
REVIEWING GUIDELINES

1. GENERAL

We try to ensure that the reviewers we select are experts in the relevant field(s) and do not have a conflict of interest, and can thus assist us in evaluating whether a manuscript is suitable for publication. In rare cases it can happen that we select an inappropriate reviewer—if this occurs, please inform us immediately.

Time is a scarce resource—especially for reviewers. Therefore, we pre-screen manuscripts for quality, relevance, and interest. Initially, we do not contact more than three reviewers. If a reviewer is not able to review a manuscript at all, or by the deadline provided, they should inform us immediately so that an alternative reviewer can be found. A short extension of the reviewing deadline is certainly possible; please let us know if this is required.

Suggestions for suitable alternative reviewers are greatly appreciated, but reviewers should not approach alternative reviewers directly, as manuscripts should be kept confidential. If we do not hear from a reviewer we assume that a report will be sent in time.

Reviewers may be asked to evaluate a revised version of a manuscript; however, we will not send a manuscript back for re-review if we judge the authors have not made a serious attempt to revise their manuscript in response to the reviewer comments.

Reviewers can use the To-Do list on their personal homepage at www.manuscriptXpress.com to download a PDF of the manuscript for review and to upload their completed review.

2. SCOPE

Advanced Materials publishes original materials science research in the form of short **Communications**, as well as **Reviews**, **Progress Reports**, and **Research News** articles. These cover all aspects of materials science.

Advanced Functional Materials publishes original materials science research in the form of longer **Full Papers**, as well as **Feature Articles** and **Highlights**, covering the same topics in materials science as *Advanced Materials*.

Small publishes original experimental and theoretical studies of fundamental and applied interdisciplinary research at the nano- and microscale in the form of short **Communications** and longer **Full Papers**, as well as **Reviews**, **Concepts**, and **Highlights**.

More detailed descriptions of each article type can be found on the corresponding journal's website under the "For Authors" link.

3. THE EVALUATION FORM

3.1 HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE RESULTS?

Naturally, the judgment of the importance of a paper is to a certain extent subjective. Please note that we ask for an evaluation of the importance only with regard to publication in *Advanced Materials*, *Advanced Functional Materials*, or *Small*.

Thus, a paper can be considered to be important for a broad and heterogeneous readership and thus suitable for publication in these journals, or it may be "only" important to a particular area and thus be more suitable for journals targeting a more specific audience. Referees should give reasons for their judgment of the importance in line with the following guidelines:

1. *Critically important for specialists and high general interest (top 5%)*
 - The results are critically important for researchers working in the specific field.
 - The results are highly innovative and of such significance as to attract the interest of the vast majority of readers.
 - The results corroborate or lead to a new important theory or mechanism, or repudiate an established important theory or mechanism.
 - The scientific community has been waiting for such results for a long time.
2. *Highly important for specialists and significant general interest (top 15%)*
 - The results are important for researchers working in the specific field.
 - The results will attract the interest of a majority of readers.
 - The work is conceptually new.
 - The work is a very significant step forward for an important and/or wider field of research.
3. *Suitable for a more specialized journal*
 - The results are important for researchers working in the specific field, but of limited interest to the majority of readers.
 - The paper would be more suitable for publication in a journal focusing on the specific field.
4. *Less important*
 - The results are of limited interest and could be suitable for publication in a specialized journal.

3.2. DOES THE DATA OBTAINED BY EXPERIMENT OR CALCULATION VERIFY THE HYPOTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS?

Assumptions and hypotheses brought forward in a manuscript must be in accord with the experimental and/or theoretical results. The conclusions must be supported by the experimental data.

In addition, the identity and purity of all new chemical compounds must be fully characterized by appropriate analytical methods (e.g. NMR spectroscopy, X-ray crystal structure analysis, elemental analysis, etc.). These data should be given in the Supporting Information.

