PHYSICAL REVIEW C
EDITORIAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES
(Revised July 2008)

Physical Review C is published by the American Physical Society. It publishes papers that 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 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 journal pages for Rapid Communications, four for Brief Reports, and two for Comments and Replies. Short Paper sections may not be used for serial publication. For information on how to estimate length, see the information available on the Authors, General Information subpage at `http://prc.aps.org/`.

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 that 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. The Comment and the response (if any) will be sent to an Editorial Board member for an signed advisory opinion to the Editors as to whether to publish the Comment. The Board member may seek additional expert opinion before providing advice.

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 an Editorial Board member for a signed advisory opinion to the Editors as to whether to publish the Reply. The Board member may seek additional expert opinion before providing advice.

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

Notice of the decisions reached on Comments and Replies will be sent to their corresponding authors, along with pertinent correspondence.

The **Errata** section contains notices regarding errors or omissions in papers previously published. Besides the standard Erratum, several special categories of documents may appear in this section. In the online journal, each of these documents involve bidirectional links between the original article and the document in the Errata section. The category of the corrective document is indicated in its title and in the link from the original article.

The standard Erratum is a statement by the authors of the original paper that briefly describes the correction(s) and, where appropriate, any effects on the conclusions of the paper.

An Editorial Note is a statement by the journal about the paper that the editors feel should be brought to the attention of readers of the article.

A Publisher's Note is a notice that the article has been corrected subsequent to publication. Such corrections are made to correct typographical or production errors that involve significant metadata (such as title or byline) or have a significant impact on the reader's ability to understand the article. Such corrections

are normally made only shortly after publication, with approval of APS management, and are not made for scientific errors or omissions. The Publisher's Note indicates the correction and when it was made.

A Retraction is a notice that the paper should not be regarded as part of the scientific literature. Possible reasons for this include, among others, presentation of invalid results and inclusion of results that were published previously by the same authors in substantially similar form. (In the latter case, the prior publication, not the Retracted article, should be regarded as the source of the information.) To protect the integrity of the record, the retracted article is **not** removed from the online journal, but notice of Retraction is given. Retractions are sometimes published by the authors when they have discovered substantial scientific errors; in other cases, the editors conclude that Retraction is appropriate. In all cases, the Retraction indicates the reason for the action and who is responsible for the decision. If a Retraction is made without the unanimous agreement of the authors, the approval of the Editor in Chief of APS is required.

EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

The *Physical Review* and *Physical Review Letters* publish new results. Thus, prior publication of the same results will generally preclude consideration of a later paper.

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 an abbreviated form (in a Letters journal, as a Rapid Communication, or in conference proceedings) may provide a useful basis for a more detailed article in the *Physical Review*. Such an article should present considerably more information and lead to a substantially improved understanding of the subject. Reproduction of figures, tables, and text material that have been published previously should be kept to a minimum and must be properly referenced. In order to reproduce figures, tables, etc., from another journal, authors must show that they have complied with the copyright requirements of the publisher of the other journal. Publication of material in a thesis does not preclude publication of appropriate parts of that material in the *Physical Review*.

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 a clear relationship 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 a manuscript has several authors, one of them, the corresponding author, should be designated to receive and respond to correspondence from the Editors. This designation can be changed upon notification of the Editors. It is the responsibility of the corresponding author to represent all those involved with the work reported.

By submitting the manuscript, the corresponding author certifies:

- The paper represents original work of the listed authors.
- The manuscript as presented accurately reflects the scientific results.
- All of the authors made significant contributions to the concept, design, execution, or interpretation of the research study.
- All those who made significant contributions were offered the opportunity to be listed as authors.
- All of the listed authors are aware of and agree to the submission of this manuscript.
- The manuscript has not been published, and is not now and will not be under consideration by another journal while it is considered here.
- As part of the submission, the authors have provided any relevant information to the editors (e.g., information about recent relevant unpublished manuscripts by the authors).
- The authors accept the established procedures for selecting manuscripts for publication.

Authors may not present data and other results obtained by others as if they were their own. Nor may authors incorporate

without attribution text from another work (by themselves or others), even when summarizing past results or background material. If a direct quotation is appropriate, the quotation should be clearly indicated as such and the original source should be properly cited. Papers that have been found to be in violation of this rule will be rejected. In such cases, resubmission of the manuscript, even with the plagiarized text removed, is not ordinarily allowed. However, the Editors may allow exceptions to this policy if warranted by special circumstances.

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 Electronic Physics Auxiliary Publication Service (**EPAPS**) of the American Institute of Physics. Files deposited in EPAPS are made freely available via ftp and the World Wide Web. As an electronic service, EPAPS can accommodate color-figure, multimedia, and program files. Information about EPAPS is available via the Authors, General Information subpage at `http://prc.aps.org/`, in the Manuscript Preparation section.

Readers benefit from complete referencing, which is necessary to place any work in the context of the current state of research. Authors should therefore make every effort to ensure that their citations of previously published work are comprehensive at the time of submission. This includes references to books and to published conference proceedings that contain more than abstracts. Authors should also add to the references any works published during the course of the review process.

It may also be necessary for authors to cite unpublished work, such as e-prints, preprints, internal reports, or results which have been reported only orally at meetings (even though an abstract may have been published). Unpublished work that appears during the review process may require citation as well. Unpublished work has not been fully vetted by the community, and considerable judgment on the part of the Editors will be employed in determining the need to cite such work.

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 external 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 are encouraged to submit 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 should state whether the paper they submit has been previously considered for publication in any of the APS journals (*Physical Review Letters,* other *Physical Review* journals, or *Reviews of Modern Physics)* and supply the code number assigned by that journal. They should also provide information about other recent relevant unpublished work of theirs (e.g., for a paper under consideration by an APS journal, supply the code number; for one submitted to another journal, provide the title; for a paper deposited on an e-print server, supply the e-print number).

We are no longer able to accede to requests from authors that we withhold their identities from the referees. Such "double-blind" reviewing has been discontinued.

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. Authors should not send a version of the manuscript marked to show the changes, as this can lead to confusion and delay in processing.

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. Therefore, the authors should attempt to persuade primarily the referee, not the Editors, that a paper should be accepted. Ordinarily, 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 stated 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 an advisory opinion to the Editors, which will be sent to authors and/or referees with the Board member's name.

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 questions to be answered in this review are: Were our procedures followed appropriately and did the paper receive a fair hearing? A decision by the Editor in Chief is the final level of review.

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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