

ADVICE TO REFEREES

Physical Review Letters aims to publish papers that keep broadly interested physicists well informed on vital current research. Papers are expected to satisfy criteria of **validity**, **importance**, and broad **interest**. We seek your guidance regarding how well this paper meets these criteria, as revealed by your answers to the questions which appear below.

Your assessment is particularly important with regard to scientific soundness. If you advise the editors that the paper is unacceptable for scientific reasons, it will not be published without further review. Your advice on the more subjective aspects is also requested. These aspects require a subjective judgment by you and a subjective editorial decision. Amplification of your point of view is therefore important. It is essential to cite references if the work is judged not new.

- **VALIDITY**

Is the work scientifically sound? If not, do you believe the paper can be revised to correct the scientific defects you find?

- **IMPORTANCE**

Does the manuscript report substantial research? Is the conclusion very important to the field to which it pertains? Is the research at the forefront of a rapidly changing field? Will the work have a significant impact on future research?

- **INTEREST**

Papers are of broad interest if they report a substantial advance in a subfield of physics or if they have significant implications across subfield boundaries. Is this paper of broad interest?

In some cases, the apparent importance and interest of a manuscript may be enhanced by stylistic revision. We welcome your suggestions and ask that you consider the following questions:

Is there an introduction which indicates, to the interested nonspecialist reader, the basic physics issues addressed, and the primary achievements? Is the research placed in the proper context, e.g., are the references appropriate and adequately discussed? Are assumptions clearly presented? Is unnecessary jargon avoided? Do the title and abstract stand alone? Are tables and figures, if any, well used and effectively presented?

The fundamental criteria for publication are validity, importance, and interest. Over the years, various statements of criteria have been published, and many of these retain value if they are regarded as secondary to the fundamental criteria. With that in mind, we ask that you consider the following remarks:

The focus of the journal is basic physics, and publishable Letters should conform to this emphasis. However, it is not our intent to exclude texts that might also contain important results in, for example, applied physics, biological physics, etc.

The journal does not accept marginal extensions of previously published work. For example, when the discovery of a new effect in one system is published, reports of similar explorations in other systems are usually considered inappropriate for the journal's pages, as are confirmations of previous results.

The journal declines publication of papers which appear to parcel research results into fragments for multiple publication.

We welcome speculative ideas provided that their consequences and ramifications have been sufficiently well considered and, to the extent possible, have been spelled out.

We hold the authors responsible for demonstrating adequate awareness of published prior research and for proper acknowledgment of colleagues. We invite the referees' comments on these issues, but we do not hold referees responsible for deficiencies, nor does the journal accept responsibility for them.

SHORT PAPERS IN PHYSICAL REVIEW

Physical Review publishes **Articles**, **Rapid Communications**, **Brief Reports**, and **Comments**. Except for **Articles**, these are limited in length. Editorial policy of the *Physical Review* is guided by the 1995 APS Council statement, which requires that all manuscripts significantly advance physics, be scientifically sound, be important to the field, and be in satisfactory form. Announcements of planned research and progress reports are not suitable for publication. A series of short papers by the same authors on a particular subject is discouraged in favor of a single comprehensive regular article.

A recommendation to publish in a section of the *Physical Review* should not be used to soften rejection as a **Letter**. Papers should independently satisfy the criteria for publication in the recommended section.

Short Regular ARTICLES

Articles in the *Physical Review* may be short. However, if the material is unclear because of attempts to present it in a short format, a recommendation to rewrite the paper as a regular article of suitable length should be made.

RAPID COMMUNICATIONS

Rapid Communications are intended for especially important results that deserve accelerated publication, and are therefore given priority in both the editorial and production process to minimize the time between receipt and publication. **Rapid Communications** are expected to meet the same standards as **Letters**, except that their interest and accessibility are directed at a specialized, rather than general, readership.

BRIEF REPORTS

Brief Reports are short papers that provide accounts of completed research. The same standards of scientific quality apply as for other sections, but they do not warrant the priority handling given to **Rapid Communications**, and are inappropriate as regular articles. Addenda may be suitable as **Brief Reports**, provided they conform to the general publication criteria discussed above.