What is the Designated Visitor Mode (dVM)

Matheus Guilherme Brito - 2025-10-30 - Comment (1) - ESO Proposal (Phase 1)

What is the designated Visitor Mode (dVM)?

Designated Visitor Mode (dVM) observations allow users to carry out observations in the same way as Visitor Mode (VM) but without travelling to Paranal. ESO reserves the right to allocate telescope time in designated Visitor Mode (dVM) instead of regular VM for any runs with a duration smaller than one night. ESO also offers dVM observations for runs longer than one night as an option for users who wish to minimise travel times and carbon footprint.

dVM observations are scheduled on specific dates and time slots, just like regular VM runs. The observations are executed by an ESO staff member, in close contact (e.g., via Skype) with the Principal Investigator, or a person designated by the PI to serve as the liaison with the Observatory. The web-based tool POEM (Paranal Observatory Eavesdropping Mode) allow the observer to follow target acquisitions on the instrument workstations, but it does not allow direct interaction with the observations and data. More information can be found here.

Below you can find few FAQ about dVM:

- **Why should I prepare the observing material at least 10 days before the run?**

  Preparing the observing material at least 10 days before the dVM run ensures that all necessary information is available and verified before the observing night. This helps in smooth operations and minimises the risk of missing critical details during the actual observation. Please note that if the observing material is not submitted in advance, the observing time may be converted to Service Mode, leading to the loss of the dVM run. This is to ensure that the observatory can efficiently manage its resources and schedules.

- **Will I be reminded about the upcoming dVM run?**

  Automatic reminders are going to be sent starting about 20 days before the run and until your pre-run material is approved by USD.

- **What are the key information to be put in the README?**

  The README file MUST contain the contact information for observers [First+Last name and email (mandatory), phone number and skype contact (optional)] in the General Description section. Please, note if the observations require a non-standard setup or special calibrations.

- **Who should I contact for questions?**

  Please contact us via our HelpDesk for any question related to your run until 3-5 days before its start.

- **Who will be the night astronomer for my run?**

  The night astronomer will contact you at sunset and discuss the observation plan (sunset times are available here).

- **What if my observations are less than a full night?**

  You can discuss the exact schedule when contacted by your night astronomer at sunset.

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Matheus Guilherme Brito
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Written by Carlo Felice Manara