STScI | SPACE TELESCOPE SCIENCE INSTITUTE

EXPANDING THE FRONTIERS OF SPACE ASTRONOMY

JWST Cycle 5: Discussion Panelist Q&A

JWST Science Policies Group

Space Telescope Science Institute

January 22, 2026

Pre-TAC Checklist

- **You have new proposals to read!** (about 10 of them usually)
- Have you read the EC proposals that are assigned to your panels?
- Have you sent your time conflicts to your chair?
- For the proposals you have graded, it is a good idea to add comments to SPIRIT. They're going to come in handy!
- Dates for Discussion Panelists:
  - **Galactic Panels: Monday - Thursday February 2-5, 2025, 10am-4pm EST**
  - **Extragalactic Panels: Tuesday - Friday February 3-6, 2025, 10am-4pm EST**
  - Deadline for Review Comments: Tuesday February 11, 2025

Summary

- What to do before the meeting: **Read extra proposals!**
- Panel Meetings & Dual Anonymous Peer Review (DAPR)
- Ranking
- Team Expertise
- EC Proposals
- Review Comments
- Logistics

What to do before the meeting:

Read extra proposals!

What to do before the meeting

Make sure you have read all the proposals that will be discussed!

- You already read and graded ~ ⅔ the proposals in your panel.
- We used those grades to triage your panel and set the discussion list.
- You probably only read ~⅔ of the proposals on the discussion list. You will be expected to discuss **ALL** proposals on the discussion list, so you should read any proposals on the list that you did not already read.
- It helps to take notes so that you can remember your thoughts when participating in the discussions.

You can start to enter remarks and comments.

- Primaries and secondaries: Review comments for triaged proposals that won't be discussed — get a head start!
- Primaries and secondaries: Notes for proposals that will be discussed.
- Not primary or secondary: Enter shared remarks for other proposals, if you have them.

Panel Meetings
&
Dual Anonymous Peer Review (DAPR)

Overview

- **2 executive committees** — panel chairs + vice chairs, meet in person
  - Large GO (hours > 130)
  - Treasury GO (all sizes)
  - Legacy AR
  - Pure Parallels
- **18 discussion panels** — initial work is asynchronous, then virtual meeting
  - Small GO (20 < hours ≤ 50)
  - Medium GO (50 < hours ≤ 130)
  - Survey
  - Target of Opportunity (ToO, all sizes)
- **8 external panels** — fully asynchronous
  - Very Small GO (hours ≤ 20)
  - Archival (AR)

Panel Meetings

Virtual via WEBEX:

- **Galactic Panels: Monday - Thursday February 2-5, 2026**
- **Extragalactic Panels: Tuesday - Friday February 3-6, 2026**
- **Panels meet from 10am to 4pm EST**
  - Panel chairs may shift by ~15-30 minutes but it shouldn't be more than that!
  - Panel chairs set the detailed agenda.
- **Please make every effort to be available for the whole meeting.**
  - Report any time conflicts to your panel chair ASAP.

High-level Overview:

- Introductions and Set-up
- Discussions — discussion of proposal, grading of proposal (xN proposals)
- Ranking — discussion and possible adjustment of ranking based on average grades
- EC proposals — discussion (but no grading) of EC (Large, Treasury, Legacy) proposals
- Comments — Primaries and Secondaries write comments for each proposal

Discussions

- Chair announces the proposal number.
- **Check for conflicts — conflicted people move to a breakout room. Do not state reasons for conflict.**
- Discussion:
  - Primary, gives a brief summary and strengths and weaknesses.
  - Secondary provides additional comments, then all other panelists.
  - **Please discuss special requirements and any parallels.**
  - **Discussions should focus on the science not the team.**
  - **Do not compare proposals.**
- Chair asks if everyone is ready to grade, then everyone grades.
  - You must be present for the whole discussion to grade.
  - If you cannot enter a grade, message the PSS **privately** with your grade.
- PSS locks the grades.
  - **You cannot go back and change grades.**

Why Dual Anonymous Proposal Review?

Goal

Primary objective of peer review process:

Best-Justified Science

Tool

Anonymising proposals:

Places focus directly on **Science**

Removes focus from **Team**

DAPR for Proposers: Do's and Don't's

❌ Names/affiliations of proposing team, links to personal websites.

❌ Claims of ownership of past work.

✅ Focus on work proposed, include relevant info needed to assess scientific merit.

✅ Fully and properly cite relevant work, including proprietary data/software.

✅ Make reasonable effort to anonymize their submissions.

DAPR for Reviewers: Do's and Don't's

Guesses are often wrong!

