

INSTRUMENT QUALIFICATION COMMITTEE POLICIES

The Instrument Qualification Committee (IQC) shall include all members of AAI who hold the rank of Qualified Observer. This includes Qualified, Assistant, and Senior Observers.

The IQC shall:

- 1). Staff the Observatory on Public Nights and maintain a Dome Duty schedule for this purpose.
- 2). Perform other functions involving the use of observing facilities as requested by the President of AAI.
- 3). Conduct the Qualified Observers' Course and provide for the training of Senior Observers.
- 4). Prepare and maintain up-to-date handbooks for the Qualified Observers' Course and the Senior Observers training program.
- 5). Monitor the competency of observers and enforce or recommend disciplinary procedures when necessary.
- 6). Prepare and maintain necessary IQC records such as lists of observers with their various rank and status levels.
- 7). Present lectures on subjects of interest to observers and AAI members in general.

More detailed information on IQC procedures and policies is given on the following pages. The material is grouped into six sections as noted below:

- Section 1: PUBLIC NIGHTS-DOME DUTY**
- Section 2: OBSERVER RANK LEVELS**
- Section 3: OBSERVER STATUS LEVELS**
- Section 4: QUALIFIED OBSERVERS' COURSE**
- Section 5: SENIOR OBSERVER TRAINING PROGRAM**
- Section 6: DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

Under its agreement with Union College, AAI is obligated to conduct Public Nights at Sperry Observatory. The IQC is responsible for staffing the Observatory and maintaining Dome Duty schedules for those Public Nights. The following guidelines shall be observed by the IQC in carrying out its responsibilities.

- 1: Dome Duty teams shall be organized by the IQC. They shall consist of a Team Leader plus Observers as required to operate the telescopes and to perform other necessary functions on Public Nights.
- 2: Team Leaders shall be in responsible charge of the Observatory on Public Nights, subject only to the IQC Chairmen or the President. Observers shall function under the guidance of the Team Leader.
- 3: Dome Duty schedules shall be prepared by the IQC. All Observers on the dome duty scheduled roster shall be properly notified by posting the schedule on the observing bulletin board or by other suitable means.
- 4: Team Leader vacancies shall be filled by recommendation of the IQC chairmen and approval by the President of AAI. Team Leaders must hold the rank of Senior Observer.
- 5: When a candidate completes his training and is recognized as an Observer, he shall be entered on the Dome Duty roster with his appropriate rank. He shall be expected to complete his required tour of active duty.
- 6: If an Observer cannot serve on his assigned duty night, he is responsible for finding a qualified substitute. If he cannot arrange for a substitute, he shall so inform his Team Leader. Absences under these conditions may be considered as excused absences.
- 7: Team leaders shall monitor the attendance records of their team members and report excessive absences as defined in paragraph 6 to the IQC chairmen. A Team Leader should contact any member of his team who incurs more than one unexcused absence to encourage compliance with paragraph 6. ***If an Observer incurs three consecutives unexcused absences, he may be warned that his Active Observer Status is in jeopardy.*** If he fails to respond satisfactorily to the warning, and if he does not improve his attendance record, ***he may be transfered to inactive status and required to take a Dome Test to re-qualify for his previous rank.***
8. Qualified Observers on dome duty are expected to serve as representatives of the organization.

They should encourage **questions from the public about AAI and astronomy.**
In general, Observers should act as ambassadors to the heavens.
QOs should always act in a polite and courteous manner.

SECTION 2: OBSERVER LEVELS

There shall be four levels of Observer status: **Qualified, Assistant, Senior and Restricted.** The duties and privileges of the four levels of Observers are listed below. An Observer may request transfer from active to reserve at any time. However, if he wishes to re-qualify at a later date, he must pass a dome examination. If he has not completed his required tour of active duty at the time he transfers to inactive status, he must do so when he re-qualifies.

* - An Observer's level may be changed at the discretion of the IQC chair.

Qualified Observer (QO)

A QO is a member of AAI who is over the age of 18 and who has successfully completed the QO Course (see section four). The duties and privileges of a QO are listed below.

