Editorial

Géotechnique has a long tradition of rigorous review of papers, and this is one of the cornerstones on which the reputation of the journal is established. We should not, however, be complacent, and the *Géotechnique* Advisory Panel (GAP) has decided, after much thought, to change our procedures slightly. In the interests of transparency I think it is helpful if our readership is kept informed of these changes.

At present each paper is reviewed by one referee who is not a member of the GAP, and an assessor drawn from the GAP. Each of these is chosen at a full meeting of the Panel. When the referee and assessor's reviews are received they are discussed by the Panel, and the decision whether or not to publish is made collectively. The fact that the assessor is present at the discussion of the paper of course makes for a properly informed discussion. This active involvement of a very experienced editorial board is unusual for learned journals, and one we value highly. For most journals, the editor chooses two (sometimes three) referees, and once the reports are received, makes an executive decision whether to publish. Our system has served us extremely well, but in these days of ever-increasing standards of quality assurance we feel that we need to seek the views of more than one referee from outside the Panel.

If there are any uncertainties attached to the referees' report we already consult a second external referee, but in future we plan to send every paper to two referees outside the Panel. The role of the assessor will be to moderate the two referees' reports, carry out their own assessment and present a consolidated view to the Panel. We expect that this will not only enhance our standards of reviewing, but will also provide more informative feedback to authors.

We also intend to improve the reviewing of Technical Notes, which are at present refereed by present and past members of the GAP. In future each Technical Note will be sent to an external referee as well as a GAP assessor. The processing of Technical Notes can, however, be somewhat faster than that of full papers, as the Honorary Editor, rather than the full Panel, chooses the referee and assessor.

We hope that the new procedure will also speed up slightly the reviewing of full papers. Our referees work hard, but occasionally a review can become delayed. If a report is delayed we shall be flexible enough to proceed on the basis of one unequivocal referee's report and the assessment by the Panel member.

I hope that these new procedures will help maintain the high standards that we set for *Géotechnique*, and will improve the service that authors receive. Inevitably they will place a somewhat greater burden on referees, on whom we depend heavily, so we are taking steps to alleviate this by widening the circle of referees that we ask to do this important task.

As always, I am happy to receive comments about any aspect of *Géotechnique*, preferably sent by email to guy.houlsby@eng.ox.ac.uk.

It is with sadness that I have to inform readers that Neil Trenter has died. Neil had only joined the *Géotechnique* Advisory Panel at the beginning of this year, and we were looking forward to gaining from his wealth of experience. He will be missed by many friends from the geotechnical community.

*Professor G.T. Houlsby, Oxford University
Honorary Editor*