



ESO

European Organisation  
for Astronomical  
Research in the  
Southern Hemisphere



The European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere (ESO) is the foremost intergovernmental astronomy organisation in Europe and the world's most productive ground-based astronomical observatory. ESO carries out an ambitious programme focused on the design, construction and operation of powerful ground-based observing facilities enabling astronomers to make important scientific discoveries.

ESO operates three unique world-class observing sites in northern Chile: La Silla, Paranal and Chajnantor (home to ALMA and APEX), and the ESO Headquarters are located in Garching, near Munich, Germany.

At Paranal, ESO operates the Very Large Telescope, the world's most advanced visible-light astronomical observatory, and will host and operate the southern array of the Cherenkov Telescope Array, the world's largest and most sensitive high energy gamma-ray observatory. ESO is a major partner in ALMA, the largest astronomical project in existence. And on Cerro Armazones, ESO is building the 39-metre Extremely Large Telescope (ELT), which will become "the world's biggest eye on the sky" and whose operations will be fully integrated into the Paranal Observatory.

For its User Support Department, within the Data Management and Operations Division of the Directorate of Operations at its Headquarters in Garching, near Munich, Germany, ESO is advertising the position of

## **User Support Astronomer**

The User Support Department is the main interface between the La Silla Paranal Observatory and the Service Mode users of its facilities. The department is part of the Data Management and Operations Division which provides high-reliability support to the operation of the ESO facilities and to their community of users in the framework of an integrated end-to-end system and maintains the archive facility and its data holdings as a powerful resource for both scientific and operational use.

The User Support Department is looking for an astronomer with a strong and active research profile. The post holder should have a strong interest in maximizing ESO's science output through conducting expert user support and contributing to the development of efficient processes, tools and high-quality documentation for the user community.

### **Main Duties and Responsibilities**

The successful candidate will be responsible for the support of Service Mode users of the La Silla Paranal Observatory facilities and of VLT and/or VLTI operations.

The main tasks include:

- Support the users of the Very Large Telescope (VLT) and/or the Very Large Telescope Interferometer (VLTI) in the areas of Phase 1 (observing proposal preparation) and Phase 2 (review of observation blocks and observing strategy) as well as providing helpdesk support including post-observation support for data reduction;
- Support the Paranal Observatory during programme execution and follow-up;
- Play an active role in the operation teams of the instruments to be supported;
- Become involved in preparations for ELT operations and support of its users.

As an astronomer and member of the ESO Science Faculty, you will be expected and encouraged to conduct astronomical research and participate actively in the scientific life of ESO. Research in areas directed towards using the capacities of the VLT/VLTI and ALMA and future capabilities of the ELT will be strongly encouraged.



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### **Reports to:**

Head of the User Support Department

### **Key Competences and Experience**

#### Essential Competences and Experience:

- Several years of active astronomical research at least at postdoctoral level with a solid publication record;
- Familiarity with a broad range of instrumental, data analysis, and observational techniques;
- Experience in the use of current large observing facilities, either ground- or space-based;
- Solid knowledge of at least one of the major data reduction packages;
- Excellent cross-disciplinary communication skills both oral and written;
- Pro-active approach to contribute ideas for improvement and future developments;
- Effective and committed team member able to build effective links across different teams;
- Excellent organisational and time-management skills;
- Open and friendly attitude to interact with a variety of users.

#### Desirable Competences and Experience:

- Experience in optical and near-IR spectroscopy and/or with Adaptive Optics assisted observations;
- Familiarity with Python and SQL;
- Ability to and experience of working efficiently within an international and multi-cultural environment both independently and within a team.

### **Qualifications:**

Essential educational level: Ph.D in Astronomy, Physics or equivalent

### **Language skills:**

The position requires an excellent working knowledge of English.

### **Remuneration and Contract:**

We offer an attractive remuneration package including a competitive salary (tax free), comprehensive pension scheme and medical, educational and other social benefits, as well as financial help in relocating your family and the possibility to place your child/children in daycare.

ESO aims to support members of personnel in maintaining a good Work-life balance between their professional and private life. ESO is also committed to offering Family-Friendly Support, creating a work environment and policies which allow staff to balance their professional and private responsibilities through flexible working arrangements and financial support for families

The contract is for a fixed term duration of three years, and is subject to successful completion of the probation period. There may be a possibility of extension(s) subject to individual performance and organisational requirements as defined in the applicable policies and staff rules and regulations. For any further information, please visit [ESO's conditions of](#)



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[employment](#). Please note that the contract policy and in particular the regulations concerning fixed-term and indefinite contracts are currently under review which may lead to changes in the contractual conditions applicable to this position.

**Duty Station:**

Garching near Munich, Germany. The post holder will be requested to make occasional duty trips to the La Silla Paranal Observatory in northern Chile.

**Career Path:** V

**Application:**

If you are interested in working in areas of frontline science and technology and in a stimulating international environment, please visit <http://www.eso.org> for further details.

Applicants are invited to apply online at <http://jobs.eso.org/>. Applications must be completed in English and should include a motivation letter, CV containing a publication list and a research statement. Also required are the names and contact details of three persons familiar with your work and willing to provide a reference letter. Referees will be automatically invited to submit their letter, however, applicants are strongly advised to trigger these invitations (using the web application form) well in advance of the application deadline.

**Deadline for applications is 14 January 2021.**

Interviews are expected to start soon after this date.

ESO has established diversity as an important value of the Organisation, is committed to providing an equal opportunities environment and is actively seeking to promote a diverse and inclusive workforce.

No nationality is in principle excluded, however, recruitment preference will be given to nationals of Australia, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Chile irrespective of gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, race or religion.