



Astronomical League

Observing Program Division

White Paper

Observing Program Proposal Process

Do you have an idea for an Observing Program that the Astronomical League should offer to its members? And you are willing to develop and perhaps act as coordinator? You have come to the right place.

First, you should do is check out the list to see if someone is already working on a program on that topic. The easiest way to do that is to contact one of the National Observing Program Directors: Aaron Clevenson, Cliff Mygatt, Al Lamperti, Maynard Pittendreigh, or Marie Lott.

New programs are reviewed and approved by the AL Council at an annual convention (ALCON), typically held in July or August. Submissions should be made to the AL National Observing Program Directors at least a month before the convention. This gives time for the Observing Program Directors to review your proposal, for the AL Secretary to add your proposal to the agenda for the meeting of the Executive Council and gives time for members of the Council to review your proposal and to be prepared for the meeting. It also gives you time to make any changes that they recommend. A proposed program must be a complete package when it is submitted to Council.

New programs must add to the existing observing programs. This might be a program that explores a new class of objects or one that investigates a new feature of the universe. More advanced forms of existing programs are also an option (Lunar II, Herschel II, etc.). Some overlap with objects in existing programs is acceptable, but it should be as small as possible. The new program must also be of interest to the AL membership. It should be comprised of objects that would be accessible to members using their backyard telescopes.

The AL National Observing Program Directors are available to help you throughout the process. Please contact one of them through email, and they will work with you towards successful adoption of your new Observing Program.

Here are the steps involved:

1. Identify your idea for a new AL observing program.
2. Check with a National Observing Program Director to see if that program is already under development.
3. Submit your topic to one of the AL National Observing Program Directors. They will add it to the list.

4. Develop your list of objects. This list varies from program to program, but the typical program has 100 observations. You should note the object's designation, common name (if it has one), constellation, right ascension, declination, object type (whatever is appropriate for your list), magnitude, and any other pertinent information about the object (class, classification, color, etc.).
5. Fill in the **Observing Program Proposal** form. This form will provide all of the information that is required by the AL Council to make a decision on the new Observing Program.
6. Develop the manual if you plan to have one. See the information on **AL Manual Publication**. Manuals are a benefit to the participants, the observing program, and the Astronomical League.
7. Work with the AL National Observing Program Directors as needed and desired.
8. Create the content for your program's page on the AL website.
9. Create any certificates needed for your program and a pin design.
10. Submit your proposal to the AL National Observing Program Directors at least a month before the annual convention. This submission should include:
 - The **Observing Program Proposal** form
 - The list of objects
 - The pin design
 - The certificate(s) design(s)
 - The web page contents

This can be submitted through one of the AL National Observing Program Directors.

1. The proposal will be reviewed, and the AL Council will make a decision at the annual convention. You are encouraged to attend and present the case for the new program at their meeting. If you do not attend, we will try to represent you as best as possible. If you plan to attend, please contact the AL Secretary to coordinate. There are three possible outcomes: They will accept the proposal, they will defer the decision pending additional information or changes, or they will decline to add the new program. Their decision will be given to the AL National Observing Program Directors who will forward it on to you. Normally, if additional information or changes are required, the Observing Program will be reconsidered at the following annual convention.
2. After the program is approved, additional information will be provided regarding the ordering of pins and manuals. These are ordered through the Astronomical League's National Office to take advantage of quantity discounts.

We look forward to your submission. Please contact one of us if you have any questions.

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