❌ **Do not try to guess the proposing PI or team!** (It's not a test.)

❌ Do not discuss, imply or insinuate the proposing team.

❌ Discuss the experience and expertise of the team.

✅ Focus on the **scientific merit** of the work proposed.

✅ Refer to the **proposal** not the proposers.

✅ *Private communication* is **not** code for "hey, we're the team".

If an STScI staff member asks you to refocus, please refocus.

Non-Compliant Proposals

⚠️ Egregious breaches have (probably!) been reported. Some minor cases may remain.

✅ **Report** any cases to your **PSS** and your **SPG manager**.

✅ Not sure? **Report** it anyway.

Minor violations:

✅ Try to ignore and proceed with your review of the **scientific merit**.

✅ Highlight anonymity concern in feedback comments.

Major violations, or impossible to ignore:

❌ **Halt discussion.** We will ask you to move on to the next proposal while the STScI reviews the case.

Ranking

Ranking

- **Purpose of ranking is to consider scientific balance of the panel.**
  - Compare duplicated targets or proposals.
  - Reflect on overall science program (but remember external panels and EC).
  - **Goal is <u>not</u> to play Tetris with panel allocation.**
  - Ranking reflects panel consensus, not any individual panelist.
- **Discussion must focus on Scientific Merit.**
- Panel must discuss adjacent proposals pairwise.
  - Anyone conflicted on either of the pair must leave the call.
  - Exception: Duplicate proposals — these may be discussed even if they are not adjacent.

Ranking: Small and Medium Allocations

- Each panel has:
  - **Small Allocation = N:**
    - Used to set “1N line” (approval line) and “2N line”.
    - Primarily used to “fund” Small programs.
    - Can be used to fund Medium programs.
  - **Medium Allocation = M:**
    - Only used to “fund” Medium programs.
    - CANNOT be used for Small programs.
    - Only Mediums above the 1N line (set by Small programs) are approved.
    - Unused Medium allocation returns to the general pool.
- **Panel must rank to 2N and set Do Not Support line.**
- **Allocations are more like guidelines to help frame the discussion.**
- Calibration programs are zeroed out. Surveys are also zero “cost” — we count the targets not the time.

Ranking — Example with Smalls only

General Pool

210

Rank	Size	Requested	General Pool Used	Notes
1	Small	30	30	Approved
2	Small	35	65	Approved
3	Small	40	105	Approved
4	Small	35	140	Approved
5	Small	40	180	Approved
6	Small	35	215	1N line, status TBD
7	Small	40	255	Not Approved
Result: 5 Small proposals approved, +1 Small on the line pending.				

Ranking — Example with Smalls and Mediums, unused Mediums

General Pool	Medium Pool
210	160

Rank	Size	Hours Requested	General Pool Allocation	Medium Pool Allocation	Notes
1	Small	30	30	0	Approved
2	Medium	100	30	100	Approved
3	Small	40	70	100	Approved
4	Small	35	105	100	Approved
5	Small	40	145	100	Approved
6	Small	35	180	100	Approved
7	Small	40	220	100	1N line, status TBD
8	Small	30	250	100	Not Approved
Result: 5 Small proposals approved, +1 Small on the line pending. 1 Medium approved, 60 Medium hours return to the float.					

Ranking — Example with Smalls and Mediums, Mediums exceeded

General Pool	Medium Pool
210	160

Rank	Size	Hours Requested	General Pool Allocation	Medium Pool Allocation	Notes
1	Small	30	30	0	Approved
2	Medium	100	30	100	Approved
3	Small	40	70	100	Approved
4	Small	35	105	100	Approved
5	Medium	100	145	160	Approved, using 60 medium hours and 40 general hours
6	Small	35	180	160	Approved
7	Small	40	220	160	1N line, status TBD
8	Small	30	250	160	Not Approved
Result: 4 Small proposals approved, +1 Small on the line pending. 2 Mediums approved, Medium pool exhausted.					

Ranking — Example with Smalls and Mediums, no Mediums approved

General Pool	Medium Pool
210	160

Rank	Size	Hours Requested	General Pool Used	Medium Pool Used	Notes
1	Small	30	30	0	Approved
2	Small	35	65	0	Approved
3	Small	40	105	0	Approved
4	Small	35	140	0	Approved
5	Small	40	180	0	Approved
6	Small	35	215	0	1N line, status TBD
7	Small	40	255	0	Not Approved
8	Medium	100	/	/	Not Approved
Result: 5 Small proposals approved, +1 Small on the line pending. No Mediums approved. 160 Medium hours return to float.					

