



## Polymer Characterization

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### Message from the Guest Editor

Under its many forms, fluorescence has become an essential tool for the structural and dynamic characterization of synthetic and biological macromolecules in solution and in a solid state. Its extreme sensitivity enables one to probe macromolecules under conditions that are so dilute (sub-mg/L concentrations can be easily achieved) that they prevent intermacromolecular interactions during that short time window (a few tens of nanoseconds) where the fluorescent probe remains excited, in essence allowing the study of isolated macromolecules. Furthermore, novel living radical polymerization techniques have provided scientists with means to incorporate dyes in well-defined synthetic macromolecules of ever more complex architectures and at positions of which specificity was once believed to be solely available to biological macromolecules. The length scales probed by fluorescence, ranging from several angstroms up to ten nanometers, are also ideally suited for the study of macromolecules, being themselves a few nanometers in size. Due to its long scientific history, some might believe that fluorescence has nothing new to offer.





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