

Membership Policy for the Rubin Observatory Legacy Survey of
Space and Time Dark Energy Science Collaboration

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The LSST Dark Energy Science Collaboration has two categories of membership for scientific collaborators: Members and Full Members. Generally, Full Membership implies an increased level of engagement compared to Membership with the latter providing a path towards the former.

Details of the application process and other issues related to Membership and Full Membership are defined in this Membership Policy. The policy is administered by the Membership Committee, which will report to the Collaboration Council at least once a year, describing application statistics and issues that have arisen within the year.

DESC Membership

Rights of Membership

DESC Membership grants access to DESC computing resources, all DESC data products, the internal DESC website and documents, and DESC communication tools and platforms, including those provided by LSSTC for science collaboration use. The Membership status allows scientists to learn enough detail about the activities, needs, and coverage of tasks in the DESC to develop a proposal for Full Membership. Each Member's status will be reviewed periodically to confirm the Member's involvement with DESC activities. This process is described in the "Membership Status Review" section below.

Becoming a Member

New applicants will fill out an online form to explain their expertise and proposed involvement with the DESC. The application will be considered by the DESC Membership Committee, which will strive to respond within a few days of receipt of the application.

Criteria

Membership will be granted to applicants who meet the following criteria:

1. They can identify work they wish to pursue that is relevant to the DESC.
2. They have LSST data rights.
3. They agree to follow DESC policies and by-laws.

Section 4 of RDO-013: Rubin Data Policy describes who has LSST data rights. Until June 2021, this includes individuals at institutions in the US, Chile, or IN2P3 in France, and those with established access to LSST data rights by an MOA with the LSST Corporation.

Before LSST data arrive from Rubin Observatory, applicants who are seeking to meet criterion (2) and meet other criteria can be granted DESC Membership on a provisional basis for a fixed time period. Provisional Members have the same rights as Members; they are expected to secure data rights on a well-defined timescale (determined by their path to doing so), after which they become Members.

DESC Full Membership

Rights of Full Membership

Full Members retain the rights of Members. In addition, Full Members are eligible to vote in the Spokesperson and Collaboration Council elections and to be nominated to stand as candidates in these elections.

Becoming a Full Member

The transition from Membership to Full Membership is based on a short written proposal (a page or two) describing past, present, and future specific contributions. The proposed contributions could be tasks outlined in DESC planning documents, or tasks that are argued to be important for achieving the science goals of the DESC, as well as managerial contributions and work for the LSST Project. Members of the LSST project are encouraged to join the DESC and may count their contribution to the LSST Project in their time commitment to the DESC. Project members will still be required to make a specific commitment to scientific aspects of the DESC, expressed through activities such as attending meetings, assisting with the development of white papers or other reports, and participating in activities of the DESC working groups.

Criteria

Only Members who have LSST data rights can apply for Full Membership. The following criteria are considered in granting Full Membership:

1. Demonstrated previous engagement with the DESC via participation in collaboration and working groups meetings, relevant publications, presentations, software contributions, and/or community service effort.
2. The relevance and importance of the proposed research or technical task(s) to the DESC, or the necessity of more effort on ongoing or planned task(s) within DESC.
3. The level of ongoing and proposed time commitment relevant to the DESC – generally expected to be a significant fraction of research time over a period of several years. Collaboration service counts toward time commitment level. Contributions to Rubin Observatory may also count toward time commitment level if criteria (1) and (2) are both satisfied.

Process

Faculty and full-time staff scientists may apply for Full Membership soon after they think they fulfill the above criteria, and may describe contributions of their students and postdocs in the proposal. Postdoctoral researchers and graduate students should apply for Full Membership independently. Graduate students must also provide a recommendation letter from a Full Member.

The proposal should follow a template provided by the Membership Committee, to ensure all pertinent information is collected. Proposals may be submitted at any time and will be considered on a rolling basis throughout the year. The Membership Committee will strive to respond to a Full Membership proposal within two months of its submission.

The Membership Committee receives and reviews applications for new Members and Full Members. The Membership Committee is responsible for making decisions on the applications, announcing successful

applications to the applicant and relevant individuals, and communicating the reasons for negative decisions to the applicants. Individuals who receive a negative decision from the Membership Committee may choose to appeal the decision to the Collaboration Council, which will set up an internal ad hoc committee to make a final decision.

Each Full Member's status will be reviewed periodically to confirm the Full Member's involvement with DESC activities. The DESC will regularly update the LSST Corporation on the list of Full Members.

Membership Status Review

The membership status review primarily aims to ensure that all current DESC members actively contribute to and help build the DESC community. Additionally, it protects the rights and privileges of Members and Full Members who are actively engaging in the Collaboration. The Membership Committee will conduct membership status review on a yearly basis. The Membership Committee should strive to make the review process lightweight for members, and should coordinate with DESC Management Team and Operations when appropriate (e.g., to minimize redundancy between the DESC Census and membership review).

The Collaboration Council will develop and ratify any review criteria that would result in a change of membership, and the Membership Committee, in consultation with the Collaboration Council, will develop the specific review procedure, including how the information collected during a review will be used. The resulting Membership Status Review Criteria and Membership Status Review Procedure will be advertised to the collaboration well in advance prior to the review. The review will at a minimum ask each member to verify that their entry in the DESC membership database is up-to-date, and that they have agreed to abide by DESC Policies.

During the review, the Membership Committee will make reasonable attempts to contact unresponsive members (in case of a junior member, including through their advisors). If the membership status review results in a change of a DESC member's membership status, the Membership Committee will notify the affected member in a timely manner, both before and after effecting the change. If the affected member is a junior member, their advisor will also be notified.

The Membership Committee can make reasonable accommodations to members who experience personal or technical difficulties, or anticipate a temporary period of reduced DESC involvement. If a dispute between a member and the Membership Committee arises from the membership review process, it should be referred to the Collaboration Council, which will set up an internal ad hoc committee to make a final decision.

Additional Topics

LSST Data Rights

DESC members should maintain their LSST Data Rights as defined in the Rubin Data Policy. If a DESC member loses their LSST Data Rights (including any grace period), their DESC membership is subject to termination¹; the member should inform the Membership Committee. When a member's DESC membership is terminated due to a loss of LSST Data Rights, and the said member has participated in ongoing DESC Projects, the member will be automatically granted external collaborator status to complete their work on those Projects, provided the member will not access any newly released LSST data directly.

Departing from DESC

DESC members who wish to leave DESC should notify the Membership Committee. Please visit <https://lsstdesc.org/pages/apply.html> for instructions.

¹Such termination of DESC membership is anticipated to be enforced only after Rubin Data Preview 2.

Membership Policy

Details of the application process and other issues related to Membership and Full Membership are defined in this Membership Policy. The policy is maintained by the Membership Committee. A 2/3 majority vote of the Collaboration Council is required for any significant change in the policy.

Appendix: Version History

- v5.3.1: Initial version, ratified by the DESC Council
- v6.1: Removed statement about ratification by LSSTC Board
- v6.2: Updated link to Membership form
- v6.3: Amended to update the Full Membership review process, and to clarify the role of the Council.
- v6.4: Changed the reference to the “DESC White Paper” in the Full Membership application to “DESC planning documents”.
- v6.5: Amended to include provisional member status.
- v6.6: Amended to include updated full membership criterion.
- v6.7: Amended to update LSST/Rubin naming.
- v7.1: Amended to add the Membership Status Review section, and additional topics on LSST data rights and DESC departure.
- v7.2: Amended to be more aligned with both actual practice and the federation charter, plus some additional information on leaving DESC.