Ranking View

Views | Discussion / Galaxies / Final Ranking

Small Pool | Medium Pool

Galaxies Final Ranking

Actions | 59 Proposals | 59 GOs | 0 SNAPs | 0 ARs | 145 General Allocation | 106 Medium-Proposal Allocation | 1305 Requested Orbits | 1305 Awarded Orbits

Final ranking is locked. You can unlock it via the Actions menu above if necessary.

Key: 48 Triaged Proposal **+N** Over Allocation (*N* × allocation) Enter text and press Return to filter table

Show/hide columns | De-anonymize selected proposals … | Re-anonymize all proposals

Rank	ID	Normalized Grade	Normalized Panelist Deviation	Category	Type	Size	Title	Request	Req Ttl	Award	General Awd Ttl	Medium Awd Ttl
1		1.81	0.44	Galaxies	GO	SMALL		19	19	19	19	0
2		2.00	0.47	Galaxies	GO	MEDIUM		74	93	74	19	74
3		2.18	0.57	Galaxies	GO	SMALL		23	116	23	42	74
4		2.38	0.72	Galaxies	GO	SMALL		33	149	33	75	74
5		2.44	0.58	Galaxies	GO	SMALL		21	170	21	96	74
6		2.54	0.49	Galaxies	GO	MEDIUM		40	210	40	104	106
7		2.54	0.58	Galaxies	GO	SMALL		25	235	25	129	106
8		2.56	0.55	Galaxies	GO	SMALL		20	255	20	149 +1	106
9		2.60	0.48	Galaxies	GO	SMALL		23	278	23	172 +1	106
10		2.61	0.79	Galaxies	GO	MEDIUM		55	333	55	227 +1	106
11		2.65	0.60	Galaxies	GO	SMALL		20	353	20	247 +1	106
12		2.66	0.84	Galaxies	GO	SMALL		18	371	18	265 +1	106
13		2.68	0.40	Galaxies	GO	SMALL		26	397	26	291 +2	106
14		2.68	0.73	Galaxies	GO	MEDIUM		40	437	40	331 +2	106
15		2.74	0.70	Galaxies	GO	MEDIUM		40	477	40	371 +2	106
16		2.79	0.61	Galaxies	GO	SMALL		34	511	34	405 +2	106

1N line +1

2N line +2

What happens to unallocated time?

- **You will very likely have some unallocated time!** (Could be a few, could be a lot.)
- Unallocated time from all panels are pooled together, then they are redistributed back to the panels:
  - We aim to ensure that the success rate is as even as possible across all science areas and proposal types.
  - We follow guidance from the Executive Committees.
- **What can you do?**
  - Rank carefully down to 2N in case we need to go deeper!
  - Make scientifically-motivated recommendations to your Panel Chair (and Vice Chair) about what to do with extra allocation.
  - Your Panel Chair will communicate these recommendations at the EC meeting and in their panel report.

Team Expertise

Team Members & Team Expertise Statements

⚠️ **Not** anonymous.

❌ **Not** considered during scientific discussions and ranking.

✅ Only **recommended** proposals **after** ranking phase.

- ~20 minutes to read expertise statements. Panelists cannot opt out.
- Raise clear, **compelling** deficiencies in expertise required to **meet science goals**.
- By **consensus**, panel can recommended disqualification, and must provide a **detailed justification**.

❌ If a proposal is disqualified, **time cannot be re-allocated**.

“Compelling Deficiencies”

✅ Discretion of panelists:

- Particularly difficult datasets.
- Particularly difficult analyses.
- Exceptionally challenging programs.
- 10-sigma outliers.

❌ Inexperience with JWST data.

❌ Failure to publish past datasets.

⚠️ Comments to proposers should be based on the **scientific discussion**, not on the team or their expertise.

