PHYSICAL REVIEW C
EDITORIAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES
(Revised January 1999)

Physical Review C is published by the American Physical Society. It prints papers which report results of research in nuclear physics and related fields such as nuclear astrophysics.

Although the Council of the APS has the final responsibility for *Physical Review C*, the Council has delegated some of the responsibilities to its Publications Oversight Committee, to the Editor-in-Chief, and to the Editor of the journal. The journal has an Editorial Board whose members are listed on the inside cover of the journal. They are appointed for three-year terms by the Editor-in-Chief upon recommendation of the Editor, after consultation with the APS Division of Nuclear Physics. They advise the Editor on editorial matters.

Editorial policy is guided by the following statement adopted in April, 1995 by the Council of the APS:

> It is the policy of the American Physical Society that the *Physical Review* accept for publication those manuscripts that significantly advance physics and have been found to be scientifically sound, important to the field, and in satisfactory form. The Society will implement this policy as fairly and efficiently as possible and without regard to national boundaries.

TYPES OF PAPERS

In addition to regular articles, *Physical Review C* publishes Rapid Communications, Brief Reports, and Comments. These are limited in length; five printed pages for Rapid Communications, four for Brief Reports, and two for Comments and Replies. Short Paper sections may not be used for serial publication.

The **Rapid Communications** section is intended for the accelerated publication of important new results. Expanded follow-up articles are strongly encouraged.

Brief Reports are reports on completed research which do not warrant publication as a regular article. Addenda to papers previously published in *Physical Review C* are also published in the Brief Reports section.

The **Comments** section of *Physical Review C* is restricted to papers which criticize or correct papers of other authors previously published in *Physical Review C*. While Comments may criticize the work, they should not criticize the authors. Comments may point out specific errors, misinterpretations, or omissions of references to earlier work. However, when possible, an Erratum should be used for these purposes rather than a Comment. Comments should not contain polemics, nor should they reiterate previously published disagreements.

A Comment is usually sent to the authors of the work to which the Comment refers for their opinions. If these authors consider the Comment useful, we usually publish it. If they feel that it should not be published or if they recommend revisions before publication, they should not regard themselves as anonymous referees. Their opinions will be sent over their signatures to the authors of the Comment and, when appropriate, to an independent anonymous referee.

If the Comment is accepted for publication, the authors to whose work the Comment refers may wish to submit a Reply to the Comment. This can be done at any time. If they want both the Reply and the Comment to be published together, they must provide a Reply in a timely fashion following notification of acceptance of the original Comment. The Reply will be sent to the authors of the original Comment for evaluation. If they feel the Reply should not be published, or if they recommend revision, their response will be sent over their signature to the authors of the Reply and, when appropriate, to an independent referee.

Once a Comment or a Reply to the Comment has been received, only revisions to the manuscripts requested by the referees or the Editors will be allowed (except for minor matters such as spelling or grammar).

Errata are notices of errors or omissions in papers previously published in *Physical Review C*. Errata should be as brief as possible. An Erratum should contain a short statement of the correction(s) and, where appropriate, a description of any effects on the conclusions of the paper.

EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

Papers must contain **new results**. The question occasionally arises whether confirmation of previously published results justifies publication of a manuscript. This depends on the importance of the measurement, whether there has been a controversy involving the earlier measurement or other measurements by the same authors, the length of the manuscript (a Brief Report may be acceptable where a long article is not), whether the repetition is a small part of the manuscript or all of it, and whether the same authors have previously published similar information. Material previously published in a **Letters** journal, as a **Rapid Communication**, or in a **Conference Proceedings** is acceptable for publication in

Physical Review C provided the submitted manuscript presents considerably more information enabling the reader to get a substantially improved understanding of the subject. We do not usually accept figures, tables, or text material which have been previously published, but each case is considered individually. Previously published material should only be referenced, not repeated. Previous publication of material in a **thesis** does not preclude publication of appropriate parts of the material in *Physical Review C*.

