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[Home](#) > Targets of Opportunity Overview

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Overview

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This page provides an overview of the SOAR Target of Opportunity policy, as well as some exceptions specific to the 2019A-2020A observing semesters. A detailed description of the policy can be found in [this document](#) [1], which proposers should read before proposing. Some things to keep in mind:

- The total number of **executed** interrupts is limited to **12 per semester**, with some exceptions.
- The amount of time that can be used for an interrupt is limited to no more than 2.5 hours, including all night-time overheads.
- Scheduled time-critical nights can be protected; such "protected nights" are infrequent but they do exist.
- Differently from the NOAO ToO policy, ToO programs are responsible for supplying observers. Training can be provided as needed.

Questions regarding the policy can be sent to the [director](#) [2].

2019A-2020A Special Policies

Given the high level of interest in following up gravitational wave events, SOAR has set aside a separate allocation for observations of these events, starting in semester 2018B. *For each of 2019A, 2019B and 2020A, up to 18 interrupts will be authorized*, to be allocated between partners as needed, according to the same procedures as the standard policy linked above.

It is expected that this would support observation of 2-3 events per semester (based on [SOAR's experience from last year](#) [3], assuming similar brightness).

For 2018B, there are two competing groups of approved proposers. The adopted solution is to provide data to both groups while allowing either one to trigger an observation. In the event that there are two (or more) competing groups approved by the partners for other semesters, the same policy will be followed.

The current gravitational wave campaign should end partway through semester 2020A; this provides us an opportunity to assess the follow-up policy prior to the resumption of detections in late 2021.

ToO Policy Review

Time-domain astronomy is a rapidly evolving field, and SOAR's ToO policy is expected to evolve as well. We will assess our experience with the current policy annually. Comments from users (both ToO programs and classical programs) are encouraged.

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Links

[1] <http://www.ctio.noao.edu/soar/sites/default/files/TOOPOLIC-5.pdf>

[2] <http://www.ctio.noao.edu/soar/content/soar-staff>

[3] <http://www.ctio.noao.edu/soar/content/soar-tracks-spectroscopic-evolution-historic-ligo-discovery>