

USER'S
MANUAL



FLOW RATE PLATFORM

OCT 2024



PRECAUTIONS

Do not open Flowboard and FLOW UNIT devices. Please refer all servicing to after-sales service department (support@fluigent.com)

Prevent any objects or liquid from entering the Flowboard and FLOW UNITS, this may cause a short-circuit failure or other malfunction. Failing to respect this advice would:

- Expose you to direct current/voltage in case the device is under voltage which may lead to severe damages
- Void device's warranty
- Discharge our company from any liability regarding physical or device damages.

Do not place the product in an unstable location with a level surface and a strong and stable support

Do not use other power supply than the one provided, it has been carefully selected to meet the power requirements of the Flowboard in all configurations and to comply with all safety standards.

The diameter of the FLOW UNIT XS capillary is small: 25 µm. Filter your solution, if possible add a filter in the fluidic path and clean the FLOW UNIT XS after each use.

SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

The Flow Rate Platform provides a solution for measuring and/or controlling flow-rates for any fluidic applications. Combining this system with our pressure handling system (Flow EZ™ or MFCS™) will give you the opportunity to check at all times flow-rate and volume of liquids flowing through your fluidic system. It can be personalised with four (4) or eight (8) Flow UNIT inserted in the casing. The five (5) different flow rate sensors models that can be included offer an extensive choice of flow-rate ranges to best match your required precision, from 7 nL/min to 5 mL/min.

This user manual will show you how to install and use the Flow Rate Platform in your daily work. It will describe all its functionalities and will help you to connect all the different sensors models and to use it with all the equipment, especially our pressure based flow controller, Flow EZ™ and MFCS™ and our software OxyGEN to monitor and control the flow rates.

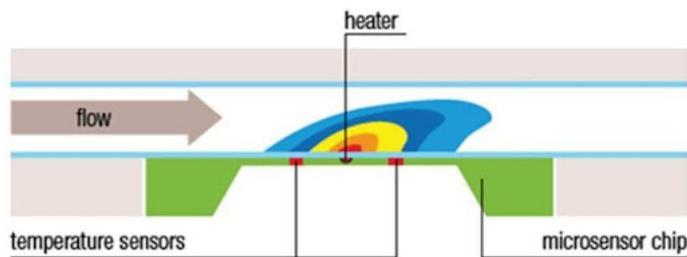
INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INFORMATION

TECHNOLOGY PRINCIPLE

The Flow Unit, integrated to the FRP, enables flow-rate measurements, in a wide range of flow-rates thanks to the five (5) models: XS, S, M, L, XL.

The flow-rate acquisition is based on a thermal technology. A heating element on the microchip adds a minimal amount of heat to the medium for the thermal flow measurement. Two (2) temperature sensors, symmetrically located above and below the source of the heat, detect even the slightest temperature differences, thus providing the basic information about the spread of the heat, which itself is directly related to the flow-rate.



This user manual will show you how to install and use the Flow Rate Platform. It will describe all the device functionalities and will help you to connect the sensors of the device and to use it with all the equipment: with Fluigent Flow EZ™ and MFCS™-EZ

The FRP integrates 4 or 8 FLOW UNIT. The user can chose between the five (5) different FLOW UNIT models that are available for flow rates ranging from 7 nL/min to 5 mL/min. All the fluidic specifications are displayed in the specification table.

Here is a picture of the two different FRP models with 4 or 8 integrated flow rate sensors.



Note: The Flow Rate Platform can work at its best performances with FLUIGENT pressure flow control solutions (FLOW EZ™ and MFCS™-EZ). More details on www.fluigent.com.

SPECIFICATIONS

SENSOR PERFORMANCE					
Sensor model	XS	S	M	L	XL
Calibrated media	Water	Water, IPA	Water, IPA	Water, IPA	Water
Range	0±1.5µL/min	0±7µL/min 0±70µL/min	0±80µL/min 0±500µL/min	0±1mL/min 0±10mL/min	0±5mL/min
Accuracy (m.v.= measured value) also applies to negative values	10% m.v. above 75 nL/min 7.5 nL/min below 75 nL/min	5% m.v. above 0.42 µL/min 21 nL/min below 0.42 µL/min 20% m.v. above 4.2 µL/min 210 nL/min below 4.2 µL/min	5% m.v. above 2.4 µL/min 0.12 µL/min below 2.4 µL/min 20% m.v. above 25 µL/min 5 µL/min below 25 µL/min	5% m.v. above 0.04 mL/min 1.5 µL/min below 0.04 mL/min 20% m.v. above 0.5 mL/min 100 µL/min below 0.5 mL/min	5% m.v. above 0.2 mL/min 10 µL/min below 0.2 mL/min
Lowest detectable flow increment	3.7 nL/min	10 nL/min	0.06 µL/min	0.7 µL/min	3 µL/min
MECHANICAL SPECIFICATIONS					
Sensor diameter	25 µm	150 µm	430 µm	1 mm	1.8 mm
Max pressure	200 bar	200 bar	100 bar	15 bar	15 bar
Wetted materials	PEEK & Quartz Glass	PEEK & Quartz Glass	PEEK & Borosilicate Glass	PEEK & Borosilicate Glass	PEEK & Borosilicate Glass
Inner volume	1 µL	1.5 µL	5 µL	25 µL	80 µL
Inner diameter	25 µL	150µL	430 µL	1.0 mm	1.8 mm