1. After graduation from the QO Course, the QO shall serve his 18 month required tour of active Dome Duty.
2. The QO shall be assigned an official QO number and an identification card.
3. The QO shall be entitled to rent a drive key for the 24" reflector.
4. The QO may operate the 24" telescope independently. The QO may also assist in the operation of the 10" refractor under the supervision of an SQO.
5. The QO may bring a non-member guest into the observatory on non-public nights. The QO is to take full responsibility for the actions of the guests and to insure the safety of the observatory and the equipment.

Assistant Observer (AO)

An AO is an AAI member between 12 and 18 years of age who has passed the QO Course. An AO in good standing shall automatically become a QO on his 18th birthday.

The duties and privileges of an AO are listed below.

1. After graduation from the QO Course the AO shall serve 18 months active duty.
2. The AO shall be assigned an AO number and an AO

- identification card. He shall retain the same number when he becomes a QO.
3. The AO shall not be entitled to rent a drive key to the 24" telescope.
 4. The AO may operate the 24" telescope under the supervision of a QO or a SQO. The AO may assist in the operation of the 10" telescope under the supervision of an SQO.

Senior Qualified Observer (SQO)

An SQO is a member of AAI over 18 years of age who has successfully completed the QO Course and who has passed the SQO test. The duties and privileges of an SQO are listed below.

1. After passing the SQO test, the SQO is encouraged to serve 18 months active Dome Duty.
2. The SQO shall be assigned an official SQO number and an SQO identification card.
3. The SQO shall be entitled to a drive key for the 10" telescope.
4. The SQO may operate either the 24" or the 10" telescope independently.
5. The SQO may bring in non-member guests into the observatory on non-public nights. The SQO is to take full responsibility for the actions of the guests and to insure the safety of the observatory and equipment.

Restricted Observer (RO)

An RO is not required to be a member of AAI. The duties and privileges of an RO are listed below.

1. The RO must demonstrate to the Exec. Comm. that he is interested in pursuing serious research at Sperry Observatory.
2. The RO must have approval of the Exec. Comm. to carry out his research. This approval shall be in writing, the exact conditions and wording to be determined by the Exec. Comm.
3. The RO status shall have a maximum of one year after which he may apply for renewal.
4. The privileges of an RO with regard to the use of the Observatory equipment shall be generally similar to those of an AO. The RO may not operate any instrument unless he is monitored by an appropriate observer for the instrument being used.

SECTION 3: OBSERVER STATUS CATEGORIES

There shall be three Observer status categories: **Active, Reserve, and Inactive**. Observers may request transfer from one status level to the other if they are qualified for the new level. Transfer shall be made at the discretion of the IQO Chairmen.

Active Status

Active observers are those who are listed on the dome duty schedule roster and who regularly and faithfully serve on their assigned nights. Throughout this service, they are expected to maintain their proficiency on the telescope(s) they are entitled to operate.

Reserve Status

Reserve Observers shall have the same privileges and responsibilities as Active Observers except that they shall be exempt from regular scheduled dome duty. They may, however, be asked to operate the telescopes on special occasions, such as adult courses and seminars. An Observer shall not be considered for reserve status until he has completed his required tour of active duty.

Reserve Observers shall be checked and retested as necessary (at the discretion of the IQC) to insure that they are maintaining their proficiency on the telescopes they are entitled to operate. Checking and retesting procedures shall be established by the IQC chairmen. ***If the Observer does not agree to take a re-test he must return his key/keys.***

Inactive Status

Inactive Observers are those who do not meet the requirements for Active or Reserve status as described in this section and in Section One. Observers may also be placed on inactive status for disciplinary reasons as listed in Section Six.

Inactive Observers shall not have the privileges of active or reserve observers. They are not entitled to use the observatory and must return their telescope keys.

Inactive Observers who wish to be restored to active or reserve status shall be re-tested to establish their proficiency in handling the telescopes. Re-testing shall be the responsibility of the IQC.

