

Editorial

The new A&A Letters: Short, unlimited, and free for all

The advent of streamlined publishing workflows in recent decades has culminated in the online-only versions of the leading journals in our field. With this, an obvious question has arisen: what is the role of the Letters when publication time is no longer an issue? Letters originated when publication time was very long, shipping was by post, and a faster channel was needed to inform the community of significant or time-critical results.

Is there still a *raison-d'être* for Letters in today's publishing landscape? At A&A we think there is. Rapidity remains an important issue for authors, but "rapid publication" should now be seen as allowing authors to write short and focused manuscripts on significant ideas or results. Occasionally in our careers, researchers all experience the unexpected but spectacular result of our observations, simulations, or theories, or the first exciting results from a large survey, or even the "great idea I had at this conference that I need to tell you about". A&A Letters is the publication home for these papers. Letters can be more speculative but they must be self-contained and have an impact in a particular field.

Today we are delighted to announce the revised scope for A&A Letters.

A&A Letters are short manuscripts on a significant result or idea, vetted by a peer-review process. A&A Letters are:

- Free for all researchers across the world. They have both no page charges for publication and immediate open-access status.
- Limited to 3000 words (four or five pages) but can have unlimited supporting material as appendices.
- Treated on a fast-track. A referee's report is expected about ten days after submission. Authors are expected to react to referee reports in a similar time.

For exceptional discoveries, and if requested by the authors, Letters can be accepted by the A&A Editorial Board and published on an even faster track.

João Alves
Thierry Forveille