Please note that the maximum pressure depends on the FLOW UNIT model. Ensure that the pressure applied to a FLOW UNIT does not go beyond this value at all times.

The FLOW UNIT suits your own fluid controller. If you use a pressure regulator you may have to enter a maximum pressure below this value. If you use other flow controller, be aware that pressure may go higher than 100 bar very easily and may cause damage to your FLOW UNIT.

FLOW RATE PLATFORM DESCRIPTION

DEVICE DESCRIPTION



The FRP has four (4) (FRP4) or eight (8) (FRP8) fluidic ports on each side of the device.

The positive flow-rate direction is indicated on the device by an arrow on the top.

The flow sensors are numbered as follows, and will be displayed in this order in the OxyGEN software :



On this picture, the first flow sensor is an XL while the others are S or M.

DESCRIPTION

GENERAL FLUIDIC CONNECTION

XS TUBING & FITTINGS

The XS model have two (2) fluidic ports.

The characteristics of those two (2) ports are: Thread-size: UNF 6-40. Compatible with tubings of 1/32" external diameter (1/32" OD).

To get started, FLUIGENT can provide you a "CTQ_KIT_LQ_XS" kit including:

- Two (2) green sleeve 1/16" OD x 0.033"x1.6"
- Two (2) LQ flow unit connector for 1/32"OD tubing,
- One (1) meter of PEEK Tubing Blue 1/32" OD x0.010" ID
- Two (2) adapters PEEK 1/16" to 1/32" OD tubing
- One (1) PEEK filter XS
- One (1) tubing connector 1/16 - 1/32



Note : to avoid damaging and to prevent clogging the Flow Unit XS, we strongly recommend using the filter supplied in the kit.

S / M TUBING & FITTINGS

The S and M FLOW UNIT models have two (2) fluidic ports.

The characteristics of those two (2) ports are: Thread-size: UNF 6-40.

Compatible with tubings of 1/32" external diameter (1/32" OD).

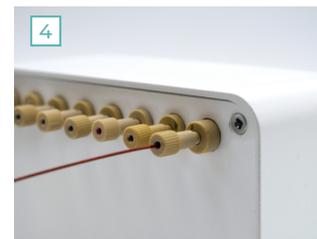
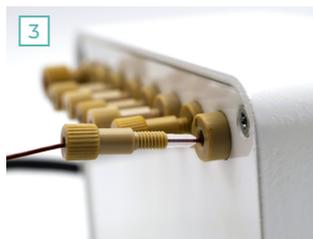
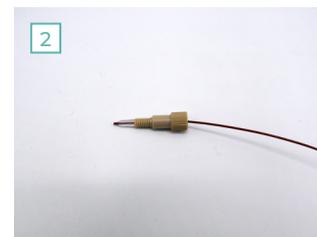
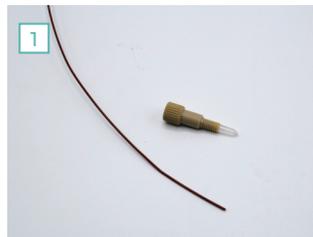
To get started, FLUIGENT can provide you a "CTQ_KIT_LQ" kit including:

- One (1) green sleeve 1/16" OD x 0.033"x1.6"
- Two (2) LQ flow unit connector for 1/32"OD tubing,
- One (1) meter of PEEK Tubing Blue 1/32" OD x0.010" ID
- One (1) adapter PEEK 1/16" to 1/32" OD tubing



Note: As there is a wide variety of tubings and fittings for the different applications that you may use, FLUIGENT advises you to make sure that your fluidic connection system fits with the two (2) fluidic ports of the FLOW UNIT. If not, please note that there is a large panel of adapters and unions to connect your tubings to ours. Visit www.fluigent.com to learn more about materials and ID available with 1/32" or 1/16" OD tubing, nuts and ferrules from fittings suppliers to suit your application.

