Appeal for referees

In the Acknowledgements on the previous page, you will see a list of supporters of *The Mathematical Gazette* who do invaluable work advising me of the appropriateness of articles which have been submitted for publication in the journal. This process is very important for maintaining the status of the *Gazette* amongst the mathematical community as a peer-reviewed journal, and it allows me to do my job as Editor effectively. However, the current team of referees in under mounting pressure, with an increasing number of submissions from all over the world, to the extent that some of them are doing far more than their fair share of the work. I am therefore appealing for more readers to come forward and offer their services as potential referees.

On receipt of a new submission, I choose an appropriate referee and send them a copy of the article, asking them to comment on the suitability of the piece for the *Gazette* and on its mathematical accuracy. I ask them to reply within three months, unless there are special circumstances which might prevent them doing so. A good way to start is to read the submission through quickly, deciding what the general thrust of the article is and what sort of mathematical insights are being offered. If it is clearly inappropriate – for example by being incorrect, uninteresting, or too academic or specialised for the *Gazette* – the referee will recommend immediate rejection. If it is excellent in every respect and would fit in exactly with what the journal expects, they can suggest immediate acceptance. The most likely response, however, is to list the strengths and weaknesses of the paper and suggest ways to improve it. It is of course the job of the author to ensure that the English is good, but sometimes the referee also offers advice on the use of language. It is also common to emphasise elements of house style, such as the way to list references or set out proofs. Usually an author, upon receiving such a report, revises the submission and it is then suitable for publication, but sometimes it needs to be sent back to the referee for further comment. Of course, it is my task as Editor to make the final decision.

Any reader who is willing to offer their services as a referee should e-mail or write to me using the contact details on the next page. I will then send a form which allows them to specify topics in which they have expertise and interest, and also more information on what the job involves. No referee is under pressure to accept a submission and can ask me to give them a rest at any time. I do hope, however, that I will have a few new names to add to the Acknowledgements at the end of 2019, as a result of this appeal for assistance.

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