



## GUIDE FOR CO-EDITORS

### EPL Editorial Procedure

The following is a summary of the procedure normally followed for a manuscript. It is only provided as a general guideline for Co-Editors in the hope that it might help them in their interactions with the authors.

#### 1. Submission

Manuscripts should be submitted via the on-line submission system or by email to the Editorial Office who

- checks the length and the completeness of the manuscript. If the length of a manuscript exceeds 7 printed pages by more than 10% it is immediately sent back to the author; if not, then we go on with the submission procedure.
- We send an acknowledgement letter to the author, asking for details if necessary.
- We choose the appropriate Co-Editor according to the subject of the paper (using keywords) and availability and send him/her an email assigning the paper to him/her. The .pdf file (and possible coverletter) is to be downloaded from the website by the Co-Editor. Authors can also suggest Co-Editors.

In case the Co-Editor feels the paper is not in his/her field of expertise (or in case of conflict of interest), he/she is asked to suggest one of his/her colleagues to the Editorial Office.

If a Co-Editor receives a manuscript directly from the authors, he/she should make sure the Editorial Office has received it as well.

Upon the receipt of the manuscript, the editor to whom the paper has been sent can decide that a paper is unsuitable for EPL. Such a paper is rejected right away, without being sent to referees. Authors of such papers have the same right to appeal as other authors at a later stage in the process (see below).

The Co-Editor should give special attention to the title and abstract of the manuscript. Both of them should be attractive and easy to understand for non-specialists. The introduction of the paper should clearly underline the novelty of the paper. Proper references should also be cited.

If the Co-Editor judges that these points are not met upon the receipt of the paper, a revision can be requested immediately or the modifications should be included in the revised paper when the decision has been made.

## 2. Refereeing Procedure

If the paper passes the first stage, the Co-Editor should send the names of the referees that the Editorial Office should contact (usually two). Authors are also invited to provide a list of possible referees suited to review their paper.

If the Editorial Office does not receive the referee names within one week, a reminder will be sent to the Co-Editor. After three weeks without answer from the Co-Editor, the Editor-in-Chief will send a reminder to the Co-Editor.

The Editorial Office will then send a standard email to the referees, on behalf of the Co-Editor, together with the .pdf file.

Upon receipt of the report, a thank-you letter is sent to the referee and the report is forwarded to the Co-Editor. If a report is sent directly to the Co-Editor, he/she should forward it to the Editorial Office for record.

The referees have the opportunity to fill in five-point quality boxes on the report form on the EPL website. The referees' scores are for the use of the Co-Editors only, to be used as a guidance, the results of these boxes should not be revealed to the authors.

Upon receipt of the referee reports, the Co-Editor makes a decision on acceptance, rejection or revision. If two reports are contradictory, he/she may decide to contact an additional referee.

Note: If a referee cannot review the manuscript, the Editorial Office will ask the Co-Editor for an alternative referee. If a referee passes the paper on to a colleague, the Co-Editor will be informed accordingly.

### **A. Reminders**

The Editorial Office sends reminders to the referees:

- a first reminder is sent if there was no reply within 7 days;
- a second reminder is sent if there was still no reply after 7 additional days;
- a reminder is sent 14 days after the referees had promised to send a report (or later if the referee had specified something different);

### **B. Revision**

If a manuscript needs revision, the reports are transmitted to the author(s) together with the Co-Editor's decision and comments.

- Authors should be asked to explain the changes made to the manuscript and respond to the remarks/criticism of the referee(s). The changes are also supposed to be highlighted in the text. The length of the revised version will not exceed 7 pages. A PDF file is always asked together with the source files.
- An acknowledgment message is sent to the authors for each revised version after the length and completeness have been checked again.
- The Co-Editor will be informed when the pdf file and accompanying letters have been submitted and can be downloaded from the website.