XS / S / M CONNECTION



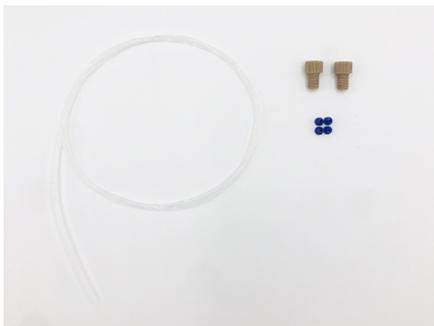
1. Cut the 1/32" OD tubing to the desired length, leaving a square-cut face.
2. Slide the fitting over the tubing.
3. Insert the assembly into the receiving port, and while holding the tubing firmly against the bottom of the port, tighten the fitting finger tight.
4. To check the tightness of your connection, you may pull gently on the tubing: it must stay fitted in the ferrule and nut.
5. Do the same thing on the 2nd port.

L / XL TUBING & FITTINGS

The L and XL FLOW UNIT models have two fluidic ports.
The characteristics of those two (2) ports are: Thread-size: ¼-28.
Flat-bottom type (FB).
Compatible with tubings of 1/16" external diameter (1/16" OD).

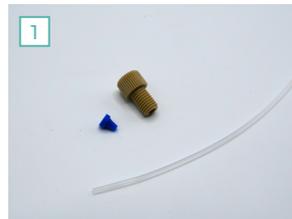
To get started, FLUIGENT can provide you the "CTQ_KIT_HQ" kit including:

- Two (2) Flow Unit HQ connector ¼-28 Flat
- Bottom for 1/16" OD tubing
- Four (4) ferrules for HQ flow unit
- 1 m FEP tubing 1/16" OD * 0.020"ID



Note: As there is a wide variety of tubings and fittings for the different applications that you may use, FLUIGENT advises you to make sure that your fluidic connection system fits with the two (2) fluidic ports of the FLOW UNIT. If not, please note that there is a large panel of adapters and unions to connect your tubings to ours. Visit www.fluigent.com to learn more about materials and ID available with 1/32" or 1/16" OD tubing, nuts and ferrules from fittings suppliers to suit your application.

L / XL CONNECTION



1. Cut the 1/16" OD tubing to the desired length, leaving a square-cut face.
2. Slide the nut over the tubing with the nut thread facing the tubing end being connected.

Slip the ferrule over the tubing, with the tapered portion of the ferrule facing the nut. NB: the nuts and ferrules are specifically designed to work together. (FLUIGENT advises you to only associate the provided ferrules with the provided nuts and vice-versa).

3. Insert the assembly into the receiving port, and while holding the tubing firmly against the bottom of the port, tighten the nut finger tight..
4. To check the tightness of your connection, you may pull gently on the tubing: it must stay fitted in the ferrule and nut.
5. Do the same thing on the 2nd port.

STORAGE

Do not forget to put the yellow plugs on for storage as shown on this picture.



SETTING UP WITH A PRESSURE CONTROLLER

The FRP can be connected with any of our pressure controllers : the Flow EZ™ or the MFCST™.

SETTING UP WITH FLOW EZ™

FLOW EZ™ DESCRIPTION

The Flow EZ™ is the most advanced system available for pressure-based flow control. The compact device stands near the microfluidic device, allowing the user to minimize bench space use without the need of a PC. One can be operational and generate data rapidly. The Flow EZ™ supports reservoir sizes from 2 mL to one liter laboratory bottles. One can use large reservoirs and maintain continuous, pulseless flow for days without refilling.



Flow EZ™

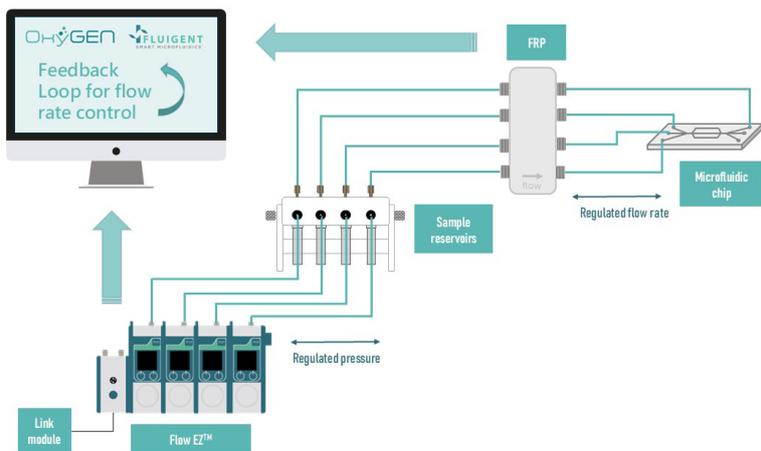
CONNECTION TO THE SOFTWARE

For control using the OxyGEN software a Link module, connected to the Flow EZ, must be added to the setup:

