



# Astronomical League

## Observing Program Division

### Internal White Paper

### Certification Guidelines

One of the principle roles of an Observing program Coordinator is the issuance of certifications to the AL membership upon completion of the requirements of an Observing Program or Award. This document is intend to provide guidelines to those Coordinators.

#### **The overall Observing Program process:**

1. An Observing Program is proposed by a member of the AL.
2. The AL member completes the necessary paperwork and artwork for the proposal.
3. The proposal is reviewed by an Observing Program Director.
4. The proposal is forwarded on to the AL Council for consideration at the next annual Council Meeting at an AL-Con.
5. A Coordinator is appointed by the AL President.
6. The Certification Process:
  - a. An AL member completes the requirements.
  - b. The log and the necessary documentation is submitted to the Coordinator for approval and certification.
  - c. The Coordinator reviews the work of the AL member.
  - d. The Coordinator issues a certificate and pin (if appropriate).
  - e. The Coordinator submits the award to the on-line database and the Reflector.

#### **The Role of the Coordinator:**

- The Coordinator is responsible for reviewing the completeness of the submission.
  - Was the appropriate information documented?
  - Was the right number of observations completed?
  - Does the information look reasonable?
- The Coordinator does not need to check every detail.
- If the submission is complete, the Coordinator issues the certification.

#### **Normal Situation:**

- The Coordinator generates a Certificate. The certificate usually contains:
  - Member name.
  - Member's astronomical society.
  - Date earned,
  - Certificate number.

- Certificate numbers will be in one of these formats:
  - Some Observing Programs and Awards do not assign numbers.
  - 1234 – this is the normal format for most Observing Programs.
  - 1234-B – this is used to denote that the entire Observing Program was done using binoculars.
  - 1234-I – this is used to denote that the entire Observing Program was done using imaging.
  - 1234-M – this is used to denote that the entire Observing Program was done manually (no go-to).
  - Rarely, other suffixes are used.

## General Rules:

- Only one pin is issued to an AL member per Observing Program.
- Some Observing Programs do offer pins for multiple levels:
  - Caldwell.
  - Radio Telescope.
  - Outreach.
- Some Observing Awards do not offer pins.
- Replacement pins and certificates can be provided. There is a cost to the AL member. Costs are outlined elsewhere on the AL website.
- There is no cost for a replacement certificate (only) when it is sent to the AL member electronically.

## Special Cases:

- **Single Certifications:**
  - Certifications are issued only to individual AL members.
  - Certificates are not issued to groups or societies.
- **Requested certification changes:**
  - Errors in the database will be corrected. These corrections will not be sent to the Reflector magazine.
  - If a society officially changes their name:
    - The Observing Program Division will decide if it is appropriate to make changes in the database.
    - If appropriate, the entire database will be updated.
    - These changes will not be announced in the Reflector magazine.
    - New certificates will not be issued to the AL members.
  - Society names will not be changed when an AL member switches societies. The database will reflect where the certification was earned.
  - Name changes in the database will be made if an AL member legally changes their name. All instances must be changed.
- **Multiple societies:** There are times when an AL member belongs to multiple astronomical societies.
  - The Certificates:
    - If an AL member requests that multiple societies be shown on their certificate, this can be done.
  - The Reflector magazine:

- Only one society will be included per certification in the Reflector magazine.
  - The AL member may choose which society is shown.
- The Database:
  - If an AL member requests that multiple societies be shown in the on-line database, this is allowed.
  - For example: Johannes Kepler earns his Carbon Star Observing Program certification. He belongs to two astronomical societies: Regensberg Astronomy Club and the Prague Astronomical Society.
    - He will be issued only one certificate number: No. 1234.
    - He may be entered into the database twice:
      - No. 1234, Johannes Kepler, Regensberg Astronomy Club, 1/1/2023.
      - No. 1234, Johannes Kepler, Prague Astronomical Society, 1/1/2023.
- **Astronomical Society based certifications:** Some certifications are also a function of individual astronomical societies. These can be identified as those Awards that the AL members does not usually submit, but a coordinator at the astronomical society submits.
  - These include:
    - Outreach Observing Award.
    - Mentor Observing Award.
    - Library Telescope Observing Award.
  - An AL member may earn credit for these at more than one astronomical society.
  - The AL member may choose to pursue this as outlined above, but may also pursue multiple certifications in these Awards. Otherwise:
    - Each astronomical society will keep its own records.
    - Individual societies will submit their own independent certification requests.
    - Certificates will be issued for each submission.
    - A pin, if one is appropriate, will be issued to the first astronomical society submitting a request.
    - Only one pin will be issued per AL member per certification.
    - All certificates will be submitted to the on-line database and also the Reflector as earned.
    - For example: Johannes Kepler earns his Outreach Observing Award, Master Level certification. He belongs to two astronomical societies: Regensberg Astronomy Club and the Prague Astronomical Society.
      - He will be issued two certificate numbers: No. 1234 and No. 2345.
      - He will be entered into the database twice:
        - No. 1234, Johannes Kepler, Regensberg Astronomy Club, 1/1/2023.
        - No. 2345, Johannes Kepler, Prague Astronomical Society, 6/1/2023.
      - Both certificates will be submitted to the Reflector magazine.



Aaron Clevenson, Observing Program Director