If a manuscript submitted to *Physical Review C* is on a topic not within its purview, but may be suitable for another *Physical Review* journal, the Editors will transfer the paper to the appropriate journal and inform the author(s) of that transfer.

Papers advancing new theoretical views on fundamental principles or theories must contain convincing arguments that the new predictions and interpretations are distinguishable from existing knowledge, at least in principle, and do not contradict established experimental results. Mathematical and computational papers that do not have application to physics are generally not suitable for *Physical Review C*.

Papers that describe **proposed experiments** fall into a special category. For such papers to be acceptable, the experiments must be demonstrated to be novel and feasible. It is the authors' responsibility to show that their proposal is likely to stimulate research that might not otherwise be undertaken. Generally not suitable for *Physical Review* are papers proposing a new experiment using straightforward calculations based on well-known theories or models, and papers describing simulations of apparatus or optimization and feasibility studies.

Submission of a manuscript is a representation that the manuscript has not been published previously and is not currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. If the Editors find that this is not the case, the manuscript is considered withdrawn and will not be considered further by *Physical Review C*.

When the Editors receive a manuscript from one of its authors, they assume that the manuscript has been read and approved by all the authors. If the Editors learn that this assumption is not valid, the manuscript is not processed further until all disagreements are resolved. If there is any disagreement regarding the content of the manuscript or the list of authors, the manuscript is considered withdrawn.

Although there is no limit to the **length** of regular articles, the appropriate length depends on the information presented in the paper. Authors are encouraged to refer in their paper to internal reports or theses that contain more detail than the published article or to deposit some of the material, especially long tables, in the Physics Auxiliary Publication Service (**PAPS**) of the American Institute of Physics. The electronic counterpart, **EPAPS**, is similar, and accomodates color-figure, multimedia, data, and program files. Information about EPAPS can be obtained via the APS research-journals World Wide Web server at the URL http://publish.aps.org/, via ftp to aps.org in the /pub/jrnls directory as the file epaps_up.asc, or from the Editorial Office on request. If a manuscript is so long that it might require more than 20 pages when printed in the *Physical Review*, the referee will usually be asked for advice on whether the material in the manuscript justifies the length.

Authors should place their work in the context of the current state of research, but they are not held responsible for **references** to publications which had not yet appeared when their paper was submitted. They are not responsible for references to preprints, internal reports, results which have been reported only orally at meetings (even though an abstract may have been printed), nor for papers that have appeared in publications not abstracted in standard abstracting journals. If such work is called to the attention of the authors by a referee, they are encouraged but not required to refer to it. Authors are, of course, expected to include references to or acknowledgments of material which has been used in their work or which has influenced their work, even if this material has not been published. Authors are expected to include references to books and to published Conference Proceedings if they contain more than abstracts.

Authors should be aware that attitudes toward the quotation of results from preprints, Annual Reports, etc., are still evolving. For example, many feel that any result from a preprint, especially one made available electronically, can be quoted without permission. Others feel that this is unethical, in particular for detailed data and results. Therefore, it would be prudent, to avoid unnecessary disputes as well as to avoid quotation of results that may have changed, to obtain permission of the authors of preprints and similar documents before quoting detailed results.

EDITORIAL PROCEDURES

Usually the Editors select one referee to review a manuscript. Referee reports are advisory to the Editors, but are generally transmitted by the Editors to the authors, and so should be written in a collegial manner. The Editors may withhold or edit these reports for cause. If in the judgment of the Editor a paper is clearly unsuitable for *Physical Review C*, it will be rejected without review; authors of such papers have the same right to appeal as do other authors.

Authors may request that a particular person or that people at a particular institution not be chosen as referees. We usually honor such requests although we try to give authors whose work is criticized in a manuscript an opportunity to respond to the criticism. Authors may suggest a list of experts whom

they consider especially suited to referee their paper. Such a list is particularly welcome when a manuscript treats a highly specialized subject on which we rarely publish papers.