Based on the authors' reply, the Co-Editor can process the manuscript further. Possible courses of action include (a) acceptance or, in exceptional cases, rejection without further review; (b) sending the manuscript to new or to the previous referees for further advice. If further refereeing is sought, the Co-Editor will make a final decision upon receipt of the report(s).

Only two revisions are allowed. If no final decision can be reached after 2 rounds, the paper must be rejected.

**Note:** If no revised version is received four weeks after it was requested, the Editorial Office may consider the manuscript as withdrawn and will close the file (An extra time of 2 weeks is usually allowed when requested).

And if a revised version is received after that, a new submission date will be assigned.

### 3. Final Decision

The responsibility for the final decision lies with the Co-Editor. Except in very rare cases (minor modifications, etc.), a decision resulting from a second round of refereeing concludes the editorial processing of the manuscript. Co-Editors are encouraged to make a decision within 5 weeks from the day when they receive the manuscript. They may decide the fate of a manuscript even if they have had no report or one report only.

When using the EPL website, the Co-Editor has different choices for the final decision: Please see the Appendix of the EPL-Co-Editor-Help-Document.

#### **A. Rejection**

In case of rejection, the (anonymous) reports that led to that decision are sent to the authors.

**Note:** For papers, which were rejected because of specificity of EPL (general interest, etc.) and not because of scientific issues, the authors have the option to transmit the paper to one of the regular papers journals (EPJ, J. Phys. Series, Classical and Quantum Gravity, Plasma Physics and Controlled Fusion (PPCF), Plasma Sources Science and Technology (PSST), Physica Scripta, Journal of Optics, Nanotechnology, New Journal of Physics (NJP), Nonlinearity, Semiconductor Science and Technology, Superconductor Science and Technology or Materials Research Express).

To avoid useless resubmissions and/or appeal, the Co-Editor should clearly explain his/her decision and/or write a report himself/herself.

#### **B. Acceptance**

The Co-Editor should inform the Editorial Office about the acceptance of the manuscript.

The Editorial Office will send a letter to the author explaining the production procedure. The

electronic files are sent to the Production Office where copy-editing will be processed and proofs will be sent to the authors.

Acceptance without referee reports is also possible.

If a paper is accepted without a report, the sentence manuscript “accepted by Professor...” will be added to the published paper.

If the accepted paper is of a very good quality, the Co-Editor may wish to add this paper to the list of Editors’ choices. The paper will be highlighted on the website.

The Co-Editor has just to inform the Editorial Office that the paper should be highlighted by ticking the appropriate box on the website.

#### 4. Editorial Agreement with partner journals

A few years ago, Europhysics Letters (EPL) and the European Physical Journals made an editorial agreement on mutual transfer of papers, which allows to keep the submission date and the reports. In 2006, the agreement was extended to J. Phys., in 2007, it was extended to Classical and Quantum Gravity, in 2009 to PPCF and PSST, in 2013 to Physica Scripta, in 2014 to Journal of Optics, Nanotechnology, New Journal of Physics (NJP), Nonlinearity, Semiconductor Science and Technology, Superconductor Science and Technology and in 2018 to Materials Research Express.

##### 1 - Transfer of papers from EPL to a partner journal

Good papers submitted to EPL which are not of sufficient general interest can be transferred to one of these regular journals. The submission date and the referee reports will be transferred by the Editorial Office. The Editor of the receiving journal can decide to accept the paper directly or can ask referees for further judgement.

##### 2 - Transfer of papers from partner journals to EPL

A paper submitted to a partner journal can be transferred to EPL if the Editor believes the paper is of sufficient general interest. The paper can be accepted in EPL with no further reviewing process or can be send to referees for further judgement.

Note that to benefit from that agreement, the authors should submit their paper formally to the other journal on the Co-Editor’s suggestion. Authors should mention previous consideration by the other journal. Then the editorial offices will contact each other to transfer the editorial file.