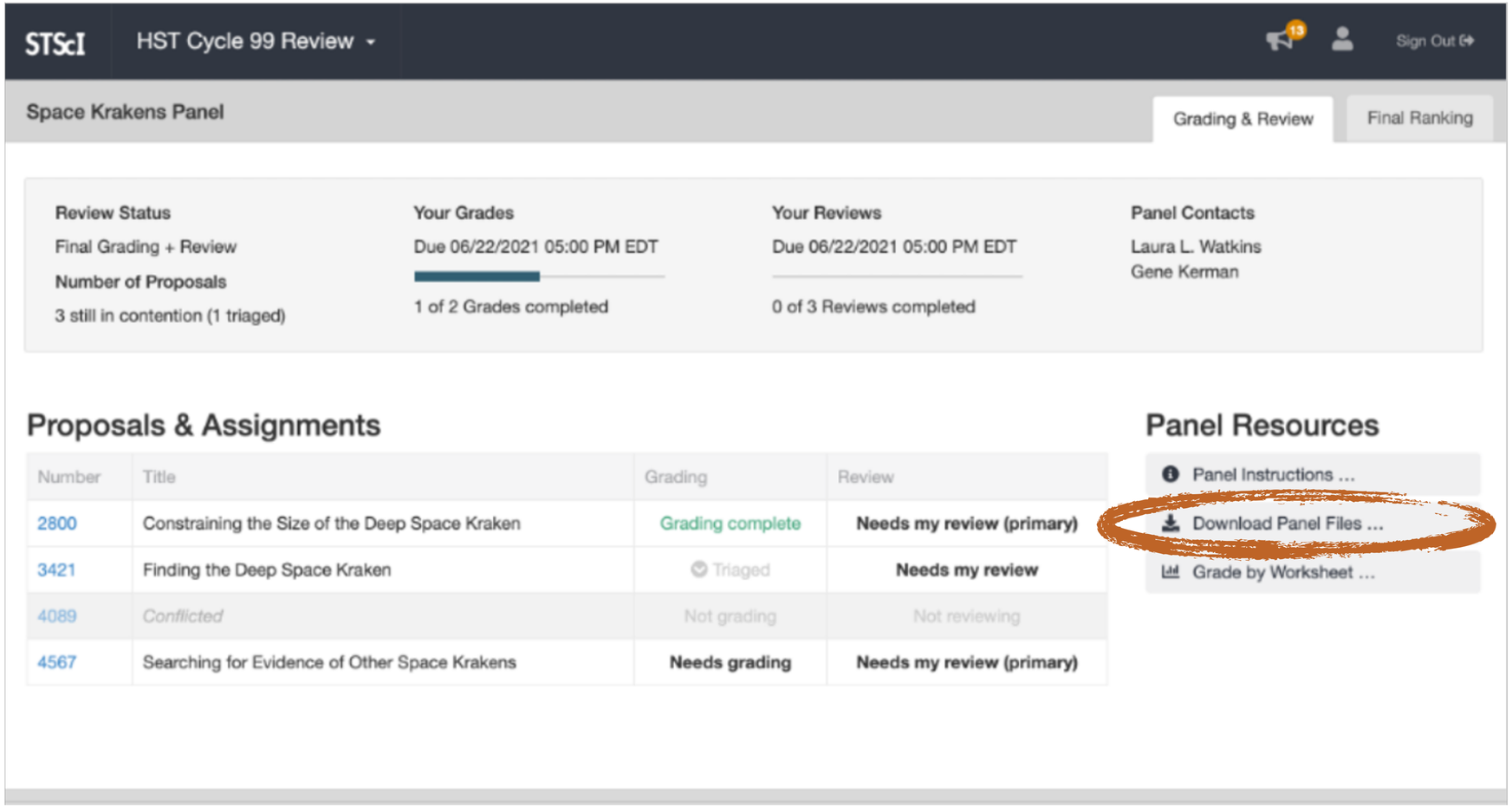
EC Proposals

EC Proposals

- The Executive Committee (EC) reviews Large GO, Treasury GO, AR Legacy, and Pure Parallel proposals.
- We ask panels to read a subset of the EC proposals. Your Chair and Vice Chair will let you know which ones to focus on and how this discussion will proceed.
- **Why?**
  - These are (very) large investments of time and resources! These should have broad scientific impact and interest.
  - EC covers all science areas, EC members may have general but not specific expertise.
  - Provide feedback to the Panel Chair and Vice Chair.
- Panels **discuss** but **do not grade these**.
- **Still check for conflicts.**

Where do I find the EC Proposals??

Executive Committee proposals can be found in the Download Panel Files:



https://jwst-docs.stsci.edu/jwst-opportunities-and-policies/jwst-peer-review-information/reviews-grades-and-comments/spirit-webreviewer-tool-guide/viewing-panel-assignments-and-resources

Review Comments

Review Comments

- Primary and secondary must write comments for their assigned proposals.
- **This includes triaged proposals.**
  - Reviewers can ask for feedback from other panelists.
- General workflow:
  - Secondary writes comments, clicks *Mark Completed*.
  - Primary writes final review combining their own comments, the secondary's comments, and any other remarks. Clicks *Mark Completed*.
  - Primary submits review by clicking *Submit As Final*.
  - Panel chair reviews submission and signs off by clicking *Review Sign Off*.