The link module is a module which allows communication between the Flow EZ and the computer. For more information please refer to the lineup user manual :

<https://www.fluigent.com/resources-support/support-tools/downloads/user-manuals/lineup-series-user-manual/>

SET UP



Do not forget to clean and rinse your FRP after use.

SETTING UP WITH MFCSTM

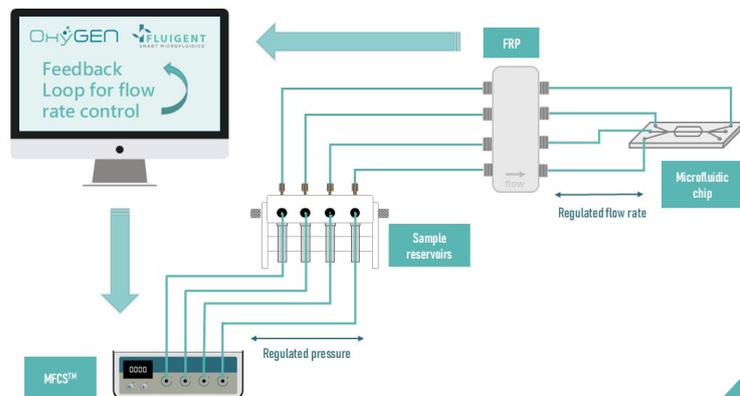
MFCSTM DESCRIPTION

The Microfluidic Flow Control System is the first generation of pressure based microfluidic flow controller. By using the patented FASTAB™ microfluidic technology, the MFCSTM generates a constant pressure-driven flow rate that allows for reliable and repeatable experiments. The MFCSTM-EX provides up to 8 negative or positive pressure channels to pressurize multiple fluid reservoirs.



MFCSTM

SET UP



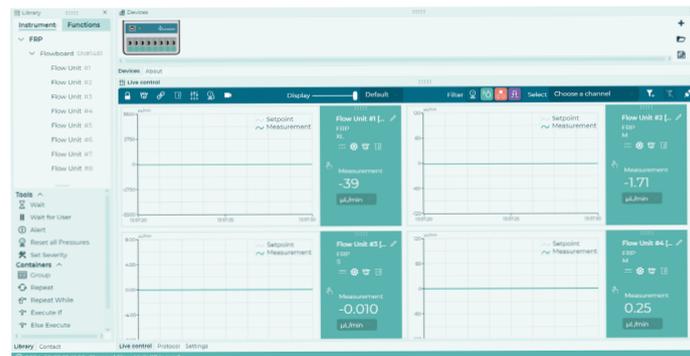
QUICK START GUIDE

1. Connect the FRP to the computer with the USB Cable
2. Then, start the software (OxyGEN) installed on your computer (user manual) from the following link : <https://www.fluigent.com/resources-support/support-tools/software/oxygen/>
3. You can now see all the Flow Units from the Flow Rate Platform in the software and control it for your application.

OXYGEN: MEASURE AND CONTROL THE FLOW-RATE

Once the Flow Rate Platform have been successfully connected, in order to measure and control flow rate you just need to launch the OxyGEN software.

The oxygen software will automatically detect the flow sensors inserted in the FRP and show immediately the flow rate measure of each connected flow unit on the Flow rate graphs.



For more detailed information please see the OxyGEN user manual in the following link: <https://www.fluigent.com/resources-support/support-tools/downloads/user-manuals/>

SENSORS CHARACTERIZATION

With OxyGEN software, information on the characteristics of the Flow Units that constitute your platform can be found.

In particular, one can have access to the sensor model (XS, S, M, L, XL) and its position in the device.

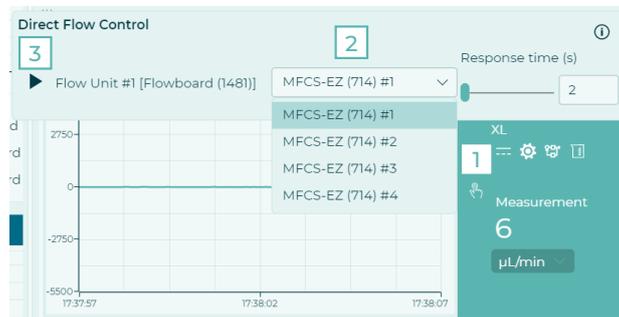
Position of the sensor in the platform (refer to FRP description)

Flow Unit model

For more detailed information on each flow rate sensor model, please refer to the specifications that are detailed in this user manual or in the Flow Unit data sheet.

