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The La Silla Paranal Observatory ESO is opening the following position for its Science Operations Department:

## Interferometry Specialist Operations Staff Astronomer

(Career Path V)

**Purpose and scope of the position:** Paranal Operations Staff Astronomers contribute to the challenge of operating the world leading astronomical facility so as to optimize its scientific output. As Interferometry specialist, the successful candidate will have the opportunity to provide expert knowledge on novel interferometric instrumentation, and may be given the overall responsibility for an instrument or system at the Very Large Telescope Interferometer (VLTI). Flexibility exists so as to tailor duties and responsibilities according to personal expertise and interests.

**Duties and responsibilities:** As part of the operations team, the successful candidate will:

- Contribute to the observing support in both visitor and service mode at the La Silla Paranal Observatory, with duty station on Paranal, including short-term scheduling of observations, calibration of instruments and the assessment of the scientific quality of the astronomical data.
- Work with the team operating the VLT Interferometer, composed of the four 8.2m Unit Telescopes, the four 1.8m Auxiliary Telescopes, the optic train and delay lines feeding the interferometry laboratory, and the VLTI instruments. The current suites of interferometric instruments is composed of AMBER, a 3-beam near-infrared spectrograph, and MIDI, a 2-beam mid-infrared spectrograph, as well as additional sub-systems such as the FINITO fringe tracker. The successful candidate will also be involved in the deployment of

PRIMA, a phase-referenced instrument for imaging and micro-arcsec astrometry.

- Contribute in the VLTI operations-readiness of the second generation of interferometric instruments.

Depending on skills and experience, the successful candidate will be responsible for some of the systems, for the definition, implementation, optimization and characterization of new observing modes, the set-up of optimized calibration plans and the integration of these systems with the automatic data reduction pipelines.

The successful candidate will be member of the ESO Science Faculty, with an appointment at the level of Assistant or Associate Astronomer. S/he will be expected and encouraged to actively conduct astronomical research. Up to 105 nights per year are spent at the Observatory carrying out functional duties. The rest of the time is spent in the ESO office in Santiago.

Financial support for scientific trips and stays at other institutions, including in Europe, is foreseen for all Paranal Operations Astronomers.

### PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS / QUALIFICATIONS

Ph.D. in Astronomy, Physics or equivalent.

We are seeking a staff astronomer with substantial observing experience (at least three years). The ideal candidate will be an active researcher and have excellent observation-oriented research records, will be familiar with instrumental, data analysis, archiving and/or observational techniques, and must be conversant with at least one major data reduction package such as MIDAS, IRAF or IDL.

Of critical value for this position is a record of experience in astronomical interferometry (instrumentation, observing techniques and/or data reduction). Candidates with a strong background in near- or mid-IR observations, adaptive optics, and/or



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general optics, together with a strong motivation to become an Interferometry Specialist will also be considered.

The ideal candidate will have a proven ability to identify technical issues and potential risks and demonstrated experience with real-time troubleshooting. Very good self-organization and time management, coupled with the ability to prioritize multiple tasks are a must. Very good communication and interpersonal skill are required, with the ability to adapt and to work efficiently in a multi-cultural environment, both independently and within a team.

A good command of the English language and a strong sense of team spirit are essential. A working knowledge of Spanish or a willingness to learn it would be advantageous.

**Duty station:** Paranal and Santiago, Chile

**Starting date:** As soon as possible

**Contract:** The initial contract is for a period of three years with the possibility of a fixed-term extension or permanence in accordance with ESO's contract policy requirements and provisions. Promotions will be based on scientific as well as functional achievements.

**Remuneration:** We offer an attractive remuneration package including a competitive salary (tax-free),

comprehensive pension scheme, medical, educational and other social benefits as well as professional training opportunities and financial support in relocating your family. Either the title or the grade may be subject to change according to education and the number of years of experience.

**Application:** If you are interested in working in areas of frontline technology and in a stimulating international environment, please visit <http://www.eso.org> for further details. All applicants should apply on-line at <https://jobs.eso.org/>, and applications must be completed in English.

The position requires **three letters of reference** to be sent to [vacancy@eso.org](mailto:vacancy@eso.org).

**Closing date for applications is 31 July 2009.**

Should you have any questions related to the content of this vacancy notice please contact [vacancy@eso.org](mailto:vacancy@eso.org).

Although recruitment preference will be given to nationals of ESO Member States (members are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Czech Republic and United Kingdom) no nationality is in principle excluded.

The post is equally open to suitably qualified male and female applicants.