

Normal Programme Applications for HARPS are Most Welcome

Conny Aerts^{1,2}
Gaitée Hussain³
Ferdinando Patat³

¹ Instituut voor Sterrenkunde, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium

² Chair, ESO Observing Programmes Committee

³ ESO

As was the case for previous observing periods, the Observing Programmes Committee (OPC) has been happy to note the large diversity of topics, covering all aspects of astrophysics, in the observing proposals for Period 92 (covering October 2013 – March 2014). Exciting new ideas were prominently present and many were rewarded with telescope time.

A notable trend during the past few years has been the very efficient organisation of

communities in need of long-term high-precision spectroscopic monitoring. They have requested observing time in the Large Programme category with HARPS (see Pepe et al., 2002) and its spectropolarimetric mode HARPSpol (described by Piskunov et al., 2010). Prime examples are the exoplanet community, the CoRoT asteroseismology teams, groups performing intensive polarimetric time series to search for and characterise magnetic fields in stars, and many more. Time-domain astronomy with ESO telescopes works optimally when forces are joined and targets are shared over the overall allocated time in order to achieve optimal time coverage and frequency precision.

A limiting factor of this type of community organisation seems to be a hesitation on the part of individual scientists, or small teams, to apply for normal HARPS programmes, under the unjustified assumption that almost all HARPS time is

only reserved for Large Programmes. Table 1 shows the breakdown of HARPS allocations by Normal and Large Programmes over ten observing periods and demonstrates that, although the Large Programmes are very successful at winning observing time, Normal Programmes can be competitive. The limited number of Normal Programmes leads to an unwarranted limit on the diversity of scientific topics addressed by the HARPS facility. The ESO community is encouraged to submit proposals for Normal HARPS Programmes, addressing original and splendid science ideas for Period 93, and beyond.

References

- Pepe, F., Mayor, M. & Rupprecht, G. 2002, *The Messenger*, 110, 9
Piskunov, N. et al. 2011, *The Messenger*, 143, 7

Period	Submitted Proposals			Requested Time (nights)			Scheduled Proposals			Allocated Time (nights)			Success Rates			
	Normal	Large	Total	Normal	Large	Total	Normal	Large	Total	Normal	Large	Total	Proposals		Time	
82	27	1	29	240	15	285	15	1	17	118	15	163	0.56	1.00	0.49	1.00
83	22	9	33	160	149	334	7	3	12	58	82	160	0.32	0.33	0.36	0.55
84	25	5	32	195	142	362	5	2	9	46	94	168	0.20	0.40	0.24	0.66
85	25	2	29	182	103	312	5	1	8	42	93	162	0.20	0.50	0.23	0.90
86	30	3	35	236	124	386	5	0	7	44	95	165	0.17	n/a	0.18	0.77
87	23	3	27	155	125	295	9	1	11	55	98	168	0.39	0.33	0.35	0.78
88	26	5	32	217	133	365	5	2	8	34	100	149	0.19	0.40	0.16	0.75
89	20	4	25	112	161	288	9	0	10	44	114	173	0.45	n/a	0.39	0.71
90	17	5	23	102	144	261	5	2	8	31	122	168	0.29	0.40	0.30	0.85
91	17	10	27	109	186	295	13	3	16	85	85	170	0.76	0.30	0.78	0.46
92	19	6	26	106	138	259	9	2	12	41	104	160	0.47	0.33	0.39	0.75

Table 1. The time allocation statistics for HARPS in the last ten semesters (October 2008 – March 2014) for Normal and Large Programmes (LPs) is tabulated. From Period 82 the ESO 3.6-metre telescope was

fully operated in visitor mode and HARPS was the only offered instrument. The time requested/allocated by/to scheduled LPs is spread across the requested semesters, while the time requested by rejected LPs

is counted only for the semester in which the proposal was submitted; any requests in subsequent semesters are not counted. The total numbers listed include Guaranteed Time Observations (GTO).



A panoramic view of La Silla covering almost 360 degrees, prominently showing the ESO 3.6-metre dome and the tower of the Coudé Auxiliary Telescope, illuminated by moonlight. The HARPS spectrograph in its vacuum enclosure is housed inside the 3.6-metre dome.