

A matter of time

We are changing our policy on when the received date of a manuscript is reset.

Published papers almost always include the dates on which the work was received and accepted by the journal. The received date is one way of determining priority in competing claims to a particular result, which can be important in competitive and fast-developing fields. The risk is that to be 'first', researchers may be tempted to submit preliminary results in the hope that a revised version would eventually be published. In such cases, it can be argued that keeping the original submission date as the received date would be unfair to other researchers who have diligently waited to submit their manuscript until their results were conclusive.

Since its launch in 2006, *Nature Nanotechnology* has had the policy that if a decision was taken not to publish a manuscript, and the authors decided to revise it and asked us to reconsider it, the

new version would automatically be given a new submission date. Clearly, this rule solves the problem of giving priority to preliminary results. However, the preliminary nature of the work is not the only reason why a manuscript might be rejected.

The change will no longer be automatic, and if we feel that we should make an exception, we shall.

In some cases, the decision not to publish a manuscript is based on referee reports that the authors are subsequently able to address or convince the editors and referees that they were unfair. Alternatively, the decision to reject a manuscript might be due to the lack of a specific piece of

experimental or theoretical data, which is deemed essential to make the work suitable for *Nature Nanotechnology*. If, however, the authors are able to provide such data in reasonable time, and the revised work does not change enormously, then it seems fairer, in such cases, that the original submission date is retained.

From now on, when deciding which received date should appear on a paper that has been rejected but is eventually published in the journal, we shall carefully consider its history, the level of revision it has undergone and the time it has taken to resubmit the work. If we feel that the first version of the manuscript was too preliminary to retain the original submission date, we shall change it. But the change will no longer be automatic, and if we feel that we should make an exception, we shall. □

A matter of duty

Corresponding authors should not neglect their responsibility to a journal or their co-authors.

It may seem obvious that each author of a paper should agree with its contents, and we feel certain that this happens in most cases. There are, however, exceptions and therefore it is probably worth reminding corresponding authors that their duties go beyond simply uploading the manuscript files.

When a manuscript is submitted to our journal we assume that all of the co-authors have agreed to its contents.

In this issue we publish a corrigendum on a paper that appeared in our July 2012 issue (7, 459–464; 2012) that was necessary because of a lack of communication between

the corresponding author and some of the co-authors. In this particular case, the resulting mistakes in the description of the methodology used in the work could easily be corrected, but it still required an investigation, which we report in two associated addenda. In other circumstances, the effects may not be as easy to rectify and could, for example, lead to serious problems with the scientific record, difficulties in the relationships between co-authors and, in more extreme cases, disciplinary action.

Our editorial policies specify the responsibility of the submitting author of the manuscript during the time under consideration at the journal, as well as the duties of the corresponding author after publication of the paper (<http://www.nature.com/authors/policies/authorship.html>). It is clearly stated that "The corresponding (submitting) author is solely responsible for

communicating with the journal and with managing communication between co-authors".

When a manuscript is submitted to our journal we assume that all of the co-authors have agreed to its contents. If the paper is accepted we assume that all the authors will see the proofs and agree with the final version and with the author contribution statement. And the corresponding author is responsible for this happening. □

Correction

In the version of the Editorial 'Graphene is not alone' originally published (*Nature Nanotechnology* 7, 683; 2012), the first name of the Review author was spelt incorrectly; it should have read 'Qing'. Corrected in the HTML and PDF versions after print: 14 November 2012.