LINKING WITH A PRESSURE CONTROLLER

Once your setup realised and the flow rate platform connected to your PC, linking your flow sensor to your pressure controller is very easy. You can regulate and monitor the flow in your setup by following the steps below.

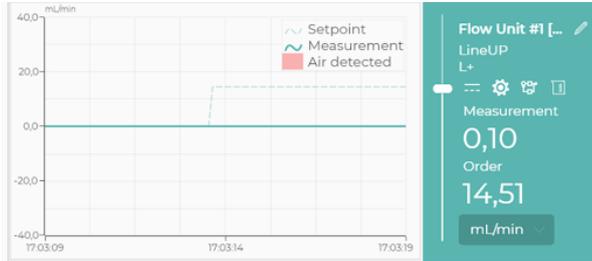


1. Click on the hand icon to open the window of Direct Flow Control
2. Choose the MFCS channel or the FlowEZ that you want to connect with the chosen flow sensor.
3. Click on the play icon to close the window and have access to Direct Flow Control.
4. Repeat the same process with all the flow sensors of your setup.

FLOW-RATE GRAPH

The flow rate graph reports the current flow-rate sensor measurements. Once connected to your pressure controller, if flow rate control is needed, the DFC can be launched by clicking on the hand icon.

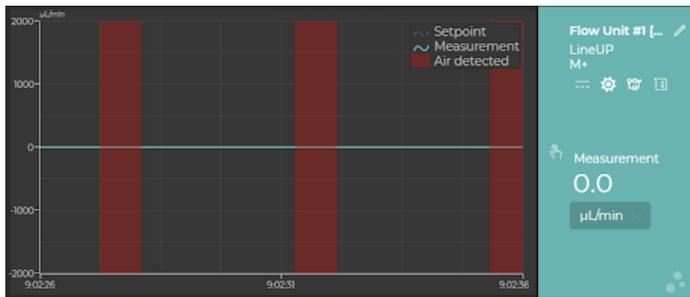
SETTING UP



The new order can be either given via the vertical cursor if a DFC has been set up Flow rate graphs or as a number in the dedicated text field. One can change the unit of reference via the select box under the “Order” field. The name of the channel (that can be modified) and its characteristics can be seen in the top right corner.

BUBBLE DETECTION

When air is detected, red areas will be displayed on the flowgraph over the period of detection.



DUAL CALIBRATION

PRINCIPLE OF SINGLE AND DUAL CALIBRATION

The different FLOW UNIT models are calibrated to provide an accurate reading when used with the corresponding fluid, water or isopropyl alcohol.

For the FLOW UNIT model XS and XL, only one single calibration for water is available.

For the FLOW UNIT models S/M/L, two calibrations are available:

Water and Isopropyl alcohol.

The FLOW UNIT can be used to handle different fluids not originally calibrated for. When possible, select a standard calibration field that most closely matches your fluid. For example, water calibration can be used for water-based solution and isopropyl alcohol calibration for hydrocarbons or oil. The calibration can be selected and switched in the software.

In order to obtain accurate flow-rates for alternative fluids, it is necessary to use correction factors (scale factor), to convert the displayed value into the actual value. The scale factor can be added in the software (see Custom scale factor in the corresponding user manual).

Adding the scale factor ensures that the flow sensor reading is now accurate for the target fluid.

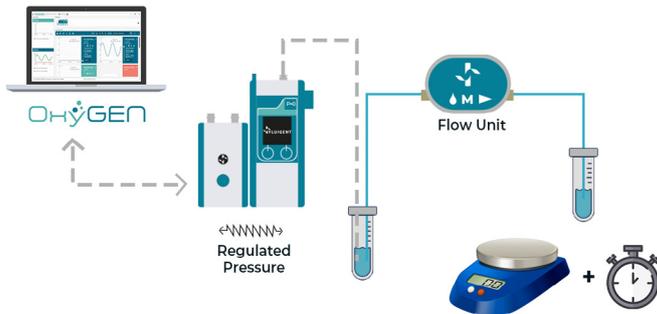
The following section explains how you can calculate this scale factor and shows an example with a fluorinated oil: HFEHFE.