SECTION 4: QUALIFIED OBSERVERS' COURSE

The QQ Course shall be conducted by the IQC. The main purpose of the course shall be to train AAI members for Dome Duty service on public nights. A second purpose shall be to provide AAI members with the skills needed to develop other telescope-related interests such as astrophotography and photometry. A third purpose shall be to develop AAI courses and any future QO courses. Dome training for the QO course will concentrate on the 24-inch reflector. Guidelines for conducting the QO course are noted below. Changes in these guidelines may be made at the discretion of the IQC chairman.

1. Candidates for the QO course must be **members of AAI**.
2. *Candidates for the QO course shall sign an agreement to complete 18 months of active Dome Duty if they pass the QO course.*
3. The course shall be held once a year, preferably in the Fall. It shall be a ten week course with class work one night each week and dome training as required throughout the ten week period.
4. The class work shall consist of lectures on various phases of astronomy. Candidates are expected to attend all the classes. A limited number of excused absences may be allowed at the discretion of the IQC chairman. At the end of the course, candidates shall take a written test on the subject matter of the lectures. A passing grade for the written test shall be 80%. A re-test may be given at the discretion of the IQC chairman.
5. Dome training shall be offered after the lectures on class nights as well as on other evenings during the ten weeks of the course.
Candidates shall be required to take a dome test to establish their proficiency in handling the 24-inch reflector. Passing grade for the dome test shall be 80%. A re-test may be given at the discretion of the IQC chairman. The dome test shall be given by at least one QO, appointed by the IQC.
6. As part of their training, candidates shall be required to attend and assist at three public nights to gain dome duty experience with the public in attendance.
7. A QO handbook shall be provided to all candidates. The handbook shall cover both classroom and dome training material.
8. Upon successful completion of the course, candidates shall be recognized as Qualified Observers or Assistant Observers, depending on age as defined in Section 2. They shall then be assigned to the active dome duty roster.

SECTION 5: SENIOR OBSERVER TRAINING PROGRAM

The IQC shall provide for the training of candidates for the rank of SO. The training may be done in a formal course or on an individual basis between the candidate and a SO who acts as a teacher. The purposes of the SO training program shall be the same as those for the QO Course but at a more advanced level. Dome training for the senior program shall be concentrated on the 10" refractor. SO's shall be encouraged to serve on active dome duty for at least 18 months. However, this provision may be varied by the IQC Chairmen, especially when the SO is actively serving AAI in other ways. The SO training program shall instruct the candidate in the handling and operation of the 10" telescope. Any dome test shall be administered by one or more SO's selected by the Chair and approved by the President. An SO handbook covering the 10" refractor shall be made available to SO candidates.

SECTION 6: DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

In an organization such as AAI, whose members are dedicated to practicing and publicizing amateur astronomy, there should be little need for disciplinary procedures. However, such procedures are included herein to protect the good name of AAI and to insure that the equipment and facilities of the Observatory are not subject to careless handling or deliberate abuse. To this end, certain offenses and disciplinary actions and penalties are described below.

1. An Observer who demonstrates incompetent or careless handling of the equipment, or who fails to follow established procedures with regard to the Observatory or the instruments, shall be suspended and placed on inactive status.
2. An observer who commits deliberate sabotage or vandalism of telescopes and related equipment shall be suspended, placed on inactive status and the matter brought to the Executive Committee for further action.
3. An observer who interferes with other observers who are performing public night functions may be suspended and placed on inactive status. Examples of such interference include engaging in personal arguments, using offensive language, indulging in physical disputes or otherwise doing harm to the good name of AAI.

4. In the event of extreme disciplinary infraction on a public night, the Team Leader, the IQC Chairmen, or the President, shall have the authority to suspend an offending Observer's privileges on the spot until further investigation can be carried out. In a situation of this type, the final decision on re-instatement of the Observer's privileges shall be made by the Exec. Comm.
5. The IQC Chairman shall have the authority to suspend Observers and to place them on inactive status for periods up to 30 days as a result of disciplinary infractions. All transfers to inactive status for periods over 30 days must be approved by the President.
6. Any Observer who has been placed on inactive status may request re-instatement at his previous rank when his disciplinary period is over. He may be required to take a dome test at the discretion of the IQC Chairman.
7. An Observer may be placed on inactive status if disciplined.

Please note:

**This document has been approved by the Executive Committee
Amateur Astronomers, Inc.
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