Review Comments — Guidelines

- **Strengths** and **Weaknesses** are compulsory. Other fields are optional.
- A **short** summary is ok, but it is not a strength by itself.
- Refer to the **proposal/program/work/analysis** not the proposers/team/authors.
- Do not refer to the panel or the reviewer.
- Do not ask questions.
- Do not state that a proposal will be accepted or rejected.
- Comments should be sensible and meaningful regardless of outcome.
- Do not imply that a minor issue (e.g. a typo) caused the proposal to be rejected.
- **Be polite and be kind.**
- **Do not use generative AI (eg ChatGPT) to write comments!**

Personnel and Logistics

Logistics

- Slack channels for each panel.
  - Feel free to chat but don't give specifics about proposals (because conflicts).
  - ✅ **OK:** "*Hey, could anyone DM some comments about proposal 1234, it was triaged but I actually really liked it.*"
  - ❌ **Not OK:** "*I felt 1234 didn't justify their sample size well enough.* " ← send this via DM not to the channel.

- Please remember the review is **Confidential**
  - All discussions
  - All materials
  - Panel membership (until published in the newsletter)
- Remove all documents from your computer after the review.

Relevant STScI Personnel

- Jennifer Lotz – STScI Director
- Rachel Osten– STScI Deputy Director
- Mercedes Lopez-Morales - Associate Director for Science
- Neill Reid – Multi-mission Project Scientist
- Laura Watkins – Science Policy Division Head
- Amaya Moro-Martin – JWST Science Policies Lead
- Molly Peeples – Cross-mission Policy Scientist
- Dan D'Orazio, Amy Jones, Nimisha Kumari, Claus Leitherer, Becca Levy , Nikolay Nikolov, Linda Smith, Dave Stark, Lou Strolger– Science Policy Division members
- Aleksandra Hamanowicz – TAC Technical Manager
- Brett Blacker – TAC Technical Manager
- Amber Armstrong – Deputy TAC Technical Manager
- Tom Brown – JWST Mission Office Head
- Jeff Valenti – JWST Mission Office Mission Scientist
- Macarena Garcia Marin – JWST Mission Office Project Scientist
- Stacey Bright - – JWST Mission Office Deputy Project Scientist
- Beth Perriello – Observations Planning Branch
- Sherita Hanna – Events Planning Group Lead
- Kevin Flinn – IT Technologist (in charge of all things A/V, Webex, etc.)

NASA/ESA/CSA Personnel (some of whom may drop in on your panels)

- NASA:
  - **Hannah Jang-Condell:** Program Scientist for JWST, NASA HQ
  - **Jane Rigby:** JWST Senior Project Scientist, GSFC
  - **Stefanie Miliam:** JWST Project Scientist, for Policy, GSFC
  - **Knicole Colon:** JWST Operations Project Scientist, GSFC
  - **Susan Neff:** JWST Deputy Operations Project Scientist, GSFC
  - **Michael McElwain**: JWST Observatory Project Scientist, GSFC
  - **Amber Straughn:** JWST Deputy Project Scientist for Science Communications, GSFC

- ESA:
  - **Chris Evans:** Head of the ESA Office & ESA JWST Project Scientist, STScI
  - **Paule Sonnentrucker:** ESA JWST Mission Manager, STScI

- CSA:
  - **Jean Dupuis** – JWST Senior Mission Scientist, CSA

Panel Personnel

Panel	SPD Manager	Panel Support Scientist
Solar System	Molly Peeples	Ilias Goovaerts
Exoplanet Atmospheres	Amy Jones	Alejandro Crespo Gomez (1) Pierluigi Rinaldi (2) Melissa Sahbandeh (3)
Planetary Systems	Linda Smith	Jegug Ih (1) Calum Hawcroft (2)
Stars and Stellar Populations	Becca Levy	Mans Holmbert (1) Mariarosa Marinelli (2) Archene Dyrek (3)
Dust and Gas	Nimisha Kumari	Santosh Harish (1) Logan Jones (2)
Galaxy Ecosystems	David Stark	Jimena Rodriguez (1) Avery Kim (2)
Galaxy Frontiers	Nikolay Nikolov	Matthew Dalas (1) Sachindev Shenoy (2) Ian Wong (3)
SMBH	Lou Strolger	Farhanul Hasan (1) Federico Fogantini (2)
Galactic and Extragalactic ECs	Amaya Moro-Martin	

Thank you for serving on the JWST Cycle 4 TAC!

See you on February 3 (Gal) / February 4 (EGal) at 10am EST!