3.3. IS THE LENGTH OF THE MANUSCRIPT APPROPRIATE TO ITS CONTENTS?

The **maximum length of a Communication is four journal pages** (approximately 3000 words and three figures/tables), while the **maximum length of a Full Paper is eight journal pages** (approximately 7500 words and eight figures/tables). Longer papers will be accepted only in exceptional cases if their quality warrants special consideration.

Details that are of importance to specialists, but not to most of the readers, should be submitted as Supporting Information. However, the term "Supporting Information" should be taken literally: readers must be able to read a paper without needing to retrieve the Supporting Information. References to Supporting Information should be limited to the first page footnote and the Experimental section. *Papers that make multiple references to Supporting Information data in the main text (figures, for example) should be considered as being "too long"*.

3.4. SHOULD THE ARTICLE BE ACCEPTED?

We ask reviewers to recommend a particular course of action in their report. The final decision by the responsible editor is informed by the strengths of the arguments of the author and all reviewers, and may not always agree with the "majority" of reviewer recommendations. The four possible choices are:

1. *Acceptable without change*: No modifications are necessary; the manuscript is publishable "as-is".
2. *Acceptable after minor revisions*: The manuscript should become acceptable after minor revisions, including:
 - Correcting references or adding more references
 - Improving the quality of graphics
 - Providing more accurate explanations for some of the results
 - Including more results of experiments that can be easily performed or may have been intentionally left out of the original manuscript
 - Shortening the manuscript
 - Correcting language, typos, or otherwise improving the presentation
3. *Reject, but may become acceptable after major revisions*: The manuscript could become acceptable after major revisions, including:
 - Including results of more sophisticated experiments that could take several weeks
 - Completely rewriting the manuscript
4. *Reject*: The manuscript is not acceptable for publication in the journal and is not likely to become so in the future.
 - It may be flawed or have serious problems in the premise, experiments, or interpretation.
 - Rejection should be recommended for manuscripts that are considered "Suitable for a more specialized journal" or "Less important".

In general, problems with the presentation of results require minor revisions, while problems with the data and results require major revisions or rejection.

3.5. RECOMMENDING ANOTHER JOURNAL

It may become apparent during review that a manuscript might be more suitable for a different journal because of topic or length. Reviewers should indicate if a manuscript could become acceptable instead for *Advanced Materials*, *Advanced Functional Materials*, or *Small*, without change or after minor revisions, and possibly without further reviewing. Please consult the guidelines in Section 2 (Scope) above when considering such a recommendation.

Recommendations for other journals when a manuscript is judged to not be acceptable for *Advanced Materials*, *Advanced Functional Materials*, or *Small* may also be helpful for authors.

4. COMMENTS

The Comments section of the reviewer report provides the arguments for the choices described above and can be used by the author to improve their manuscript for publication at the current or a more-specific journal. Reviewers should strive to write clearly, especially for authors for whom English is not their first language; be objective, not subjective; be constructive, not destructive; and treat the author's manuscript and work as they would like their own to be treated.

The "ideal" review will cover the following points:¹

1. Summary
 - Begin with a summary of what the paper is about.
 - Put the findings into the context of the existing state-of-the-art.
 - Indicate the overall significance of the work.
 - Provide an impression of the overall quality of the work and its strengths.
 - State whether there are any major flaws or weaknesses.
2. Major issues
 - Are there any flaws (technological, design, or interpretation), what are they, and what is the severity of their impact on the findings?
 - Has similar work already been published? Is it cited? Do the current results confirm or contradict earlier findings?
 - If findings that contradict current thinking are presented, is the evidence strong enough to support their case? If not, what additional experiments would be required?
 - If major revisions are required, what are they?
 - Are there major issues in the presentation, such as language, structure, or data presentation?
3. Minor issues
 - Are there places where the meaning is unclear or ambiguous?
 - Are the correct references cited? What else should be cited?
 - Is citation adequate, or excessive, limited, or biased?
 - Are there factual, numerical, or unit errors?
 - Are the figures, tables, and schemes appropriate, of sufficient quality, and properly labeled?

¹ Adapted from Irene Hames, *Peer Review and Manuscript Management in Scientific Journals*, Blackwell, Oxford 2007.