Processing Requests to Design and Fabricate non-SDSS Plates

Objective

To define a process that provides for a formal review and approval to integrate non-SDSS spectroscopic plates into the standard SDSS plate production process.

Definition

Non-SDSS plates are defined as spectroscopic plates that are not designed or intended to meet the Science Requirements or scientific goals of the Primary Survey, as defined in the ARC Principles of Operation for the Sloan Digital Sky Survey (PoO). They are not part of the core science program of the Survey and their fabrication, handling, and observing costs will not be borne by the SDSS, in accordance with Article 5.3 of the PoO.

Process

This process applies only to requests for a small number of plates (<20). Requests for large numbers of plates, or plates to be drilled at a shop other than at the University of Washington must be arranged with the Head of Survey Coordination on a case-by-case basis.

1. Requests for processing non-SDSS plates must be submitted to the SDSS Director and Project Scientist for review and approval. In accordance with the PoO, the SDSS Director must approve all requests for non-SDSS plates after review by the Project Scientist to assess scientific merit and then by the Director to ensure technical appropriateness and financial impact.

2. If the plate is to be drilled as part of a normal SDSS drill run, then the request must be submitted at least four weeks prior to the date when drill files are due at the UW shop. The drill file schedule is posted on the SDSS website (www.sdss.org), under Survey Ops, Survey Management. The request must include the following:

    - A description of the science program or project that the plate will support;
    - How plate production, plugging, and observing support costs will be paid for;
    - A description of how the plate will be observed, including any special observing instructions or needs;
    - The desired schedule for plugging, mapping, and observing the plate;
    - A description of how and where the data will be stored and made available to the requester.
    - A statement regarding whether the data will be made available to the SDSS collaboration.
    - A description of the level of support required from SDSS personnel.

3. Unapproved requests may be appealed to the Chair of the SDSS Advisory Council.

4. Once approved, the plate design shall conform to the standard SDSS plate geometry and must use the standard SDSS plate and tile sequence numbering scheme. A special numbering sequence will likely be assigned to the plate to distinguish it from standard spectroscopic plates.

5. Each plate will be logged and tracked in the SDSS plate database (INVENTORY). A one-word description of the plate program (or purpose) shall be provided for tracking the plate in the database. For example, the photo-Z plates are called "photoz".

6. If the plate is to be drilled as part of a normal SDSS drill run, then the full set of files associated with non-SDSS plug plates shall be provided to the Head of Survey Coordination at least ten working days prior to the drill file deadline. If the drill files are not delivered by the deadline, they will be included in the next drilling run.

7. If the drill files are not delivered in the appropriate format, they will not be accepted. It is the responsibility of the requester to understand format requirements.

8. The Head of Survey Coordination will be responsible for ensuring that the drill files are forwarded to the UW shop along with the standard set of drill files for that drill run.

9. If non-SDSS plates are not fabricated as part of a normal SDSS drill run, then the requester must provide documentation to the Telescope Engineer that the plate(s) have passed the same measure of mechanical quality control as standard SDSS plates. This is to ensure that hole dimensions and locations will not damage SDSS science or guide fibers. The Telescope Engineer will be responsible for maintaining this documentation at APO.

10. If non-SDSS plates are shipped to APO, then the requester shall work with the Head of Survey Coordination and the SDSS Telescope Engineer to determine an appropriate method for processing and storing non-SDSS plates at APO. The Head of Survey Coordination will make the final decision as to how the plates are processed and stored. This is to ensure that the processing and storage of non-SDSS plates does not in any way interfere with standard SDSS operations.