

Heidelberg, July 7, 2020

Dear prospective members and hosts of OAE Centers and Nodes,

thank you for your applications to host an OAE Center or OAE Node. Let me tell you a little about the next steps. Throughout this week, we will work to prepare an assessment of the applications for the OAE Steering Committee (in which both the IAU Executive and the Max Planck Society as the OAE host are represented).

On Monday, 13 July, the time of the next OAE Steering Committee meeting, the Steering Committee will recommend which of the applications should be moved forward to establish an OAE Center or OAE Nodes. The most important consideration at this point will be what the new OAE Center or OAE Node can contribute to the OAE mission. That is why we ask for your understanding if the OAE staff member who contacts you about your application will have this issue in their focus – that is the main point from the OAE side.

In preparing for the Steering Committee meeting, we will try to determine

- what each applicant can contribute to OAE Reviews – are there topics that you are particularly interested in? Where your staff have particular expertise?
- what each applicant can contribute in terms of a Regional School for Astronomy Education. "Regional" is different from workshops you organize locally, for participants from your local area – we will need to make a strategy to see which region, possibly beyond your country, your school could cover.
- what an OAE Node or OAE Center can provide in terms of resources. In terms of funding, what yearly budget will your Node/Center have? For personnel, we measure contribution in FTEs, "full-time equivalents," where 1 FTE corresponds to one person working full-time on tasks specific to the OAE. Note that in order to be able to estimate the resources, we will need to know specifically what kind of person is involved. Is it someone with experience in astronomy education research? In practical/amateur astronomy? In research? Or in teaching? Or else somebody who can program in Django, to help with the OAE website?

For some of you, we expect that the OAE Steering Committee will recommend a more informal mode of collaboration first – this is particularly true if most of your synergy with OAE falls into areas that overlap with the role of our National Astronomy Education Coordinator Teams (NAEC Teams). That is most emphatically not a reflection on your activities. We need to look very specifically about how prospective OAE Nodes or OAE Centers can support what the OAE is planning to do over the next few years; not all kinds of astronomy education activity fit that particular bill.

If you are interested, we also have posted a new, a little bit more explicit summary about the roles of OAE Centers and OAE Nodes, as well as a list of planned OAE Review topics on our resources page, which you can find here: <http://www.haus-der-astronomie.de/oea/documents> – for your convenience, we have also appended those documents to this letter.

All in all, we are very exciting about taking on this mission, and about the support we are receiving from so many of you. Let's do this together!



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for the OAE