

# Expectations for the quality and originality of submissions to *NJC*

**NJC**  
www.rsc.org/njc

As major forces in chemistry publishing, both within Europe and internationally, the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) and the CNRS see *New Journal of Chemistry* (*NJC*) as THE primary vehicle for the publication of chemistry of interest to the community as a whole, including the most important cutting edge advances in any branch of our diverse subject. Since the beginning of the RSC/CNRS partnership in 1998, submissions to *NJC* have more than tripled. This increase has forced a re-evaluation of the standards against which papers are measured and changes in how papers are evaluated. In this editorial, we are setting down our vision for the future of *NJC*. We wish to inform our authors, reviewers and readers of our requirements for the content and significance of submitted manuscripts.

The *NJC* Instructions for Authors<sup>1</sup> begin thus: “*NJC* provides a forum for the publication ... of original and significant work that is likely to be of wide general appeal or exceptional interest in its specialised area”. Qualities such as “wide general appeal”, “exceptional interest” and “significant” are of course subject to opinion, but nevertheless this statement sets out the key goals of the journal.

The undersigned, who are responsible for taking decisions on publication, work closely as a team and with our reviewers to ensure that the acceptance standards comply with the RSC's Refereeing Policy and Procedures<sup>2</sup>. This ensures consistent standards and that we meet the key goals stated above.

For a manuscript to be accepted for publication in *NJC*, it must fulfil two key requirements. Firstly, the referees must note it in the top 30% of papers in the field. Secondly, it must either have wide general appeal or be of exceptional interest to the specialist. With its broad readership across the chemical spectrum, *NJC* encourages submissions that are multidisciplinary in nature, either within the field of chemistry, or at the interfaces between chemistry and related sciences. Equally we are looking for the most exciting results in single disciplines.

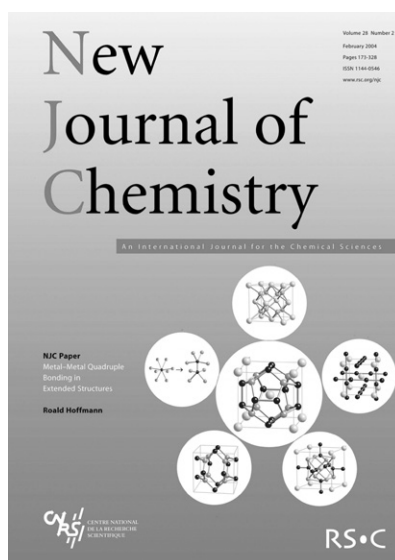
The Editors seek submissions of general interest and of the highest quality. Papers reporting routine studies or follow-up papers that are more appropriate to specialist publications will not be considered for *NJC*. Authors are encouraged to emphasise their significant findings with objective discussion and specific comparison to what has been previously published and to comment on the significance of their findings to the wider community.

In its full papers, *NJC* provides full accounts of scientific investigations with all pertinent results. As stated in the RSC's Ethical Guidelines for Publication in Journals and Reviews<sup>3</sup> authors are obliged to avoid undue fragmentation of their work into multiple manuscripts. This can be grounds for rejection. We strongly discourage repetitive publication of studies in which no significant advance in chemical knowledge or understanding is obtained. These include series of studies in which one parameter is varied without leading to any new chemical insight, or studies that rely on routine techniques for the preparation and/or analysis of compounds not significantly different from those previously reported.

*NJC Letters* are a special class of paper with their own specific acceptance criteria. They constitute a vehicle for the rapid publication of results that are of immediate interest to the chemical community. They are not brief notes reporting routine or fragmented results. Authors should avoid sequential publication of short communications or letters in one or more journals. Following publication of a *Letter*, the results of the complete investigation should be published as a full paper. Authors are required to justify the need for urgent publication of an *NJC Letter* in a carefully written and concise statement accompanying their submission.

During the past year, the entire team responsible for *NJC* has been striving to raise the quality and impact of the journal. In view of the number of submissions, the Editorial Board took the necessary decision last year to raise the standards of acceptance. In 2003, the rejection rate was over 60% (compared to a little over 50% in 2002). As part of our strategy to implement the criteria set out above and to avoid over-burdening our reviewers, we utilise a screening process. All submissions are initially assessed for their suitability for *NJC* by the Editors or a member of the Editorial Board. Those manuscripts that do not meet the requirements of submission are returned to the author without full formal peer review. Like all RSC journals, *NJC* is committed to a fair and just review system, one that is fair to authors and reviewers alike. With this new system, reviewers benefit from a reduced workload and do not spend time on manuscripts when the decision is better taken by an Editor. In return, authors get a more rapid response on these manuscripts and can submit to a more appropriate journal sooner. Authors who are unhappy with any decision, whether this is taken prior to or after peer review, have the right to appeal to the Editor who handled the manuscript by sending further justification of their submission.

To realise its potential, *NJC* continues to innovate with a number of other changes adopted over the past year.



*Perspective* and *Interface* review articles were introduced in the 2004 issue 1 Editorial.<sup>4</sup> With *Opinions*, *Letters* and *Papers*, a full spectrum of formats is now available to *NJC* authors, all packaged in an attractive new design crowned by an illustrated full colour front cover. This cover allows us to feature one of our top authors. “Hot Papers”, as identified by the referees and editors, as well as those most popular with readers online are highlighted on the journal’s home page.<sup>5</sup>

To conclude, we, the Editors, are committed to strengthening *NJC* as an “International Journal of the Chemical Sciences” that publishes the most exciting science with the farthest reaching implications. We ask you, our authors, reviewers and readers, to assist us in this endeavour: send us your best quality work, keep in mind the journal’s aims

when reviewing manuscripts and provide us with constructive feedback and comment. With your help, we can continue to develop *NJC* as a journal that authors are proud to publish in and that readers everywhere look forward to reading.

Clément Sanchez,  
Editor-in-Chief (Paris, France)

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## References

- 1 *NJC* Instructions for Authors: [http://www.rsc.org/is/journals/current/newjchem/njc\\_ag.htm](http://www.rsc.org/is/journals/current/newjchem/njc_ag.htm).
- 2 RSC’s Refereeing Policy and Procedures: <http://www.rsc.org/pdf/authrefs/ref.pdf>.
- 3 RSC’s Ethical Guidelines for Publication in Journals and Reviews: <http://www.rsc.org/pdf/journals/ethicalguidelines.pdf>.
- 4 C. Sanchez, *New J. Chem.*, 2004, **28**, E1 and at: [http://www.rsc.org/CFmuscat/intermediate\\_abstract.cfm?FURL=/ej/NJ/2004/b315372j.PDF](http://www.rsc.org/CFmuscat/intermediate_abstract.cfm?FURL=/ej/NJ/2004/b315372j.PDF).
- 5 *NJC* home page: <http://www.rsc.org/njc>.