

Physical Review Letters Resubmittal Policy

It is the intent of the resubmittal policy to reduce, insofar as possible, the time between initial submittal and a final editorial decision; iterative improvement of a manuscript through extended anonymous review is felt to be inappropriate. Thus, we make every effort to conclude the anonymous review process with a firm editorial decision no later than at the end of the second round of anonymous referee evaluation. This decision can be to publish the paper in its current form, publish after the authors have considered some optional referee suggestions, or to publish provided specific changes are made; otherwise, the decision is to reject the manuscript.

The following is a scenario of a manuscript receiving negative decisions, as affected by our policy. We do not discuss here favorable decisions or special cases.

If the author responds to the first round of referee reports, further referee evaluation may take place. The editor will inform the authors of a decision against publication as soon as possible. If at this point the author feels there is sufficient cause for an extra degree of consideration and resubmits the manuscript, this is considered to be a formal appeal. The editor will consult a Divisional Associate Editor (DAE), that is, a member of the PRL Editorial Board.

The appeal process differs from the anonymous referee process. The DAE recommendation is based upon the complete editorial file (all editorial decisions including referee identity and qualifications) as well as the scientific content of the manuscript. The DAE may act as “super” referee and evaluate the manuscript as a specialist or may seek further anonymous referee evaluation. In most cases, there already will be sufficient material in the file for the DAE to offer an informed recommendation.

The author of a paper that has been rejected subsequent to a DAE review may request that the case be reviewed by the Editor-in-Chief of the American Physical Society. This request should be addressed to the Chairman of the DAEs who will review the file and, if appropriate, forward the entire file to the Editor-in-Chief. Such appeals must be based on the fairness of the review process, 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.