

**INTERIM POLICY FOR MWA TIME ALLOCATION - V4**  
**Approved 2011 June 8**

This policy outlines the principles for the allocation of observing time during the build-out and commissioning of the Murchison Widefield Array (MWA). This policy will be implemented immediately. Prior to the completion of the commissioning period, a fully constituted Time Allocation Committee and Policy will be in place for the operation of the telescope. For reference, relevant definitions and policies from the *MWA Statement of Collaboration* (dated 4 Sep 2009) are reproduced as an appendix.

It should be understood that “build-out” and “commissioning” are going to be somewhat intertwined. Although there are certain fundamental engineering tests which are part of the build-out--e.g. are all the cables connected; are all the LNAs functioning and not oscillating--investigating the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> order imperfections in the array performance as a telescope, properly thought of as part of the commissioning process, will require observation and analysis of solar and astronomical sources. There is no reason why those sources, and in some case the data modes, chosen cannot also be of particular scientific utility. To that end the *Project Engineer* will work closely with the *Project Scientist* to maximize the scientific return of the MWA while completing this phase of the program.

1. These principles will apply to the allocation of science observing time during the build-out and commissioning phase of the MWA:
  - a. The primary goal of this phase is the achievement of fully functional, commissioned telescope in the shortest reasonable amount of time.
  - b. Any member of the MWA collaboration can apply for observing time.
  - c. No specific support will be provided, other than ‘best efforts to obtain the data’.
2. The following procedural steps are applicable:
  - a. There will be no calls for proposals; requests can be submitted to the *Project Scientist* at any time. Nevertheless, the *Project Engineer* will not infrequently request that the *Project Scientist* solicit observations to support particular engineering efforts.
  - b. The information required in observing proposals will be determined by the *Project Scientist* in consultation with the *Project Engineer*, the *Commissioning Engineer*, and the *Science Council*, and posted on the MWA Wiki.
  - c. All science observations should contribute in a significant way to the commissioning process. At a minimum this implies a commitment to the timely analysis of results and feedback of same to the *Project Engineer* and *Scientist*.
3. Priorities for the allocation of observing time will be determined by the *Project Scientist*. Factors which will be considered include the quality of the proposed science, the efficiency and effectiveness of the proposing team (in

analyzing and publishing data), the utility of the observations for commissioning, and whether the data are required for a PhD thesis.

4. This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Board during the buildout and commissioning phases, and will be revised as needed and appropriate.