

JCMT Dos & Don'ts...

Or: How to make Observatory staff happy.

Proposals

Target Selection

Don't propose to observe targets that are impossible to reach with the telescope.

Check your target sources are not outside the JCMT's declination limits (i.e. too far south). Check that the RAs of your sources are good for your semester. It is also helpful to state in the proposal the best months for your proposed observations.



Proposals

Target Selection

Do use the Clash Tool.

If publicly-available prior observations of your targets with the same instrumentation list already exist in the database, be very clear about why you need to observe them again (e.g. greater depth, different frequency).



Proposals

Time Requests

Don't just pick a time request number “out of the air”!

For most* proposals, you should *scientifically* justify why a particular sensitivity is needed, & hence indicate the time/weather conditions required.

Don't just pick an amount of time that sounds “reasonable” and then quote the corresponding sensitivity.

* There are a few legitimate exceptions to this, such as periodic monitoring of GRBs, flaring objects, etc.

Proposals

Instrument & Mode Selection

Do explain why you need certain instrument settings, weather conditions, etc.

Are your requested HARP raster scan spacings suitable? Do you need to oversample? Should you use a basket-weave scan pattern?* Should you use matched filtering? Do you really need Band 2 weather? Etc.

* 
Probably...

Proposals

Technical Justifications should be longer than 2 sentences...

Do clearly explain all calculations and assumptions made in the Technical Justification (e.g. time estimates).

JCMT Staff have to assess all proposals -- make their life easier and they'll be in a happier mood when they assess yours!

Also clearly indicate if your proposal is a resubmission.

Communication with the Observatory

Upload via the OT

Don't send science programs to FoP as an XML attachment.

Upload via the JCMT-OT instead!

Programs aren't enabled until they are checked, and a single MSB can be set to have its repeat count set to "Removed"* if you want your FoP to check it.

*  This is really useful, as an MSB "remembers" its previously-assigned number of repeats while "Removed"..

Communication with the Observatory

CC to 'flex'

Do include Flex in your project related emails.

CC flex@eaobservatory.org on your emails, and put your project code in the subject line then the email will be archived in the OMP. This lets your FoP (or another support scientist standing in for them) easily keep track.

Communication with the Observatory

CC to 'flex'

Do include Flex in your project related emails.

Also, please try and crop out the old email thread -- the whole thing gets archived in an OMP page, and it's much easier to read if its tidy! Send as plain text, whenever possible.

Communication with the Observatory

Explain the problem clearly

Don't send emails that just say "It doesn't work".

Even in your initial email, please send us full details of your problem or error -- we can make sure the right person sees it much sooner, and they can solve it much more quickly!

Using the JCMT Observing Tool

Prepare MSBs early

Do create MSBs as soon as you can after your project is created.

We often have gaps in our queue by the end of one semester, and observe in the mornings, so we may observe your project more quickly than you expected.

Using the JCMT Observing Tool

Updating your MSBs

Do remember that the master copy of your MSBs is the one you've stored in the database

If editing your pre-existing MSBs, always fetch them from the database with the OT first, edit them and then re-store them to the database. Save a local copy after that.

Using the JCMT Observing Tool

Don't modify your project while
it's being observed

**Don't modify your project
while it's actually in the
process of being observed.**

If you modify and re-store your
science program during
execution of an MSB, our
system won't be able to keep
track of how many repeats have
been done.

Using the JCMT Observing Tool

Name OT targets correctly

Don't name your target source 'Blob N'

Target names should be a scientific name of the object. Especially, don't include the frequency information in the target name!

MSB title is where you title the observations/MSBs in relation to your project.

Using the JCMT Observing Tool

Avoid unnecessary duplication

Don't copy the same information again and again

If you find yourself repeating the same information (e.g. target or het-setup) many times in your science program, you normally should restructure it. Ask for help if it isn't clear how best to structure your program!

Using the JCMT Observing Tool

Keep observer notes concise,
but do include them!

Don't try and repeat your whole science case in your notes!

MSB “Show to Observer” notes should concisely give the Telescope operator information they need to execute your program correctly. If you make it too long, details will get missed!

Be aware that notes all get concatenated together for the observers.

Publications

Include project codes

**Do quote your project codes
in your publications!**

Please, please, please do this.