#### 5. Authors Appeal

In **exceptional cases**, the authors may appeal a Co-Editor's decision on their paper. The authors' motivation should be clearly explained. Appeals must not be simply a request for further scientific review or additional refereeing, or a disagreement with the scientific appraisal of the reviewers. It must be based on whether the editorial processing for the article has been conducted fairly and in a manner appropriate with the guidelines for the journal. In

case the appeal is accepted, the entire file (including the reports and names of the referees) is transmitted to the Editor-in-Chief who, after consultation with the Co-Editor that was in charge of the manuscript, appoints an adjudicator. On the basis of the adjudicator recommendations, the Editor-in-Chief makes a final decision on the manuscript. The overruled referee(s) are informed of the decision.

This decision is final and there is no further level of appeal.

## **6. Articles submitted simultaneously to another journal**

It is understood that a manuscript submitted to EPL is not published elsewhere and/or is not presently submitted for publication in another journal. Therefore, it is the policy of the journal to reject a paper immediately when it becomes apparent (usually thanks to the referees) that it has been submitted for publication elsewhere.

## **7. Comments and Replies**

EPL publishes Comments on papers, which have previously been published in the journal. The authors of the Letter towards which the Comment is addressed are invited to reply to the Comment within 30 days. Comment and Reply will be published together in the same issue if they are scientifically valid and of interest to the community.

The length of the Comment and the Reply is limited to two printed pages each, including figures and references. **Note:** there are no abstracts in Comments and Replies.

The Comment should refer in its title to the Letter towards which it is directed. It should begin with the main point of criticism. As with a Letter, a Comment and a Reply are acceptable for publication only if they are

- adding value to a scientific issue or clarifying some point
- scientifically sound
- of importance
- and of sufficient general interest.

A Comment should discuss a point centrally related to the Letter criticized, and not simply a general topic or new work. Comments should also not be used as a vehicle to write a paper simply by extending somebody else's work. Authors are not allowed to write Comments on their own Letters, and Comments cannot be used as a substitute for addenda and errata, nor to establish priorities.

Comments and Replies must be written in a collegial style, purely factual. Polemics will be rejected without further consideration.

The received Comment will first be sent to a Deputy Editor who will check its validity. After approval, the Comment is sent to the authors of the criticized paper who are invited to submit a Reply within 30 days. The Reply (if any) is sent to the Deputy Editor who will also check its validity.

Comments and Replies will then be sent to the Co-Editor who was in charge of the criticized Letter if he/she is still on the Board. If not, the Comment and the Reply will be sent to another Co-Editor. Comment and Reply (if submitted) may be sent to the referees of the criticized paper or to independent anonymous referees.

The authors of the Letter criticized are not asked to review the Comment as anonymous referees, and in any transmission, their Reply or their reaction is not treated anonymously. If the authors decide not to write a Reply, the Comment may be published alone. On the other hand, acceptance of the Comment does not guarantee publication of the Reply.

Only one revision is allowed for a Comment or a Reply.

## 8. Errata

Authors who notice an error after the publication of their article can submit an erratum. If the erratum concerns a minor point, it can be sent directly to the Production Office. But in case of major modification, the erratum will be forwarded to the Co-Editor for approval.

## 9. Use of website

Co-editors can follow the status of each manuscript, download .pdf files of each version, provide referee names to the editorial office, send a decision via the website etc... They can also access the address database to find referees.

Our site: <https://mc04.manuscriptcentral.com/epl>

For more technical information on the website, we invite you to read the EPL-Co-Editor-Help-Document at:

[https://www.epleters.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/EPL-Co-Editor-Help-Document\\_new.pdf](https://www.epleters.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/EPL-Co-Editor-Help-Document_new.pdf)

### **GENERAL REMARKS:**

- 1. Every Co-Editor should systematically let the Editorial Office know what actions have been taken on a paper by sending copies of all the correspondence to the Editorial Office for record and follow-up.*
- 2. Co-Editors should inform the Editorial Office of their absences in advance and find replacements when the absence is longer than 2-3 weeks.*