



ESA SPACE SCIENCE FACULTY CHARTER

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Document Type	
Reference	ESA-SCI-S-MO-076
Issue/Revision	1 . 0
Date of Issue	18/07/2023
Status	Issued



APPROVAL

Title	ESA Space Science Faculty Charter		
Issue Number	1	Revision Number	0
Author	Theresa Lüftinger, Jan-Uwe Ness	Date	18/07/2023
Approved By	Date of Approval		
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CHANGE LOG

Reason for change	Issue Nr	Revision Number	Date

CHANGE RECORD

Issue Number	1	Revision Number	0
Reason for change	Date	Pages	Paragraph(s)

DISTRIBUTION

Name/Organisational Unit



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1. INTRODUCTION

The primary mission of ESA's Directorate of Science is to “Empower Europe to Lead Space Science” via support to astronomical and solar-system research in the member states by developing and operating world-class space missions beyond the reach of individual countries. Of the many functions needed to carry out this task effectively, some require the skills, judgement, and up-to-date space science knowledge that only scientists engaged in front-line research can provide. Their competency provides scientific judgement on matters pertaining to the scientific performance and use of the ESA missions and they should be encouraged to initiate, commission, and supervise continuous improvements for the benefit of all users. The ESA scientists also interact with the scientific community to stimulate new and innovative scientific applications of instruments and missions.

The ESA Space Science Faculty (hereafter Science Faculty) is a scientific forum within which ideas and views of interest to ESA and its scientists can be raised, discussed and, possibly, documented. The results of these deliberations may be of value to the ESA management, but they will not, in general, directly represent a management view.

The ESA Space Science Faculty is an internal body and has no official links or responsibilities to any bodies outside ESA.

This document defines the role of the ESA Space Science Faculty. An accompanying Faculty Operations Handbook contains lower-level implementation guidelines and operational procedures.

2. THE SCIENCE FACULTY

2.1. Role of the Science Faculty

The role of the Science Faculty is:

1. To survey and stimulate the research environment at ESA, supporting the research activities of the Directorate;
2. To provide a forum for scientific exchange between all scientists in the Directorate and stimulate exchange between ESA scientists and the scientific community;
3. To develop novel ideas in space science, supporting the activities and missions of the Directorate of Science;
4. To provide an advisory expert body to the Directorate leadership on space science and all Directorate activities;
5. To promote ESA as a research centre in Europe among the scientific community.

2.2. Membership of the Science Faculty

All active PhD-scientists carrying out personal research in the ESA Directorate of Science (ESA staff and research fellows, as well as contracted staff, including ESA/AURA staff at STScI) are eligible to be **full members** of the Science Faculty.

Associate members can (on request) be scientists from other ESA directorates, members of the [Centro de Astrobiología](#) (CAB) working at ESAC, scientists working regularly on site (e.g. from nearby, collaborating institutions, long-term visitors), scientist not (yet) holding a PhD (incl. Young Graduate Trainees and Master students), as well as former faculty members.

Full members are eligible to vote in Faculty meetings and to candidate for the chairperson roles as well as for membership in the Faculty Council.

Full members are eligible to directly request financial resources administrated by the Science Division (SCI-SC)¹, while all members have access to all other resources and services.

All members are welcome to collaborate on ESA-funded projects, and to participate in the advisory bodies (as long as access to ESA-confidential or classified information is not required).

Full membership and associate membership of the Science Faculty is granted by the Faculty Chairperson upon subscription (requiring that the (associated) member agrees to the Privacy Notice and the Charter). Any person who feels unjustly denied Science Faculty membership can appeal to the Faculty Council.

The list of Science Faculty members is made publicly visible through the Science Faculty web pages.

2.3. Functioning of the Science Faculty

Chairperson and co-chairpersons (together “the chairpersons”)

The Science Faculty elects three co-chairpersons, each for a (once renewable) term of 3 years, such that each of the three sites (ESAC, ESTEC and STScI) is presented among them.

The co-chairpersons take one-year terms as chairperson, as coordinated among themselves.

