

Article guidelines

Reviews of Modern Physics aims to publish articles that review developing areas of physics in a form that is useful to both practitioners and people entering the field.

Developing areas of physics certainly need reviews that are understandable to those outside the field, and accessibility is desirable in traditional areas as well. The vitality of physics as a discipline depends on a shared understanding as a framework for analyzing the physical world. With this goal in mind, we ask that authors give considerable attention to the presentation of their material, making introductions accessible to intermediate graduate students and readers from other fields. The body of each paper should be economically and thoughtfully organized. Notation should follow the common physics conventions established in graduate-level text books, unless there are compelling reasons to do otherwise.

For the practitioner, the review presents the current status of a given topic. It provides a historical background and a literature survey, of course, but an ideal review is more than a catalog of work done. It is critical distillation of the progress on the topic, giving guidance to the successful methods and pointing out areas for future development.

While most of our articles will be traditional scholarly reviews in the sense described above, we also seek outstanding tutorial articles stemming from topical schools in areas of advanced physics. Finally, we would like to keep RMP's tradition of publishing articles that provide a broad new framework for understanding the phenomena in a given field, as did the papers of Feynman, Bethe, and Fermi. We should be highly selective of such articles, however.

A good review article need not be very long, and RMP must resist the trend in the opposite direction. We publish only 1300 pages a year, and unfortunately we cannot cover all physics adequately without imposing a bound on the length of articles. There have been many fine manuscripts that have come in recently, creating a backlog, and we regrettably must now impose a length limit on new submissions of 50 journal pages or roughly 150 double-spaced typed pages. This will help us to serve a wider audience by publishing more articles and to schedule accepted articles more promptly.