Authors may request that their identities not be revealed to the referees (''double-blind'' reviewing). If such a request is made, it is the authors' responsibility to furnish a copy of the manuscript without the authors' names, addresses, and the acknowledgment section.

Any resubmittal should be accompanied by a summary of the changes made, and a brief response to all recommendations and criticisms. This material will normally be forwarded to reviewers, and so should be written in a collegial manner. Remarks that authors wish to address solely to the Editors should be clearly identified and separated from the summary and response.

If the authors conclude, after having made efforts to respond to the criticisms of a referee, that they and the referee cannot agree, they may request that the paper be sent to a second referee. If the Editors agree to this request, the second referee will be sent previous correspondence on the manuscript, but not the identity of the first referee. Sometimes the Editors decide to consult a second referee or a member of the Editorial Board even if the authors do not request it.

Occasionally authors request that we accept a manuscript in spite of the adverse comments of the referee. Since the referees are chosen because of their familiarity with the subject matter of the manuscript, they are usually better qualified than the Editors to evaluate its scientific merits. The authors must persuade the referee, not the Editors, that a paper should be accepted. We do not publish manuscripts without a favorable recommendation from a referee. However, the Editors do not necessarily accept a referee's recommendation to publish a manuscript. They may obtain the opinion of another referee or a member of the Editorial Board in cases, for example, where a referee has questioned important points in the paper or has said that the quality of the work is poor or marginal, or where questions of editorial policy have arisen.

After acceptance of a manuscript, if further information that seems to warrant investigation is received by the Editors, they will regard it as an obligation to reconsider their decision, even if publication might then be delayed.

In some circumstances information about a manuscript considered by *Physical Review C* and subsequently submitted to another journal may be provided to the editor of that journal. Such information might include the comments and identities of referees.

APPEAL PROCEDURES

Authors may appeal a rejection of their paper by the Editor. In the case of a formal appeal, the paper and all relevant information, including the identities of the referees, will be sent to a member of the Editorial Board. The Board member may review the case on the existing record or may seek additional expert opinion. The Board member will present a signed advisory opinion to the Editors.

If a Board member has provided a referee report on a paper prior to appeal, another Board member must review the paper on appeal. Authors may suggest those Board members they feel are appropriate (or not appropriate) to conduct the review, but the Editors are not bound by such suggestions. If there is no suitable Board member available, the Editors may appoint an appropriate scientist to consider a paper under appeal as an *ad hoc* Board member.

The author of a paper that has been rejected subsequent to an editorial Board review may request that the case be reviewed by the Editor-in-Chief of the APS. This request should be addressed to the Editor, who will forward the entire file to the Editor-in-Chief. Such an appeal must be based on the fairness of the procedures followed, and must not be a request for another scientific review. The question to be answered in this review is: Did the paper receive a fair hearing? The decision of the Editor-in-Chief concludes the consideration of the manuscript by the American Physical Society.

DATE OF RECEIPT

Each published paper carries a receipt date indicating when the manuscript was first received by the Editor. If the authors make substantive changes in a manuscript or if they hold it for more than three months after it has been returned to them with a referee's report, the paper will be given a ''revised manuscript received'' date. In such cases, the authors may be required to add references to material published since the original submission of the manuscript. If the authors hold a paper for more than six months after it has been returned to them with a referee's report, the original paper is considered withdrawn and the resubmitted version is considered to be a new paper which must have up-to-date references. If the authors do not return the proofs of a paper within three months, the paper is likewise considered withdrawn, and is treated as a new paper when the proofs are returned.

Papers which are transferred to *Physical Review C* from *Physical Review Letters* or other *Physical Review* journals, which are accepted for publication solely on the basis of previous referee reports, and for which the authors have not caused undue delays will retain the original receipt date. In all other cases, a new receipt date which is the date of transfer will be assigned. However, the authors may request that the original receipt date be retained.

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