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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 subpage of 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.

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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 If they feel that it should not be published or if they recommend revisions before publication, they should not regard themselves as anonymous referees.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.

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.

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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 theories or models, and papers describing simulations of apparatus or optimization and feasibility studies.

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.

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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 and to ensure that the content of the manuscript and the list of authors meet with their approval, both initially and through any subsequent changes. If the Editors learn that this is not the case the manuscript is not processed further until all disagreements are resolved.

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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 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.

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 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

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