Proposer Guidelines in Anonymous Reviews

Site Contents

The HST peer review process will move to a double-anonymous review process, in which authors' identities are concealed from both review panel members and TAC members. Provided here are guidelines to assist proposers in preparing their proposals, specifically their PDF Submissions, to help conceal the identities of the proposers, and ensure a fairer proposal evaluation process. See the Recommendations of the Working Group on Anonymizing Proposal Reviews site for information in the working group that compiled these guidelines, and the FAQ on Anonymizing Proposal Reviews for more general information on this change. A similar page gives Reviewer Guidelines in Anonymous Reviews for the same purposes.

The anonymous review does not mean proposals will be accepted from anonymous sources. As with previous cycles, proposers must still enter the names and affiliations of all investigators into the APT system. APT will not include names or affiliations in the versions generated for the reviews.

While APT will largely obscure the proposing teams identities in cover materials, it will not change or alter information contained in the PDF submission. **It is also necessary for proposers to take additional steps to further anonymize their PDF attachment before it is uploaded to APT**. Below are some guidelines to follow to do this:

- Do not include author names or affiliations anywhere in the PDF attachment. This includes but is not limited to, page headers, footers, diagrams, figures, or watermarks.
- Referencing is an essential part of demonstrating knowledge of the field and progress. When citing references within the proposal, use third person neutral wording. **This especially applies to self-referencing**. For example, replace phrases like "as we have shown in our previous work (Doe et al. 2010)" with "as Doe et al. (2010) showed...". Do not refer to previous campaigns using HST or other observatories in an identifying fashion. For instance, rather than write "we observed another cluster, similar to the one we are proposing under HST program #XXXXX," instead write "HST program #XXXXX has observed this target in the past..."
- Do not include acknowledgements, or the source of any grant funding.

It takes some effort by authors to anonymize their PDF submissions. As the guidelines show, grammar and structure are expected to be different than in previous HST submissions. **Take sufficient time to prepare the manuscript, especially if your plan to resubmit a proposal from a previous cycle or other submissions**.

Proposers should make an effort to describe the past work in the field, and how this proposal will improve, build-upon, or complete that past work. Many successful proposals discuss stated sample goals or statistical completeness, and how this proposed work will fit in. Similarly, proposals may also discuss the uniqueness of the sample, and goals in comparison to similar work.

Team Expertise and Background

As part of this change, STScI will also require proposers to complete the "Team Expertise and Background" section in APT. This should be a brief description of the expertise, background, and roles of the team members as they relate to the science proposed. This section should be limited in length; for most proposals, a paragraph or two will suffice. For proposals with a large number of Co-Investigators, it is not necessary to report on the qualifications of every team member, only those conducting or leading major aspects of the proposed study. This does not need to be a bio of the team members. See this Sample Document for an example of how a Team Expertise and Background section might look.