CALIBRATION METHOD: EXAMPLE WITH HFE CALIBRATION

A method for providing a known flow-rate is required to work out the scale factor for the selected fluid. This could be a syringe pump, a peristaltic pump or a pressure regulator delivering fluid onto a precision balance with volume calculated from known density.

Here is an example using Flow EZ™, a fast and stable pressure-based flow controller delivered by FLUIGENT. The aim of this FASTAB™ technology is to pressurize a reservoir containing the fluid of interest to be injected through the microfluidic system.

Make a table that contains the time for each measurement, the flow-rate of the pump and the data measured by the FLOW UNIT. A minimum of 3 measurements is recommended for each flow-rate.



The principle of the experiment is to inject the desired fluids, here HFE, through the desired FLOW UNIT model connected to the Flow EZ™. Simultaneously record the flow-rate given by the software and measure the weight of fluid collected over a chosen period of time. Knowing the fluid density, you are able to determine the actual flow-rate.

Note that if a peristaltic or a syringe pump is used, one must wait until the target flow-rate is reached (settling times can be long) and to calculate an average flow-rate due to the pulsations.

The list of materials needed to reproduce the experiment is given below:

- One (1) FLOW EZ™
- One (1) FLOW UNIT model
- One (1) precision weighing scale

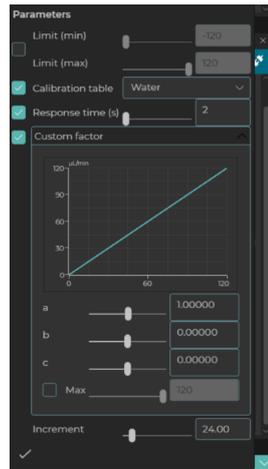
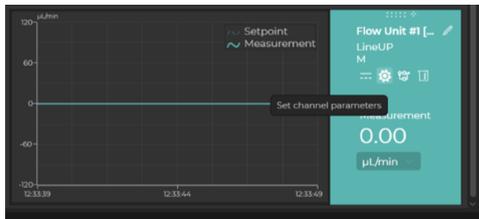
The table below displays the information recorded during the experiment: the pressure imposed by the Flow EZ™, Q_s the flow-rate recorded by the FLOW UNIT sensor through the Flow EZ™ or OxyGEN, Q_w the flow-rate measured with the precision weighing scale, and Q_w/Q_s the calculated scale factor for a single point calibration.

	1	2	3
Pressure (mbar)	90	90	90
Q_s (µl/min)	100,00	100,00	100,00
Q_w (µl/min)	459,87	469,07	473,66
Q_w / Q_s	4,60	4,69	4,74

Consequently, when working around 100 $\mu\text{L}/\text{min}$ (target flow-rate), you have to add the scale factor of 4.68 so that the measurement of the sensor corresponds to the actual flow-rate for HFE.

This custom calibration can be directly implemented on OxyGEN software using the “Set channel parameters” on OxyGEN ([more information on OxyGEN user manual](#)), where a, b and c represent factors of a polynomial function, $ax + bx^2 + cx^3$. For liquids where a linearity between different imposed flow rate is observed, only a can be used.

For more complex liquids that do not have a linear behavior, we recommend to perform several measures at distinct points (for instance 10%, 50% and 90% of the flow rate range), generate a polynomial function using a spreadsheet program, and apply the calculated coefficients on OxyGEN.



CLEANING PROCEDURE

FLOW UNIT models are highly sensitive and should be properly cleaned to always maintain high performance. With proper care and maintenance, the Flow Units can last many years. No cleaning or improper cleaning may leave deposits on the internal capillary wall which could result in measurement deviations and even clogging. Cleaning the sensor after use and before storing the device for a long period of time should prevent the sensors from any damage.

EXPLANATION

Inside the liquid flow sensors, the sensor chip measures the flow through the wall of a thin walled glass capillary. Because the measurement uses the heat propagation through the glass wall and the heat exchange with the medium, it is critical that the coupling of the chip with the medium is not altered. Formation of deposits on the glass wall inside the capillary may block the heat transfer.

GENERAL HANDLING

Do not allow the sensor to dry with media in the capillary tube without flushing clean first. Also try to avoid letting the filled sensor sit for extended periods (depending on your liquid).

Before storing the sensor, always drain of fluid, flush with cleaning agent, blow out, and dry the capillary.

For the XS FLOW UNIT model, filter your solution through a 5µm (or lower) membrane filter.

PROCEDURE

Cleaning and flushing of the Flow Units should consider the nature of the materials that were being pumped through them. Typically, one should select a cleaning solution that is safe for the Flow Unit (the inside surface) and the rest of the set up yet will dissolve the type of samples that were in contact with the surface.