The chairperson, with the help of the co-chairpersons, organises the Science Faculty meetings as appropriate, coordinates the Faculty Council and committees, and generates common scientific views for the development of the Directorate.

¹ Note that by ESA rules, only ESA staff members can lead projects involving external contracts.

Faculty Council

The Faculty Council supports the chairpersons in the execution of the Science Faculty's tasks. The Faculty Council shall encompass, in addition to the co-chairpersons, 6 to 9 members (of which at least two shall be research fellows) such as to yield an adequate representation of each site and scientific domain (heliophysics, astrophysics and planetary science). During each term of a new chairperson, thus every year, it is foreseen, that committees are formed to support the execution of the Science Faculty's tasks. The chairpersons will assign the responsibility of the chairing and the formation of the respective committees to Council members, such that Council members fulfil specific tasks in support of the Science Faculty.

Faculty Council members are appointed by the chairpersons for three years, staggered such as to replace a third of them every year. The faculty co-chairs may invite key stakeholders (such as a representative from CAB) to Council meetings as observers.

Decisions in the Council are taken by consensus and if necessary, by simple-majority voting requiring a quorum of 50%. Conflicts of interest shall be handled on a case-by-case basis. Tie votes should be broken by a vote of the chairpersons.

Science Faculty meetings

Science Faculty meetings (general assemblies of all full and associate members) shall be held as appropriate, not less than twice per year, and are organised by the chairperson, supported by the co-chairpersons.

In addition, each of the co-chairpersons shall organise at least one site-specific Science Faculty general assembly meeting per year to discuss local matters.

For decisions affecting the Science Faculty at large, faculty-wide voting is required.

2.4. Ethics of the Science Faculty

All members of the Science Faculty shall adhere to the [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#).

The Science Faculty operates in line with [ESA's Charter of Values](#) (ESA/INFO(2004)19), the Code of Conduct of the Directorate of Science ([ESA-SCI-S-POL-001](#)), the [ESA Behaviour Guide](#), the [ESA Security Directives](#) (ESA/ADMIN/IPOL-SECU(2020)1), the [ESA Personal Data Protection policy](#) (ESA/ADMIN/IPOL-LEGI(2022)1), as well as with common best practices as far as, for instance, conflicts of interest exist.

The Science Faculty commits to implementing [EDI](#), green science and [open science principles](#) in its initiatives, including open access publishing and [FAIR](#) data and software (see also [here](#)).

2.5. Resources provided to the Science Faculty

The Science Division (SCI-SC) manages the resources provided to the Science Faculty for its activities. The Science Faculty organises the allocation of resources within rules and guidelines set by the Head of the Science Division.

It includes:

- The cost of 0.25 FTE/year to cover the activities of the Science Faculty chairperson;
- Funding research proposals, with a yearly announcement of opportunity;
- Funding for travel related to personal research (e.g. conference attendance, collaborative visits);
- The cost of professional memberships to relevant societies (e.g. IAU, EAS, RAS, AAS, EPSC);
- Journal access to all major space science publications;
- Funding for graduate students including Masters and PhD students through various schemes;
- Funding a scientific visitor programme;
- Funding and organising a dynamic and diverse seminar series;
- Supporting internship research programmes (e.g. the LEAPS summer programme at Leiden);
- Funding of publication charges, in particular in support of open access research publications;
- Science Faculty funded workshops and an annual internal science workshop alternating between venues near ESAC and ESTEC.

2.6. Activities of the Science Faculty

The activities of the Science Faculty are described in a separate Faculty Operations Handbook that contains lower-level implementation guidelines, definitions, and operational procedures, describing the allocation of the above-mentioned resources. In case of conflicts with the Handbook, the Charter takes precedence.

The Faculty Operations Handbook is maintained in line with the Charter by the Faculty Council under the responsibility of the Science Faculty chairperson.

3. THE SCIENCE FACULTY CHARTER

This Science Faculty Charter is meant as a long-term, high-level document not requiring regular updates. Nevertheless, a review shall take place at the start of each new co-chairpersons' mandate (taking into account any suggestion brought forward by one or more full members of the Science Faculty). As appropriate, the chairperson will organise a discussion, draft a revised version and put it to a vote.