Proposals marked with a red cross indicate that the report cards have not yet been completed.

If one of these proposals belongs to another OPC category, click on its identification code to open the wrong category and conflict page. To report an error in the category assignment, check the “Wrong Category” radio button. The text box should be used to indicate to which category the proposal should be transferred. Submit the report by clicking on “save conflict/wrong category”. The explanatory text box must be filled; it is mandatory to provide a description of the recommended action.

A yellow disk replaces the red cross once the report has been submitted.

The notification is reviewed by OPO within the next working day. If it is accepted, the proposal will be transferred to a panel of the correct category. If the change is rejected by OPO, the proposal will remain in the list to be refereed.

B.2 Reporting conflicts of interest

Under “Report Cards”, click on its identification code to open the wrong category and conflict page. Check the ”Conflict of interest” radio button. Use the text box to explain the nature of the conflict. Under “Report Cards” click on “Submit the report” by clicking on “Save Conflict/Wrong Category”.

The justification text box must be filled; it is mandatory to provide an explanation of the conflict.

A yellow disk replaces the red cross.

The notification is reviewed by OPO within the next working day. If it is accepted the proposal is transferred to the other referees.

OPO informs the referees whether the conflict is considered substantial enough to warrant re-assignment. Once all of the conflicts reported by a referee have been resolved by OPO the referee can confirm that they have reported all conflicts associated with proposals assigned to them by clicking the “No (more) conflicts to report” button at the bottom of the list of proposals (only after all conflicts reported have been assessed and resolved by OPO). Please note that this button should be pressed even if no conflicts are identified by the referee.

B.3 Completing report cards

Report cards should be used by the referees to submit their grades and comments for all proposals.

Clicking on an identification code in the list of proposals opens a page where evaluation can be entered in a free-format text box. The grade fields at the bottom of the page should be used to assign a grade to each run.

The same grade can be assigned to all runs of a proposal by entering the grade of run A and clicking the “Apply grade to all runs button”. Note that this will overwrite any grade previously entered.
The “Save card” button submits the comments and the grades for the runs to ESO. A green tick in the list of programmes indicates successful submission. The “Close all Cards” button at the bottom of the proposal list must be pressed when all grades and comments for all proposals have been entered in order to notify OPO that the referee has finished their work. Please note that this closes the report cards and no further changes or additions can be made.

**B.4 Completing comment cards**

OPO opens the comment cards during the panel meetings, to be used by the primary referees to enter the feedback to the proposal PIs. Follow the “Comment Cards” link on the WOT front page. The procedure for comment cards is similar to that of the “Report Cards”.

The “Close all Cards” button in WOT should be pressed only when the feedback for all proposals has been entered. No further changes or additions can be made after the comment cards have been submitted.

**C Grading guidelines**

The grade scale to be used is defined as follows:

- **1.0** outstanding: breakthrough science
- **1.5** excellent: definitely above average
- **2.0** very good: no significant weaknesses
- **2.5** good: minor deficiencies do not detract from strong scientific case
- **3.0** fair: good scientific case, but with definite weaknesses
- **3.5** rather weak: limited science return prospects
- **4.0** weak: little scientific value and/or questionable scientific strategy
- **4.5** very weak: deficiencies outweigh strengths
- **5.0** rejected

The full grade scale should be used so as to ensure that the resulting ranking of the proposals is as meaningful as possible. Grades assigned by individual referees can and should be specified with one decimal digit (e.g., 2.7).

The following questions should be considered for the grading:

- Is there sufficient background/context for the non-expert (i.e., someone not specialized in this particular sub-field)?
- Are previous results (either by proposers themselves or in the published literature) clearly presented?
- Are the proposed observations and the Immediate Objectives pertinent to the background description?
- Is the sample selection clearly described, or, if a single target, is its choice justified?
- Are the instrument modes, and target location(s) (e.g., cosmology fields) specified clearly?
- Will the proposed observations add significantly to the knowledge of this particular field?
D The conflict report

This appendix briefly describes the Conflict Report document. By default, each panel member reviews all proposals for Normal, GTO and ToO programmes assigned to the panel and all Large Programme proposals submitted in the OPC panel category.

In addition, OPC members have to review all Large and Calibration Programme proposals.

The Conflict Report lists, for each referee, the conflicts of interest for each referee. The proposal identification code appears in the first column. The second column gives the name of the proposal PI, and the third column the name of the proposer (PI or CoI) with whom the conflict occurs. The last column specifies the type of conflict:

- **institutional conflict**: one of the proposers is affiliated with the same institute as the referee;
- **referee conflict**: refers to a conflict that has been reported by the referee him/herself;
- **OPO intervention**: corresponds to a conflict that does not belong to one of the above two types; the majority of such conflicts are identified by OPO prior to the distribution of the proposals and the auxiliary material to the OPC and panel members.

E The triage process

Triage is applied to Normal and ToO programmes before the panel meetings. Runs ranked in the lowest third, according to the pre-OPC meeting grades, should not be discussed at the panel meeting. This is to maximize the amount of time for the evaluation of the most interesting proposals. The triaged runs will not be considered for allocation of observing time.

This appendix gives a brief description of the triage procedure as applied at ESO.

Pre-OPC grades are renormalized to provide equal averages and the standard deviations of all the grades of each referee. For each run, a single grade and standard deviation is computed by averaging the renormalized grades of all the referees.

For each telescope, the runs of Normal and ToO Programmes are ranked according to their grade. The lowest 30% are triaged. To ensure significant oversubscription per telescope, additional runs are added until at least 1.5 times the available time is covered. Proposals with triaged and non-triaged runs are identified.

A ranked list of all the runs is provided for each panel. The ranked list of runs is sorted by the renormalized grade. The triage line appears in pink in the document. The runs above the final triage line must be discussed at the panel meeting. The runs below this triage line should not be discussed unless any panel member requests the resurrection of a particular proposal.