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Finnish observing courses with the NOT

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A national hands-on course on observational astronomy has been organised annually by the University of Turku since 2013 to carry out remote observations with the NOT from the Tuorla observatory. Typically, the course has had around 20 MSc/PhD students, who come from all the four Finnish universities that teach astronomy (Turku, Helsinki, Oulu, and Aalto). The students are divided into research groups of 4-5 with different science projects to be carried out, supervised by researchers of the participating universities, covering a wide range of topics. Usually the course is executed in the format of 3 ALFOSC nights and 2 NOTCam nights, and all the students have an opportunity to carry out both spectrophotometric optical and photometric near-IR observations. In addition to intensive format course lectures and remote observations, students work on the reduction and analysis of the obtained data using astronomical data processing software, write their own project reports, and provide a group presentation of the results. Furthermore, a smaller scale NOT remote observing science school aimed at upper secondary school students has also been carried out annually in Finland over several years now, to promote natural sciences among students and to offer an insight into what it is like to be a researcher.

Primary author: KANKARE, Erkki (University of Turku)

Co-authors: Prof. MATTILA, Seppo (University of Turku); Dr NURMI, Pasi (University of Turku)

Presenter: KANKARE, Erkki (University of Turku)