

Editorial

Authors often inquire as to the policy and practice of the *Journal of Chromatography* concerning the review process for submitted articles. The primary aim of the editors and staff is to ensure that the articles published in the journal satisfy the journal's standards for quality of content and presentation. With regard to the quality of the content of an article, this implies that it should significantly contribute to the development of the field. With regard to the quality of presentation, this means that the published work should be as clear, complete and accurate as possible. At the same time, efforts should be made to minimize excessive verbiage and to avoid repeating facts which are well known or contained in the prior literature. Authors should use the recommended chromatographic terminology, and preferably SI units and the generic names of drugs, avoiding commercial names. Also sorbents should be described chemically—at least to some degree. The journal also encourages authors to strive for a writing style that is interesting and 'readable'. To the degree that authors attain these goals, the final paper should be of maximum value to our readers, in turn reflecting credit on the authors.

When an article is first received for publication, it is normally sent to two outside reviewers. The accompanying review forms request both a summary opinion of the paper ("acceptable as is", "after minor revision", etc.) as well as detailed comments where these are applicable. Reviewers are selected on the basis of both general and specific expertise, with "difficult" papers being sent to reviewers who have specialized in the subject of the paper. Articles that pass the review process without serious questions or problems are usually accepted at this point for publication. *However, authors are nevertheless expected to respond in detail to each issue raised by the reviewers.*

Some articles will be returned by the reviewers with the recommendation that the paper be accepted only after major revision—or not at all. In these cases, when the author feels that the work still meets the standards of the journal, it is necessary to consider all points raised by the reviewers, and to both (1) modify the article as appropriate and (2) provide a detailed response to the reviewers' comments. In the absence of a satisfactory response to major questions raised by the reviewers, it will be necessary to reject a manuscript. Authors who believe that their work has not received a competent or fair appraisal from the initial reviewers can request additional reviews by other reviewers. The editors and staff of the journal also attempt to maintain an evenhanded review process.

Rapid publication of results is in the interest of the authors and the journal. Authors are therefore requested to return the revised version of a manuscript as soon as possible. If a revised version is submitted more than six months after the request for revision was communicated to the author, it will generally be regarded as a new submission and be refereed again, because a similar work may have been published in the meantime. If a revised version is not submitted within a year, it is assumed that the

author is no longer interested in publication in the journal, and the file will be closed.

The field of chromatography continues to expand at a rapid rate, with a corresponding increase in the amount and quality of related research activities. With every passing year, the standards by which we judge research articles will be more demanding. Unhappily, this also means an increasing rejection rate for articles submitted to this and other research journals. However, this is the inevitable price of progress. We ask for understanding on the part of both our authors and readers in these changing times.