

# LSST:UK Policy for Selection of Affiliate PIs and Junior Associates

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## 1. Background

The Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) signed by LSST Corporation and STFC (acting on behalf of the LSST:UK Consortium) defines the basis for UK participation in LSST. In particular, it defines the rights and responsibilities of those holding Affiliate PI (AP) or Junior Associate (JA) status: for example, AP or JA status is required for membership of an LSST Science Collaboration or for access to LSST data. The MoA specifies that the Consortium may name up to 100 APs and 400 JAs through lists that it shall provide to LSSTC on an annual basis. Current and past lists shall be available at <https://lsst-uk.atlassian.net/wiki/display/HOME/LSST%3AUK+Affiliate+PIs+and+Junior+Associates>.

While currently TBC by LSSTC, it is expected that each list will have an effective date of 1 January in the calendar year to which it applies, so annual selection rounds will take place in the final quarter of each calendar year, from 2016 onwards. The selection of the 2015 and 2016 lists were subject to special arrangements, as detailed in the Appendix below.

The ultimate responsibility for the selection of the annual AP and JA lists lies with the Consortium Board. However, the Board has decided to delegate to the LSST:UK PI Selection Committee (LPSC) the task of preparing proposed lists through application of the principles listed in Section 3 below according to the process outlined in Section 2. The membership of the LPSC shall be chosen to ensure adequate coverage of relevant science areas, but the LPSC will not necessarily have detailed knowledge of the activities of the LSST Science Collaborations, so it is important that those applying for AP status or making nominations for JA status include in their submitted forms *all* the information they wish to have considered in assessment of their requests.

## 2. Process

1. Before the start of each selection round the Board may provide the LPSC with guidance as to the way it wishes to see the principles outlined in Section 3 applied in a particular round – e.g. the number of slots to be filled, particular areas to be favoured in filling them, etc. – and the LPSC may seek further advice from the Board or the LUSC Executive Group at any point.
2. The Consortium Board Chair shall oversee each selection round, advertising the deadline by which nominations must be submitted for consideration by the LPSC.
3. Researchers wishing to be considered for selection as an AP shall complete a form specified by the LPSC on which they shall record the information to be considered in their application.
4. Existing and candidate APs will be able to nominate candidate JAs on a form specified by the LPSC.
5. The Consortium Board shall agree annual AP and JA lists based on the proposed lists produced by the LPSC.
6. The Project Leader shall pass the agreed lists to LSSTC and publish them to the Consortium.

## 3. Selection Principles

### 3.1 General

1. AP status may be held by researchers with faculty positions in any institution that is a member of the LSST:UK Consortium or by holders of long-term fellowships (e.g. RSURFs, ERFs, etc.) who have a permanent contract at such an institution. JA status shall be open to any researcher affiliated with a Consortium institution who is not eligible for AP status.
2. The selection of APs and JAs shall be consistent with the overall objectives for UK participation in LSST, as presented in the *LSST:UK Long-Term Plan*, namely:
  - a. *To obtain for the whole UK community the data access required for scientific participation in the LSST survey programme and for enhancing the scientific return from other facilities in the UK astronomy programme through incorporation of LSST data; and*
  - b. *To secure intellectual leadership of the UK community's top priority LSST science areas, by targeting investment in the software and DAC [Data Access Centre] services needed for their success.*
3. The LPSC shall consider how each annual list achieves the balance across science areas and institutions necessary for the attainment of these objectives.
4. The LPSC shall also ensure that each list conforms to the *LSST:UK Policy on Equality and Diversity [TBD]* and shall take into account any information provided on the application form that relates to the career history of a candidate AP or JA, so that no candidate shall be disadvantaged as a result of a period out of full-time employment – e.g. a career break, time spent on parental or carer's leave, or a period of part-time working.
5. As part of their acceptance of an appointment, all APs and JAs shall:
  - a. Affirm that they will abide by the conditions imposed upon them by the UK Memorandum of Agreement with LSSTC, plus any further conditions agreed by the Consortium Board and included in the application form;
  - b. Agree to follow the *LSST: UK Policy on Collaborative Conduct [TBD]*, which describes standards of acceptable and professional behaviour within the Consortium;
  - c. Undertake to share relevant information within the Consortium (so far as allowed by the rules of external bodies, such as LSST Science Collaborations) in recognition that they enjoy their status thanks to the Consortium whose wider scientific goals they must help advance; and
  - d. Inform the Consortium Board Chair if they are no longer employed by a Consortium institution, if they no longer wish to retain their AP or JA status or if they have been expelled from an LSST Science Collaboration.
6. APs and JAs shall be appointed for a fixed term, after which they may apply for reselection.
7. Failure to adhere to the conditions listed in item #5 will result in the status of AP or JA being reviewed by the Board and may result in its removal before its term has completed.

