

Observing with the AAT

3 June 2022

1. Some important reminders first

- Do not share your visitor account details with anyone else
- Access is allowed from 3pm AEST/4pm AEDT on the first day of your run
- Make verbal contact (e.g. using zoom) with the afternoon shift technician before trying to access the instrument

2. Before your run

- Book an observation station on the MSO booking form: www.mso.anu.edu.au/mrbs/
- Confirm that your dates are to be done remotely at ANU. If you do not confirm, the VPN will not be scheduled to be active from ANU and you won't be able to observe. To do this, click on the "Visitor Form" on this page=
<https://aat.anu.edu.au/science/observing/remote-observations> or use the direct link =
<https://aat.anu.edu.au/science/visitor-form>. Users can select "Observing from ANU". Once selected, they will then know that there will be a remote observing run from Stromlo. They will also know that they will need to set up a visitor account, the details of which will be e-mailed to the observer. This must be done at least 1 week in advance, else you risk it not being done in time and subsequently losing observing time.
- Obtain the AAT VPN Password. This is written in the remote observing room.
- Pick-up remote observing room key. It is in the same drawer as the car keys, in Reception.

3. Contacting site on the day of your run

With multiple remote observing sites connecting to the telescope console from across Australia and the world, communication is key for a successful remote observing run. **You are required to contact Site at 3pm on the afternoon of each night (4pm during daylight saving time).**

A good time at which to notify the afternoon technician of your plans for the next day is when the afternoon technician signs off for the night. You can also contact the afternoon technician using the technician call button, the AAT building PA system (+61 2 6842 6351), or the **SSO emergency mobile** (+61 427 685 288). If you use the PA system, wait for the beep to end before speaking. The SSO emergency mobile is carried by the afternoon shift technician during the day and the night assistant at night.

Additional information on remote observing is available from the [AAT web pages](#).

4. Important Numbers, Addresses and Locations

Phone Numbers

| Phone | Number | Notes |
|--|-----------------|--|
| AAT console phone | +61 2 6842 6279 | Internal 26279 |
| AAT observer's desk | +61 2 6842 6276 | Internal 26276 |
| AAT public address system | +61 2 6842 6351 | Wait for the beep to end before speaking |
| SSO emergency mobile | +61 427 685 288 | |
| ANU Remote Observing room | +61 2 6125 0219 | Internal 50219 |
| ANU Remote Observing Support – Brad Tucker | +61 433 905 777 | Internal 56711 |
| ANU IT Support – Chris Delfs | +61 2 6125 4020 | Internal 54020 |
| ANU Site Support – Howard Coyle | +61 416 249 797 | Site, Door, Access, Power Issues |

Computer Addresses

AAT VPN: aat-vpn.anu.edu.au

VNC desktops used for observing:

When using VNC please connect using computer names.

| Computer Name | Use | IP Address |
|---------------|---|-------------|
| AATXDB2 | Instrument Workstation | 10.88.80.27 |
| AATXDE | Guider and Telescope Controls (View Only) | 10.88.80.15 |
| AATGUIDER | Images from Guider and All Sky Camera | 10.88.90.6 |

Config and Data Reduction

The workstations AATLXH and AATLXE can be used to configure 2dF plates and for data reduction. These workstations can be connected to with SSH and do not need VNC.

| Computer Name | Use | IP Address |
|---------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| AATLXH | Config and Data Reduction | 10.88.90.25 |
| AATLXE | Config and Data Reduction | 10.88.90.24 |

Useful Websites

Weather: <http://aat-ops.anu.edu.au/AATdatabase/met.html>

Robot viewer: <http://10.88.90.80/view>. We advise against running this from a browser that is started on aatlxx or aatlxy, as this seems to slow down the VNC connection. This site can only be accessed from within the AAT network.

5. Observing from a Remote Station

If you are observing from one of the AAT Remote Observing Stations, please obtain the observing instructions from the local contact.

6. Observing from Home

If you are observing from any other location, please follow the below steps.

Setting up yourself before the run

- Install VPN and VNC clients on your laptops. We recommend that you use Cisco's AnyConnect Security Mobility Client and Real VNC's [VNC viewer](#).
- When using 2dF, screen real-estate is an important factor. At the very least, you should have two screens. This will enable you to see half of the four screens. One can then scroll to see the other half as required. Recall that 2dF windows can pop up in unexpected places.
- If you are using the NBN, check that there are no [scheduled maintenance activities](#) that might affect your connection.
- If you have access to two computers it is recommended that you set Zoom up on a different machine to the one you use for controlling the instrument. This is because Zoom will be piped through the VPN otherwise, which will slow the connection somewhat.

Connecting

- Establish communication with the afternoon shift technician via zoom. SSO staff will establish one zoom link per scheduled run. The details are part of the email that this document was attached to.
- VPN into the AAT network: aat-vpn.anu.edu.au, using the account details you have been given. (If you later have trouble logging in, returning to this page and logging in again serves as a test of the validity of your credentials.)
- VNC into aatxdb2.aao.gov.au. If you do not know the password, the afternoon shift technician will give it to you.

The end of the night

- Close the VNC window¹. Under no circumstances, should you log out of [aatlxx](#), [aatlxy](#) or [aatliu](#). The consequences could be grave.
- Log out of the VPN session if you do not plan to run reductions on [aatlxh](#), for example.

7. Observer's Report

Once you have finished your nights, please fill in an Observer's Report. This report is to be filled in by everyone who observed with the AAT, even if you only observed for part of a program's total run. Please report any unresolved difficulties with remote observing in addition to the other comments you might have. The Observer's Report is submitted via an online form located here: <https://aat.anu.edu.au/science/observing/after-run>.

¹ The VNC session will be killed by a cron job at 9am, but it is best to close it manually to prevent any unauthorised access.

8. Installing Cisco's AnyConnect Security Mobility Client

We recommend that you use Cisco's AnyConnect Security Mobility Client to connect to the AAT network using VPN. To do this

- Point your browser to <https://aat-vpn.anu.edu.au>
- Ignore the security warnings
- Login with your AAT account details that you were given.
- Follow the instructions to download the software for your operating system².
- Once installed, bring up the application and enter aat-vpn.anu.edu.au, the AAT VPN address
- Click on the settings button in the bottom corner and make sure that "Block connections to untrusted servers" is not ticked. You will only need to do this on first use – the setting will be remembered for subsequent connections.
- You may see another security warning. Press unclick anyway.

9. Further Information

The information in this document relates specifically to observing from home; it is not a substitute for the information available on the AAT webpages, which all Observers should be familiar with: <https://aat.anu.edu.au/science/observing>

Changelog:

27 October 2020: Added list item to Section 4. Created Sections 8 and 9. – DC

27 January 2022: Edited the IP addresses. – MR

03 June 2022: Edited to now be sent to all observers. Also updated observer's report section. - MR

² The VPN client is not compatible with macOS 10.15 Catalina. Please contact [Chris Ramage](#) if you need access to this client for this version of the mac OSX operating system.