For Flow Unit XS and S, fluids have to be compatible with PEEK & Quartz glass. For Flow Unit M, L and XL, fluids have to be compatible with PEEK & Borosilicate Glass.

The following steps are recommended for water-based solutions, in the right order:

1. Rinse all your system with water
2. Clean the Flow Unit with a non-foaming detergent.

The detergent needs to be compatible with Flow Unit, the rest of your set-up (microfluidic chip, especially) and fluids used before during your experiment. Remove all the contaminants thanks to a disinfectant (for example, Javel bleach). Rinse the Javel bleach (or the selected disinfectant) with water.

Rinse all you system with isopropanol. Thanks to this final step, you won't leave any trace on your FLOW UNIT.

Then, sensor yellow plugs must be installed for storage.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FLUIDS

Working with multiple liquids

Switching between multiple liquids can leave transient deposits in the form of liquid layers inside the glass capillary. This is especially common for insoluble liquids, but can happen even with miscible liquid combinations. For example, when IPA is followed by water in a sensor without drying in between, large offsets can be observed for hours after switching to water.

If possible, dedicate a separate sensor for each different liquid to be measured. If not possible, use caution when switching media and clean properly.

Working with water

When working with water it is recommended not to let the sensor dry out. All salts and minerals in the water will deposit on the glass and are difficult to remove. Although salt solutions are particularly prone to problems, even clean water can still contain enough dissolved minerals to form a deposition layer. Flush with DI water on a regular basis to prevent build-up. If you still encounter problems, occasionally flush the sensor with slightly acidic cleaning agents.

When working with water containing organic materials (sugars, etc.) microorganisms often grow on the walls of the glass capillary and form an organic film that can be difficult to remove. Flush on a regular basis with solvents such as ethanol, methanol or IPA, or with cleaning detergents to remove organic films.

Working with silicone oils

When working with silicone oil it is recommended not to let the sensor dry out. Silicone oils can be cleaned out using special cleaners. Check with your silicone oil supplier for cleaning agents compatible with glass surfaces.

Working with paints or glues

When working with paints or glues it is critical not to let the sensor dry out. Often, depositions of paints and glues cannot be removed anymore after they have dried. Flush the sensor with cleaning agents recommended by your paint or glue manufacturer that are compatible with glass. Ensure that you have found a good cleaning procedure before performing the first tests, and always clean shortly after emptying the sensor.

Working with alcohols or solvents

Unlike most other fluids, alcohols and solvents are not critical and a short flush of isopropanol (IPA) is sufficient to clean the capillary walls.

Other liquids or applications

If uncertain about your application and how to clean the flow sensor, please contact FLUIGENT for additional support at support@fluigent.com.

IDENTIFIED CLEANING SOLUTIONS

Sample liquid	Cleaning solution	Supplier
Biofilm/cells	- Biofilm remover - Sodium dichloroisocyanurate (1 ppm HClO; ref: 218928)	- Umweltanalytik - Sigma Aldrich
1% micro-beads of polystyrene in DI Water	Toluene 99.8% (ref: 244511)	Sigma Aldrich
Mineral oil (Sigma cat no.5904)	RBS 25 (ref: 83460)	Sigma Aldrich
Blood	-BD FACS Clean -RBS 25 (ref: 83460)	- BD - Sigma Aldrich

Cleaning Methods that are not recommended

In general, any cleaning by mechanical means should be avoided. Never enter the sensor's flow path with sharp objects that could scratch the glass surface. Furthermore, no abrasives or liquids containing solids that can grind the surface clean should be used. Anything that affects the glass wall will cause deviations in the measurement performance or permanently damage the sensor.

Strong acids and bases should also not be used to clean the sensor. Acids can sometimes be used in low concentration and at low temperatures. Before using the acid check how compatible it is with borosilicate 3.3 glass (Pyrex® or Duran®).

SERVICING & WARRANTY

SERVICE SCHEDULE

Component	Servicing interval
All system	Regular inspection for external damage / leaks
FLOW UNIT	Regular inspection for external damage / leaks Cleaning after each use to prevent buildup of debris
Flowboard	Regular inspection for external damage / leaks

WARRANTY TERMS

What This Warranty Covers

This warranty is granted by Fluigent and applies in all countries. Your Fluigent product is guaranteed for one year from the date of delivery at your laboratory against defects in materials and workmanship. If found to be defective within the warranty period, your Fluigent product will be repaired or replaced free of charge.

