LCO Network Quick-Reference (June 2017)

Getting Access

LCO users must register for network accounts, which allow them to submit proposals, request observations, and retrieve data. To get an account, go to the URL for the [user portal](), click on "Register an Account", fill out the form, and click "Register."

Writing a Proposal

Information on the types of proposals, and who is eligible to submit them, is available on the [Network Time Allocation Process webpage](). Eligible users with network accounts can submit a proposal through the [Portal]() by:

- Clicking the "Manage Proposals" link;
- On the "Your Proposals" page, clicking the "Submit Proposal" link;
- Selecting the appropriate Call from the list and clicking the corresponding "Apply" button;
- Filling out all of the sections of the proposal form (see the [Writing Proposals]() webpage);
- Clicking the Submit button.

Primary Investigators are notified of their proposal's acceptance by email. Each approved proposal is assigned a code. In the [Portal](), Co-Is can be added to the proposal team by:

- Clicking on the "Manage Proposals" link;
- Selecting the proposal code from the list;
- Typing the Co-I's email in the "Invite Co-Investigators" box, and clicking "Add".

Creating Requests for Observations

We strongly recommend that PIs and Co-Is of approved projects read the "[Getting Started on the LCO Global Telescope Network]()" guide for details about observations requests. Requests on the LCO network do *not* identify specific sites or telescopes. The telescopes of each aperture class are identical. LCO's Scheduler assigns each request to the best telescope available, and reassigns it to the next available telescope if the initial attempt fails.

Requests can be submitted in the [Portal]() by clicking on the "Submit Observation" link. The *minimum* information that must be provided in the request composition form is:

- In the "General Information" section, the Title (name) of the request and the Proposal for which the request is being made.

- In the "Request" section, whether the observation is an image or a spectrum, and which instrument should be used.
- In the "Target" section, the name and coordinates of the science target.
- In the "Configuration" section, the number and duration of exposures. For imaging observations, the filter must be selected; for spectroscopic observations, the slit width must be selected.
- In the "Window" section, the UT start and end times of the time window within which the observation should be made. The window must always include sufficient time for the exposures themselves *plus* the mechanical and software overheads. *In general, a larger window gives the Scheduler more opportunities to place the observation, and a narrower window may restrict the observation to a single site or may even make it unschedulable.*
- In the "Window" section, setting the **Cadence** option to *Simple Period* allows users to request multiple observations within the time window by specifying a Period and a Jitter. The **Period** is the interval between individual observations; the **Jitter** is the dispersion (around the strict period) around which the observation may be scheduled.

When a request is complete, it can be sent to the Scheduler by clicking the Submit button.

If an observation is started but not 100% completed, the Scheduler will try to reschedule the entire observation again. Time is deducted from a science project's allocation every time an observation is attempted, not only when the observation is completed. Users should verify that all exposures plus overheads can be completed in the time window.

Getting the Results of Submitted Observation Requests

All submitted requests, for proposals for which the user is the PI or a Co-I, are listed in the Portal on the user's home page. Particular requests can be found by using the "Filter List" feature on that page. Clicking on the Title of a particular request opens up a new page from which a user can:
- Click on the "Options" button to Cancel a PENDING or SCHEDULED request;
- Click on the "Options" button to Copy a request (to make another observation);
- Click on the "Details" tab to view the parameters of the request;
- Click on the "Scheduling" tab to see the history of when the request was scheduled;
- Click on the "Visibility" tab to see where and when the target was observable in the time window, and what the condition of the telescopes was at those times;
- Click on the "Data" tab to see a list of the images files created from the observations and download some or all of them from the archive.

Users can also search and download data acquired for all of their approved proposals (as well as non-proprietary data) from LCO's Science Archive.

Getting Help

Users can report bugs, make suggestions for improvements, and ask questions of LCO's Science Support team by emailing science-support@lco.global. For questions about particular observation requests or images, users should include the proposal code and the tracking ID number of the request in the email.