## 3.2 Affiliate PIs

1. The default term for APs shall be three years, but applicants may propose a different term. Longer terms will only be awarded in exceptional circumstances, with long-term involvement typically being secured through repeated reselection rather than the award of a term of extended duration.
2. Candidates shall explain why they require AP status for the proposed period and outline a plan for how they will make use of it. For example, someone seeking an eventual position of leadership in some aspect of LSST science is likely to require AP status earlier so that they can build up a track record of contribution to the activities of the relevant Science Collaboration, while those without an immediate intention to commit significant effort to LSST or simply wishing to remain abreast of LSST developments can receive information through the LSST:UK Consortium without needing to become APs.
3. The principal criterion for the award of AP status is the expected scientific contribution made during the term of the appointment. The LPSC may consider past achievements and stated future plans in assessing the expected scientific contribution, and that contribution may be manifest in a personal achievement or the advancing of a collective goal. Examples of relevant contributions include (but are not limited to) the following:
  - a. Securing a leadership role in a Science Collaboration;
  - b. Providing ancillary data that facilitates a new analysis;
  - c. Developing or maintaining software that is important for LSST science;
  - d. Undertaking a significant management role within the LSST community;
  - e. Generating simulated data used to validate data analysis software and quantify its performance.
4. The Board wishes to encourage long-term commitment to LSST, so AP status may also be awarded primarily on the basis of significant past service, provided that the candidate AP will remain active in LSST activities for the proposed AP term. The intention is that major time-integrated contributions should be rewarded, but that those with such a track record cannot do nothing and expect to remain on the AP list into the indefinite future. In assessing past contributions, the LPSC shall take account of the level of contribution that could have been made at a given stage in the project, e.g. to recognise the relatively limited opportunities available in the early pre-operations phase.
5. The Consortium want to encourage junior researchers to consider a long-term involvement in LSST, so priority shall be given to former JAs who are applying for AP status following appointment to a permanent academic position that makes them ineligible for continuing JA status.
6. APs are encouraged to nominate PhD students and postdocs working with them for JA status where that is necessary for the effective conduct of the candidate JAs' research, but the Consortium wish to retain flexibility in the composition of the pool of JAs, so JA positions are not within the direct gift of APs.

### 3.3 Junior Associates

1. Every candidate JA shall be nominated by an existing or candidate AP as part of an AP selection round. The nominator shall have a scientific connection to the candidate, who will usually be based at the same institution, although that need not be the case. A candidate JA may seek advice from the LPSC Chair to identify an appropriate nominator if one does not exist at their home institution.
2. The nomination shall include a description of the candidate's plans for taking advantage of JA status.
3. A candidate may be awarded JA status whether or not their nominator is awarded AP status. If the nominator is not awarded AP status, or if the nominator already has four JAs associated with them, then the LPSC shall attempt to find another AP willing to have the JA associated with them. Such an arrangement will only be made if acceptable to both parties.
4. If the AP with whom a JA is associated does not have their term renewed, the LPSC shall attempt to find another AP willing to have the JA associated with them; again, such an arrangement will only be made if acceptable to both parties.
5. We encourage junior researchers to consider long-term involvement in LSST. So, while the default term for JAs shall be three years, the expectation is that a renewal for a further three years will be awarded upon a positive review of their first term.
6. In assessing applications for renewing JA status, the LPSC shall allow for periods of inactivity in LSST-related science caused by appointments to post-doctoral positions in other science areas.

## Appendix: Selection of the 2015 and 2016 PI lists

In order to kick-start the PI selection process, and allow UK researchers to start engaging with the LSST Science Collaborations, the Board decided to run two selection rounds within the first year after the signing of the MoA and under modified rules.

### 2015 AP and JA lists

At its November 2015 meeting, the Board agreed that the 2015 AP list should comprise the following categories of people:

1. The members of the LSST:UK Science Working Group, to retain AP status while they remain in the SWG.
2. Investigators in receipt of funded effort in Phase A grants for supervision of grant-funded staff, to retain AP status during Phase A (i.e. up to, and including, the 2019 list);
3. Members of the Executive Group, to retain AP status while they remain in the Executive Group;
4. One nominee from each Consortium Institution not receiving an AP appointment from #1-#3, to retain AP status for the 2016 and 2017 list.

The Board encouraged institutions to make nominations through category #4, on the understanding that some such nominees were “institutional placeholders” who should not be disadvantaged personally in future selection rounds should they not have had the time to make a significant contribution while fulfilling that role.

Since the Board had not discussed the JA role in great depth at its November 2015 meeting, the AP nominees for the 2015 list were asked only to nominate for inclusion in the 2015 JA list junior researchers requiring JA status immediately. The 2015 JA list so constructed was then deemed to have been approved by the Board.

In addition, those researchers who had obtained AP or JA status through the institutional MoAs signed by Manchester, Oxford and UCL were included in the 2015 lists, with the proviso that they would have to apply for selection to the 2016 lists unless they qualified for inclusion in them through one of the four categories listed above.

### 2016 AP and JA lists

The first selection round undertaken by the LPSC took place in Q1 2016, culminating in approval of the 2016 AP and JA lists by the Board at its May 2016 meeting. That was intended to be a pilot run of the implementation of the process and principles defined in this Policy, and was approached by both LPSC and Board in that spirit. The LPSC felt that the guidance to applicants had not been sufficiently clear, with the result that some researchers had submitted applications that were too brief to enable proper consideration of their case for AP status. The Board decided that *all* those who had applied for AP status should be awarded it for 2016, but that those whose applications had been judged inadequately detailed would be required to apply for renewal of their status in the 2017 round.

The Board also decided that long-term fellows (i.e. RSURFS, ERFs), who had been invited to choose whether to apply for AP or JA status in the 2016 round should be considered for AP status if they were employed on a permanent contract at their host institution, and for JA status if not.

In response to the expansion of the SWG, the Board decided that SWG membership should not automatically confer AP status after 2016, but that the active fulfilment of SWG duties would be one of the past achievements that the LPSC should consider in assessing renewal applications.