What This Warranty Does Not Cover

This warranty does not cover routine maintenance, or damage resulting from the failure to maintain the product in accordance with instructions provided by Fluigent. This warranty also does not cover damage that arises from accidental or intentional misuse or abuse, alteration or customization, or repaired by unauthorized persons.

SERVICING & WARRANTY

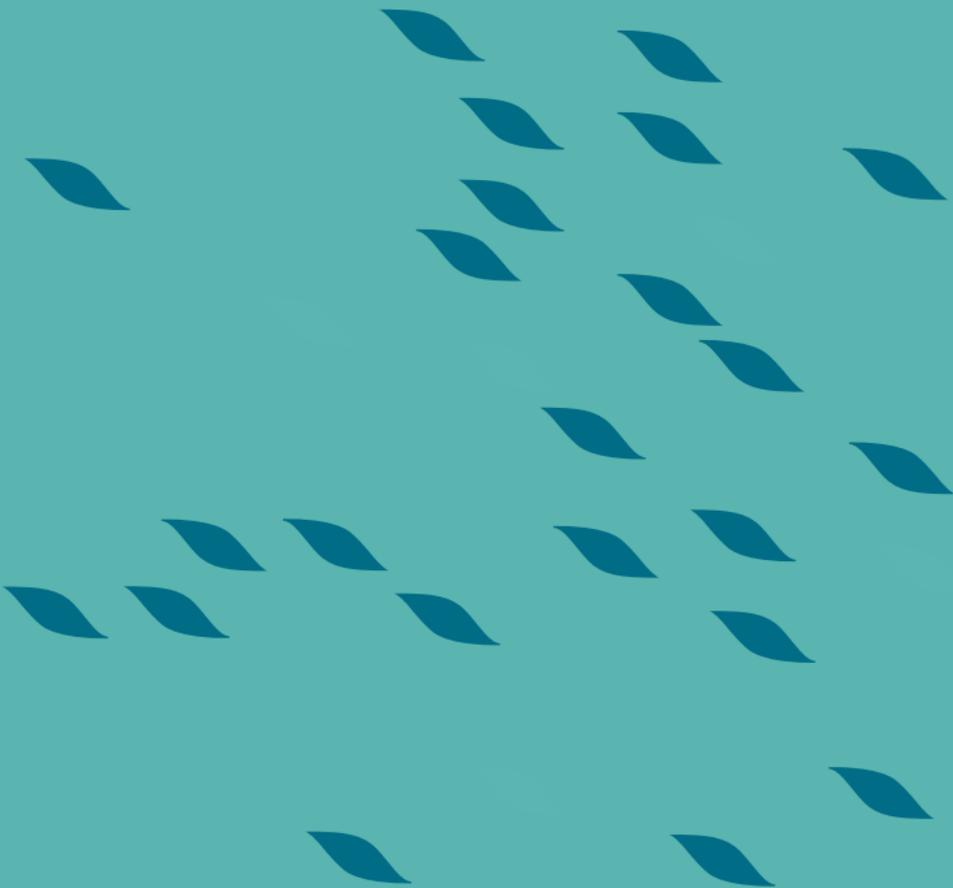
How to Get Service

If something goes wrong, contact the Fluigent dealer from whom you purchased your product. Arrange a mutually convenient time for Fluigent service representative to discuss over the problem and find a solution to fix the issue. Will be favored any remote repairs, but in case more actions need to be taken, the system will come back to Fluigent offices (for no additional cost, only if it is under warranty).

The warranty conditions are:

- Do never open the FLOWBOARD and the FLOW UNIT devices
- Do not use other cables than cables provided by Fluigent
- Prevent foreign objects or liquids from entering the FLOWBOARD
- Prevent foreign objects from entering the FLOW UNIT
- Do not place the product in an unstable location, place the unit in a location with a level surface and a strong and stable support
- Respect the temperature compatibility (from 5°C to 50 °C)
- Filter your solution, if possible add a filter in the fluidic path (§10) and clean your FLOW UNIT after each use, especially the FLOW UNIT XS (cf § 4.3). The diameter of the FLOW UNIT XS capillary is small: 25 µm. Fluigent rejects any liability in the event of clogging or surface modifications.
- Do not allow the FLOW UNIT to dry with media in the capillary tube without flushing clean first.
- Fluigent advises to realise a cleaning procedure after use.
- The FLOW UNIT yellow plugs must be installed for storage
- Check the fluid compatibility with the FLOW UNIT wetted materials before using it or ask Fluigent customer support.
- The customer is responsible for fluid used with the FLOW UNIT. Before use, the customer has to check the compatibility of the fluid with the FLOW UNIT .

For specific use, please contact our Support team at support@fluigent.com



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